



Zone and Sector Key Issues Report August/September 2010

CONTENTS

a.	Supporting Community Wellbeing	2
b.	Enhancing Environmental Outcomes	3
c.	Supporting Regional Growth	6
d.	Sustaining Transport and Infrastructure	8
e.	Maintain and Enhance the Framework for Local Governance and Democratic Participation	10
f.	Strengthening Local Government Finances and Capacity	11
g.	Building Local Government Capability	12
h.	Delivering Good Regulatory Outcomes.....	13
i.	Connecting with our Members	18

a. Supporting Community Wellbeing

1. Community Safety and Wellbeing

Joint Central/Local Government Social Issues and Community Safety Forum

The central/local government social sector forum has achieved many of its original objectives, and is now reviewing its future.

Alcohol

The Law Commission's [review](#) of the regulatory framework for the sale and supply of liquor, *Alcohol in our lives: Curbing the harm*, was presented to Parliament in April.

It contains 153 recommendations, including increasing the ability of communities to influence how and where alcohol is sold in their area. A number of the recommendations have implications for local government. At the time of writing the Government was expected to respond in late August or September.

Safer communities

The Ministry of Justice [funding round](#) for Crime Prevention and Community Safety Projects is open from 2 – 27 August.

Conditional grants were available for initiatives relating to local crime prevention for Māori communities, alcohol responses, and safer community crime prevention. The outcome of the funding applications will be notified on 24 September, and projects are able to commence on 1 October.

Gangs

As part of *Local Government New Zealand's* (LGNZ) submission on the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) Amendment Bill in June LGNZ asked the Select Committee to consider allowing all territorial authorities to make bylaws prohibiting the display of gang insignia, along the lines of the Wanganui District Council (Prohibition of Gang Insignia) Act 2009.

The Minister does not support this proposal arguing that grafting the Wanganui provisions onto the LGA would not be an adequate response to a complex issue. LGNZ is now considering how to proceed with this issue.

Housing

A decision on Queenstown Lake District Council's (QLDC) long-awaited case on whether housing affordability can be addressed under the Resource Management Act (RMA) has now been reached, with the Environment Court determining it can be. This has, however, been appealed to the High Court so final resolution of the jurisdictional issue is still some way off.

Plan Change 24 was the mechanism chosen by QLDC to introduce affordable housing policies into the District Plan so that it could become a relevant matter when plan changes were proposed as well as when resource consents were considered.

A second decision sought by the council, covering the method that would be used to deliver affordable housing, is scheduled to be heard by the Environment Court later this year.

Auckland Social Policy Forum

Submissions on the forum have closed and at the time of writing were being considered by the Minister for Social Development and Employment. LGNZ has no information on when this decision may be made.

Family-Centred Communities

The Family Lens is a joint initiative between the Families Commission, LGNZ and a cluster of seven councils to support council decision-making from a family-oriented perspective. Presentations on the successes and learnings of the cluster group have been made to Metro Sector and Community Board Executive Committee (CBEC) meetings in May and March respectively.

New Community Response Model Forums

Regional Response Forums are being established across the country as part of a government initiative to transform the way the Ministry of Social Development delivers its social support services. This is not about new funding, but a different way of planning for the delivery of social services.

There will be one national forum and 14 regional forums which will enable communities to have a say in setting their own priorities for funding of family support services in their region.

The emphasis is on a direct relationship between central government and local communities. The forums may include community, government and iwi representatives. The role of local government is not as clearly indicated.

A letter has been sent from Minister Bennett to Mayors. As the forums are regionally-based, you may want to coordinate with the other councils in your region to provide input and/or collectively put forward a local government representative.

The Minister is expected to make panel appointments next month. To make a nomination (or find out more) please contact Richard Wood, Deputy Chief Executive, Ministry of Social Development (Family and Community Services), 04-9163798, richard.wood001@msd.govt.nz.

For more information see the [Family Services website](#).

b. Enhancing Environmental Outcomes

1. Climate Change and Sustainable Land Management

Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)

Submissions closed on 23 July for the Climate Change (Waste) Regulations 2010 and the Climate Change (Unique Emissions Factors) Amendment Regulations 2010. These are being developed to support the Climate Change Response (Moderated Emissions Trading) Amendment Bill which was enacted in November 2009.

2. Waste Management and Minimisation

New Zealand Waste Strategy

The Minister for the Environment, Hon Dr Nick Smith, did not sign off the draft review of the New Zealand Waste Strategy produced by the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) and LGNZ. It is now being revised further by MfE in line with the Ministers directions. In the meantime, councils should work with the existing strategy.

Waste Minimisation Fund

Applications for the Waste Minimisation Fund continue to be assessed and a single grant was announced in June by the Minister for the Environment to the *Plasback Voluntary Product Stewardship Scheme*.

An announcement on further grants is expected in the coming months.

Product Stewardship

In May 2010 the *Plasback* programme was granted accreditation for an on-farm collection and recycling scheme for farm plastics. The programme was accredited as a voluntary product stewardship scheme under the Waste Minimisation Act (2008).

Plasback is the first accredited product stewardship scheme for the agricultural sector. For more information [click here](#).

A grant of \$130,000 from the contestable portion of the Waste Minimisation Fund was announced in June by the Minister for the Environment to support a nationwide campaign to encourage farms to become part of the recycling scheme.

ETS Regulations on Waste Emissions

Submissions on the ETS Regulations on Waste Emissions closed in July. The regulations include a default emissions factor based on volume of waste to landfill. They outline methodology to apply for unique emissions factors for waste to landfill (based on the composition of the waste stream), gas capture and destruction.

Under the draft regulations most local authorities will use the default emissions factor, as the methodology to apply for a unique emissions factor is costly. With the existing unit price to offset emissions being \$18, this will increase the cost of waste to landfill by approximately \$20 per tonne over and above other landfill charges. If the price of emissions units increases, so too does the cost of disposal at landfill, e.g. if the unit price is \$25 then the additional cost of waste to landfill would be \$28.

LGNZ has submitted on the draft regulations and this can be viewed on the LGNZ [website](#).

Territorial Levy Payouts

Councils must keep records and information about how their Waste Minimisation Fund is spent. MfE circulated a reporting template in January 2010 and engaged independent auditors in July 2010 to determine compliance. Guidance will be provided on what to expect if an auditor contacts your council.

Section 32 of the Waste Management Act specifies a territorial authority may spend the money only on promoting waste minimisation, or ways to achieve it, in accordance with its Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (WMMP). Payments can be retained if this is not the case.

The third levy payment of just over \$3 million was distributed to territorial authorities on 20 July.

3. New Start for Fresh Water

Land and Water Forum (LAWF)

The LAWF was due to report to the Minister for the Environment by the end of August. LGNZ will communicate the key messages from the report to all local authorities.

The Government's response to the LAWF recommendations will, in part, form the content of the freshwater workstream of the RMA review. A Bill on this aspect of the review is expected in 2011.

Proposed National Policy Statement (NPS) for Freshwater Management

The Minister for the Environment has referred the Board of Inquiry report and recommendations to the LAWF to form part of their response, due by end of August, as noted above.

Regulation on the Measurement of Water Takes

This standard will now be promulgated by regulation rather than as a National Environmental Standard (NES). Drafting of the regulation is underway. The timing for the regulations to have effect was originally indicated to be 1 July. This will now be 28 days after the regulations are gazetted, possibly in late 2010.

4. Energy

A draft New Zealand Energy Strategy and a draft New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy have been released for public consultation. The former replaces the 2007 New Zealand Energy Strategy. Both strategies have implications for the local government sector. LGNZ will make a submission on the drafts. The closing date for submissions is 2 September.

5. Oceans Policy

Proposed Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) legislation to manage environmental effects in the EEZ was previously drafted but not introduced before the change in Government. There may be some movement on this matter when the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) takes on its expanded functions including management of the EEZ.

6. Biosecurity

Future of Pest Management Project

On 21 June the Minister of Biosecurity announced that Cabinet had agreed in principle to the Crown being bound to Regional Pest Management Strategies. This announcement came together with the release of the Proposed National Plan of Action 2010-2035 discussion paper.

The discussion paper outlines a number of proposals to improve the pest management system, including clarifying Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and councils' roles and responsibilities, toolbox management, collective action and nationally consistent policy direction. LGNZ's submission to the Proposed National Plan of Action is available on the LGNZ [website](#).

National Pest Management Strategy for Bovine Tuberculosis (Tb NPMS)

The *Regional Council Sector View* on the strategy addressed the need for more transparency, accountability and effectiveness of funding to the Tb NPMS. An initial technical level meeting of regional council and Animal Health Board staff has identified a number of areas for further work, including defining common costs or projects overheads, and transition arrangements.

c. Supporting Regional Growth

1. Economic Development

Local Government's Contribution to Economic Growth

Over the past year LGNZ has worked to promote local government as part of the solution in the area of economic development. Soon after establishing the Economic Development Committee earlier this year, it became apparent that some work was necessary to develop the value proposition for local government in economic development, and to evaluate the contribution of local government towards economic growth.

LGNZ commissioned BERL Economics to develop both a quantitative framework to evaluate local government investment including money, resources and time, and a qualitative approach to "tell the local government story" through case studies.

The first portion of this work was released as *Local Government's Contribution to Economic Growth* at the LGNZ Economic Development Workshop in July. Six priority areas for local government's contribution are identified, and the report looks for overlaps with the Government's economic growth agenda. Two case studies utilising the framework were highlighted: Highbrook Business Park in Manukau City, and the Marlborough Research Centre: Wine Centre of Excellence. The Economic Impact Assessment of Westpac Stadium in Wellington is included as a comparative report. The full report is available on the LGNZ [website](#).

Development of the indicator framework is ongoing.

Economic development workshop

On Friday 30 July, LGNZ hosted an all-day workshop, *Economic Growth: Tapping the resources of our Cities and Regions* with Greg Clark (a keynote speaker at conference). This was a very successful event, with delegates from local

government, central government, the business sector and economic development agencies attending. The presentations from the day are available on the LGNZ [website](#).

Rugby World Cup 2011 (RWC)

LGNZ has prepared a submission to the Government Administration Select Committee in relation to the Rugby World Cup 2011 (Empowering) Bill.

The submission stresses the significant economic opportunity the RWC presents to local government, and the collective willingness of the sector to maximise these benefits during the tournament's relatively narrow window. It also acknowledges the prudence in establishing a fall-back regime to provide sufficient flexibility to deal with unexpected and urgent circumstances.

However, not all parts of this Bill may add value to local authorities, particularly those outside major population centres. The submission also stresses that although keen to pull their weight, local authorities should not be unnecessarily burdened with an ineffective Act.

While it is not clear how all parts of the Act will be implemented in practice, LGNZ is not supportive of any measures that may impose costs or undermine the importance of local government decision-making.

The submission can be found on the LGNZ [website](#).

2. Tourism

Freedom Camping

At the LGNZ Annual General Meeting (AGM) in July a remit was passed requiring LGNZ to investigate and promote solutions to the increasing problem of freedom camping.

The key issue is difficulty in enforcing bylaw provisions which councils may have in place. LGNZ is working with government agencies towards a solution which would enable instant fines and the recovery of fines from vehicle owners. The mechanism for doing this is likely to require an amendment to the LGA and various pieces of transport legislation. Interim, short term options could involve the use of regulation but this would be cumbersome.

LGNZ is also considering developing some guidelines/best practice for freedom camping bylaws.

3. Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs (MTfJ)

MTfJ made presentations to the Metro and Rural/Provincial sector meetings at the LGNZ conference, and held its AGM on 27 July. Some key achievements for the year have been:

- Reports: on apprenticeships, youth transitions
- Meetings with Ministers leading to new programmes
- Relationships/partners: Business NZ, Industry Training Federation, New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, Economic Development Agencies of New Zealand and government agencies

- Contracts with Te Puni Kokiri, Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) and Industry Training Federation.
- Goals in LTCCPs – 74% of all Councils
- Industry Graduations - 30 graduations involving 51 Councils.

d. Sustaining Transport and Infrastructure

1. National Land Transport Programme (NLTP)

There are indications that councils are struggling to match their expenditure with programme approvals, particularly for capital works. This maybe a result of moving from an annual to a three year programme cycle which has allowed some increased flexibility in programme delivery. However, anecdotally at least, for those able to bring works forward very competitive tender prices are still available.

There are strong indications that road safety will be a "strategic fit" criteria for the next NLTP in 2012.

2. Road Safety Strategy 2020

The Ministry of Transport is currently investigating how to implement the first set of actions identified by *Safer Journeys*, the Government's road safety strategy to 2020. Local government can be expected to play a significant role in developing initiatives to improve safety outcomes on local roads over the next decade. Moving to a more holistic "safe system" approach is likely to require changes to the way we think about and engage with our communities in order to progress desired road safety outcomes.

At this stage, no additional funding has been signalled by the Government to undertake additional road safety initiatives in the current NLTP. However, LGNZ is helping facilitate alignment, for example by identifying actions that can position road controlling authorities to positively respond to the strategic direction signalled by *Safer Journeys* within the next 2012/15 NLTP cycle.

3. New Zealand Transport Strategy

There is current debate within the transport sector as to the status of this document and what signals should be conveyed for longer-term transport decision-making. If those signals are to be provided, and the New Zealand Transport Strategy is not deemed to be the place to do it, discussion needs to take place around what the alternatives are.

4. Transport Submissions/Legislation

At the time of writing we anticipate making submissions on proposed amendments to the Land Transport Management Act and the Public Transport Management Act. The exact nature of these amendments is not yet confirmed.

Recent reports from the Christchurch Police show they believe the boy racer legislation and bylaws are assisting them address this problem.

5. Government Policy Statement (GPS)

The next GPS is due for release in mid-2011. It is expected that preliminary work will begin on this soon. It is hoped that this will involve early and meaningful consultation with LGNZ.

The Minister has recently made some minor adjustments to the current GPS, and whilst they reinforce a future focus on road safety they have no impact on local government funding allocations within the life of the current document.

6. Utilities Bill/New Zealand Utilities Advisory Group (NZUAG) Code of Practice

The legislation to allow the code to be mandated by the Minister is expected to be in place by the end of September, with the aim of the code being mandatory by 1 July 2011.

There will be consultation on the code before the Minister adopts it. This is likely to happen in late 2010. A range of issues need to be resolved including the future incarnation and funding of NZUAG (as a code management body).

7. Drinking Water

The Minister of Health has initiated a review of the impacts of the Drinking Water Standards on local government. The outcomes of this review were not available at the time of writing, nor the outcomes of the review into the *Drinking Water Assistance Programme* funding criteria which commenced earlier this year.

The relationship between Water New Zealand and LGNZ was supposedly consolidated with the signing of a "no surprises" Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). It is fair to state that the submission made to the Select Committee on the Transparency, Accountability and Fiscal Management Bill (TAFM) by Water New Zealand came as a surprise to both LGNZ and INGENIUM.

8. Geospatial Strategy

Land and Information New Zealand (LINZ) is seeking to take a more active role in leading the development of policy relating to geospatial information in New Zealand. To this end, LINZ has established the new Geospatial Office and developed a new governance arrangement to help implement the Government's long-neglected geospatial strategy.

Peter Winder (Auckland Regional Council) currently represents local government interests as a member of the Geospatial Executive Group, and Miles McConway (Bay of Plenty Regional Council) and Neville Perrie (Rodney District Council) have been nominated to represent the collective interests of the local government sector as members of the Geospatial Steering Committee.

LGNZ is supporting LINZ through our sector representatives in this process, and further information will be provided as this work progresses.

9. Broadband

The Ministry of Economic Development released a discussion document in relation to conducting trials for low cost broadband deployment options. It was proposed to conduct trials around directional drilling, shallow trenching, micro trenching and aerial deployment.

Along with a number of councils, LGNZ made a submission on the discussion document. We have been advised that the aerial deployment option is only intended in situations where there is existing overhead infrastructure and not in green-fields type development.

The major concern remains that lower cost deployment options, unless properly researched and managed, run the risk of shifting costs on to other utility network and infrastructure providers. This message does not seem to be getting through.

e. Maintain and Enhance the Framework for Local Governance and Democratic Participation

1. Citizenship Education

Kids' Voting 2010

Registrations for Kids Voting have now closed. Fifty-one councils (including two youth councils) are actively supporting the programme. More than 21,000 students at 129 schools from the Far North to Invercargill will use the programme in the current school term.

Resources to assist local government with youth-related issues

The guide to organising Youth Citizens' Juries is still available from LGNZ. Email info@lgnz.co.nz for more information.

The Ministry of Youth Development is preparing a *Guide for Local Government: an Introduction and Context to the Development of Youth Policy* and a toolkit for councils to support youth councils. LGNZ will advise stakeholders when the guides are available.

2. Māori and Local Government

Te Maruata – Māori Committee

Te Maruata held their last scheduled meeting for the electoral cycle on 24 June. The committee received a number of presentations and met with the Minister of Māori Affairs, Hon Pita Sharples. This was a very positive and collegial meeting. During the *korero* a range of topics were covered, including:

- the importance of working together towards desired outcomes
- the need to maintain ongoing relationships and conversations with the Minister and officials
- the ongoing focus to increase Māori voters and Māori participation overall
- possible strategies to encourage, motivate and support Māori
- boundaries and obstacles (including legislative) that needed to be addressed
- Treaty settlement matters.

Representatives from the committee presented a summary for the year to sector meetings at the LGNZ conference in July. The presentations reflected on progress to date, and concluded that the committee felt confident they had made some traction on focus areas, and could leave a legacy for a new committee after the local body elections. The key focus for the committee continues to be increasing Māori representation.

Implications of Treaty settlements for local authorities

Cabinet has considered a paper on principles for Treaty Settlements and local government. The Minister of Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations, Hon Chris Finlayson, advised in his presentation to the Regional Sector at the LGNZ conference that clarity around the role of local authorities as decision-makers has been confirmed.

At the time of writing LGNZ were awaiting formal communication from the Government about its confirmed principles.

Foreshore and Seabed Act review

The Bill to repeal the current Act was being drafted at the time of writing and we were advised it was expected to be introduced in August or September.

LGNZ expects there to be significant implications for local authority infrastructure in the foreshore and seabed, and for local authority planning documents and decision-making roles for foreshore and seabed. The LGNZ submission on the review document is available on the LGNZ [website](#).

f. Strengthening Local Government Finances and Capacity

1. Local Government Cost Index

The BERL Cost Index for local government was circulated to all councils in the week prior to conference. As a result of local interest, we are considering the recommendation that a presentation be prepared for a future round of zone meetings. BERL has indicated some interest in taking part in such a round.

The cost index, which is based on a formula for identifying cost drivers, has parallels with a regular series commissioned by SOLGM to work out price forecasts that councils can use in the LTCCP preparation. We have met with SOLGM and BERL to look at a jointly commissioned product which combines both agencies' needs and calculates the index for the next financial year.

2. Review of the LGA Transparency, Accountability and Financial Management (TAFM)

The Local Government and Environment Select Committee has finished considering submissions and is expected to report back to Parliament in November.

3. Workshop on options for strengthening effectiveness

At its May meeting National Council voted to contribute \$25,000 to a research project sponsored by the South Australian Local Government Association and

Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government (ACELG). The contribution will be primarily used to undertake a full literature review and a selection of case studies.

A critical part of the project will be holding a workshop of local government practitioners to review what research has already been undertaken and identify options. This will be held on 10 September in conjunction with the Zone 2 meeting in Whitianga.

g. Building Local Government Capability

1. International

Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF)

At the time of writing we had been advised that a paper on the CLGF Pacific Project Technical Advisory Group's (TAG) funding application would be put to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for approval in late August.

Cook Islands infrastructure support

In July 2009 the Prime Minister Hon John Key undertook a Pacific tour to Tonga, Samoa, Niue and the Cook Islands, leading a delegation which included ministers, Select Committee members, Mayors and Pacific island youth and sport representatives.

As a result of this tour and a meeting with NZAID (now the International Development Group (IDG)), LGNZ in conjunction with the Cook Islands Ministry of Infrastructure and Planning wrote a proposal to the State Sector Development Partnership Fund¹ to undertake a scoping study to determine technical assistance requirements of the Cook Islands Ministry. This proposal was noted and strongly supported by the Minister of Foreign Affairs when he signed off the final approvals for successful applications to the fund.

Representatives of LGNZ visited the Cook Islands in early July. This visit was timed to assist the Ministry in preparation for a Cook Islands Government forum on infrastructure. A reciprocal visit from the Cook Islands counterpart is yet to be finalised, but at the time of writing it was anticipated they would be in New Zealand in August or early September.

A report identifying options to assist the Ministry of Infrastructure and Planning with asset management is due with NZAID by November.

Aitutaki Cyclone Reconstruction

Early this year, the Minister of Foreign Affairs announced a \$5.5 million package of reconstruction assistance for the Cyclone Pat recovery and reconstruction project. A primary objective of the plan is to manage the risk of further depopulation of Aitutaki by ensuring peoples homes are repaired or rebuilt as well as ensuring restoration of basic infrastructure and services such as power, education and healthcare.

¹ The State Sector Development Partnership Fund is a NZAID contestable fund open to local government for the first time in November 2009. Previously only central government agencies could apply.

On approving the reconstruction package, the Minister proposed using local authority expertise through the NZAID clerk of works role. The objective of this role is to provide quality assurance services to the Cook Islands Government and NZAID, with regard to repairs to significantly damaged homes and reconstruction of destroyed homes on Aitutaki.

LGNZ advertised this position and participated in the interviews. The successful applicant, a Building Officer from New Plymouth District Council, took up the role in early August and is expected to be in Aitutaki for nine months. His in-country costs, including salary, are covered by NZAID.

2. Waitomo

Philip Jones, former Finances Manager at Western Bay of Plenty District Council, was selected as the facilitator to mediate between council and community groups in Waitomo.

Philip's work has concluded and was regarded as a success by the participants who are now better able to contribute to public discussions on the council's long-term financial strategy.

3. Pre-election Work

Each election LGNZ develops a handbook for elected members. This year the process has been made more complicated by the late passage of the LGA Amendment Bill, which is expected to be considered by Parliament in November. The decision was made to adopt a folder format which would allow for chapters to be updated and downloaded by users once the Bill is passed into law.

The folder format has enabled us to include a range of additional advice and the publication is being sold as the *Elected Members' Survival Guide*.

h. Delivering Good Regulatory Outcomes

1. RMA Review

At the time of writing officials had advised that a discussion document would be presented to Cabinet (in early-mid August) for approval prior to a six-week consultation period. The document is expected to include the Infrastructure and Urban TAG reports.

All work streams **except** for aquaculture and water are expected to be included in the discussion document. Aquaculture will be covered by a separate Bill later this year, and water has a separate timeline following release of the LAWF report at the end of August.

Discount Regulation

The discount regulation was gazetted and came into force on 31 July. The premise of the regulation with regard to "fault" changed considerably after MfE undertook initial consultation with councils. Implementation guidance has been produced by MfE. LGNZ is continuing discussions with MfE to obtain clarity and additional guidance around some aspects of the regulation.

2. Food Act Review

The Food Bill has been referred to the Primary Production Select Committee for submissions by 2 September. Further information about the Bill and submissions is available on the Parliament [website](#).

The Bill introduces a substantial reform to New Zealand's food regulation and will replace the Food Act 1981 and the Food Hygiene Regulations 1974. It has significant implications for councils' environmental health function.

Some aspects of this change will be familiar to councils taking part in the voluntary implementation programme which pilots parts of the new regime. Considerable operational detail of interest to councils will be the subject of future regulations.

LGNZ prepared some notes and preliminary recommendations on the Bill for the information of councils. These were sent to councils on 2 August and feedback was due back by 26 August.

3. Public Works (Offer Back of and Compensation for Acquired Land) Amendment Bill

The Local Government and Environment Select Committee heard submissions on this Bill and recommended in its report that the Bill not be passed. Parliament voted against the second reading of the Bill on 21 July. This is a significant positive outcome for local government.

4. Building Act/Weathertightness

Building Act Review

On 12 August the Minister for Building and Construction Maurice Williamson announced the results of the Building Act review.

The announcement was generally positive, keeping the good bits of the original proposals, taking out some areas where we had concerns (e.g. "self-certification" by builders of simple houses), and committing to looking at joint and several liability in the next phase.

Generally the plan seems to have the right balance between accountability, risk and streamlining.

As part of the review the government has committed to working with the local government sector to improve the regulatory role councils play in the building and construction area. The discussions will focus on developing a more nationally consistent and efficient building regulatory system.

The Government will consider a report on the regulatory system in the first half of next year.

Weathertight Homes

LGNZ and the eight most affected councils have been working through details for the proposed Financial Assistance Package. This includes process details on matters such as eligibility, transition of existing claims, and payment process.

The details will need to be confirmed by the Minister of Building and Construction. Information about the package and information relevant for councils is expected to be made available in September.

5. Review of the Unit Titles Act 1972

The Unit Titles Act 2010 is now in place. It will not have full effect until the transition to the new Act is complete.

6. Walking Access Commission (WAC)

The WAC has recently released its Outdoor Access Code to encourage responsible conduct in relation to walking access, enhance people's knowledge and understanding of what to do in the outdoors, and raise awareness of access rights and responsibilities.

The WAC is developing an online tool to encourage walking access that will highlight the location of all legal access in New Zealand, including unformed legal roads. While this is already public, it is considered likely the unmitigated release of this information will increase instances of conflict between users and landowners. In some circumstances, the management of such conflicts may require additional resourcing from the relevant road controlling authority.

This tool is expected to go live in early 2011.

To moderate this potential issue LGNZ is working with the WAC to develop best practice guidelines for road controlling authorities managing unformed legal roads. LGNZ welcomes input from any parties interested in contributing to this process.

7. Dog Control

A "first principles" review of the Dog Control Act has been signalled by the Minister of Local Government and is on DIA's work programme for 2010/11. Officials are currently considering the scope of the review and the likely first step will be an initial high-level discussion document.

8. RMA Making Good Decisions Programme

This joint LGNZ/MfE programme is being reviewed to ensure it is "fit for purpose" prior to significant rollout after the 2010 elections. The review is considering all aspects of the programme but specific aspects for early consideration are how to incorporate "modules" for plan/policy decision-making and Māori world view. If you have any feedback on the programme, please contact info@lgnz.co.nz.

The next round of foundation workshops will be held after the October elections, provisionally planned for December 2010, March and April 2011. Recertification workshops will be available to coincide with expiry of current certificates.

More information is available on the course provider's [website](#).

9. Aquaculture Reforms

The officials group has been consulting with local government coastal planners working in aquaculture. A Bill is expected later this year. Local government is also represented at the CEOs' forum which meets regularly.

10. National Policy Statements (NPSs)

Details on the work programme, including gazetted NPSs and NPSs under development are available on the MfE [website](#).

New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) Review

The Board of Inquiry report and recommendations were released by a member of the Board in May. The Minister of Conservation is currently considering options for the NZCPS. LGNZ has stressed the importance to local government of finalising the NZCPS and providing an implementation package to accompany the NZCPS when it is gazetted.

Renewable Electricity Generation NPS

The Board of Inquiry report is expected to be released by the Minister for the Environment soon and the Government's decisions on a final NPS are expected around September.

Possible NPS on Urban Design

Phase 2 RMA reform includes a workstream centred on urban planning issues. Consideration as to whether to continue with an urban design NPS, or an alternative approach, and in what form, will comprise part of the policy advice reported back to the Government as part of the urban planning work programme. This will be part of the RMA review phase 2 discussion document expected later in 2010.

Water Management NPS

See b. 3. "New Start for Fresh Water".

11. National Environmental Standards (NESs)

NESs in Effect

Information on the standards currently in force as regulations is available on the MfE website.

Proposed NES - Contaminated Sites

An NES on contaminated sites is currently being developed. Consultation has closed. The policy advisory group established by MfE includes local government officers. This group will assist in the development of planning controls that will form part of the NES for assessing and managing contaminants in soil for the protection of human health.

Water Management

See b. 3. "New Start for Fresh Water".

NES Review - Air Quality

MfE has recently sought submissions on proposed amendments to the NES on air quality. Changes proposed include extending the target timeframe to comply with the NES from 2013, increasing the number of permitted annual exceedances of the NES and excluding exceptional events such as dust events or salt spray events.

Comment was also sought on including mandatory offsets for new industry in over allocated air sheds. LGNZ made a submission supporting the changes in principle but seeking flexibility in relation to the timeframe. The submission is available on the LGNZ [website](#).

Proposed NES - Plantation Forestry

MfE is scoping the potential for a NES for plantation forestry. There will be an opportunity to make submissions if a discussion document is approved by Cabinet. Consultation is expected before the end of 2010.

12. Professional Development

Professional development for elected members has moved up to the next level and now has 16 workshops in the KnowHow suite of training. After extensive consultation, the team have developed a range of workshops to boost capability.

Core training workshops

- Financial Governance 101
- Financial Governance 201
- Asset Management; Decision Making
- The secret to building good relationships with chief executives
- RMA – how it really works.

Governance modules

The newly-developed governance modules cover:

- The Role of Elected Members
- Media Skills
- Consultation Skills
- Effective Team Review
- Ethical Responsibilities
- Local Government – an introduction to how it works
- Elected members' effectiveness
- Understanding orders and chairing meetings.

A new Community Boards workshop is also being developed.

Newly elected members training

The KnowHow team will be delivering workshops for new elected members around the country in October and November. The three workshops are: New Mayors; New Regional Chairs and New Elected Members.

KnowHow will be launching its new webpages on 23 August on the LGNZ website together with a new on-line registration system. This system will revolutionise how elected members register for workshops, ensuring seamless communication and accurate information.

i. Connecting with our Members

1. Internal Governance

Annual General Meeting (AGM) Wednesday 28 July 2010

The AGM was held at the SKYCITY Convention Centre in Auckland on Wednesday 28 July. A remit was considered on freedom camping, proposed by Westland District Council.

Change to Rules of the New Zealand Local Government Association

The AGM agreed to two specific rule changes to accommodate the new very large Auckland Council, with minimum disruption to the status quo rights and entitlements of other members.

Community Boards

CBEC has been active promoting the good practice awards which are to be awarded at next year's community and local boards' conference in Rotorua.

2. Communications

The *2009/2010 Annual Report* has been published and is available on the LGNZ [website](#). The report has been well-received and the updated LGNZ branding and colour pallet incorporated into the report has been widely accepted.

Preparations are also in hand for the September *Quarterly Review* which will focus on the 2010 local body elections.

Media enquiries

Media interest has been consistent in recent months with a variety of issues covered, from the Auckland super city and RWC legislation to gang patch bylaws and local body elections.

There has been media commentary on the LGA Amendment Bill currently before Select Committee and an opinion piece from LGNZ was printed in the Dominion Post in response to a commentary piece by Business Roundtable spokesperson Roger Kerr.

Conference

LGNZ Conference 2010 is now behind us and initial feedback has been positive. Attendance numbers across sessions and social events were up on last year and the conference theme, keynote speakers and presentations from Government Ministers was well-received.

Debriefing sessions with staff, sponsors and our conference managers are ongoing at the time of writing and thoughts are already turning to Conference 2011, to be held in Wellington from 10-12 July 2011.

Eugene Bowen
Chief Executive
Local Government New Zealand