



**Building
Prosperous Places**

Local Government New Zealand Conference
25 – 28 July, Auckland

**Local Government
New Zealand**
te pūtahi matakōkiri



Lawrence Yule, President, Local Government New Zealand
2010 Conference closing speech
Tuesday 27 July 2010

Ladies and gentlemen

After two days of enlightening and stimulating discussions and debates it's now time to close the *Local Government New Zealand* conference for 2010.

For me it's been not only a personal pleasure and a chance to catch up with many of you – friends and counterparts in the sector, it's been an illuminating few days.

The triennial year...election year is always a time of uncertainty, but excitement. Those of us who are passionate about our work in local government must again seek an expression of public confidence and enter the contest against candidates of differing and sometimes opposing views. Those who have made the reluctant decision to end a life of public office, will have that resolve tested by friends, supporters and, sometimes, themselves.

With the general election next year local government must confront what additional changes are on the agenda for our sector. Social, environmental and economic management will likely be subject to further change, and the government's commitment to further shrinkage of the non-tradable sector will have implications for the division of work between central and local government. The challenges facing the smaller councils, in rising cost and community expectations of service provision are unlikely to abate, while the increasing number of ratepayers at, or nearing retirement, will increase pressure to restrain rates increases. Candidates for re-election need to make that decision with their eyes open.

Conference, as always, is a time for looking back and forward – on what we have done and what is to come. This year's conference was focussed on what might be for local government. We heard of how the mayor of the largest council in

Australasia has confronted change. Greg Clark has, I hoped, increased your understanding of how important local government is to the larger economy. Peter Biggs was characteristically future-focussed and we shared the learnings of some of the departing Auckland mayors.

Now you can go home to you town, city or region and share what you too have learnt.

I want to especially acknowledge and thank the hard work of the people of Auckland City Council. A lot went on behind the scenes to help bring this conference to fruition and frankly it couldn't have happened so seamlessly without them.

To host Mayor, John Banks many thanks for his support.

This year the conference has looked at building prosperous places and how local government can play a key role.

A new feature this year was input from Ministers of the Crown in our sector meetings today, giving us the opportunity to interface directly with central government on issues affecting our communities. As always this is an invaluable prospect and we thanks those ministers for taking the time out of their busy schedules to talk to us.

We have also heard from our Prime Minister John Key, our Minister of Local Government Rodney hide and Opposition leader Phil Goff.

In his speech, John Key talked about the need for central government and local government to work closely together to make New Zealand an even better place.

The Prime Minister also spoke of his desire to see voter turnout improve in this year's local body elections.

The Hon Rodney Hide told us about the discussion document he is looking to introduce entitled 'Smarter Government Stronger Communities' which will look at the constitutional status of local government and the relationship between central and local government.

Minister Hide also used his address to emphasise the importance of keeping the local in local government.

Our interesting and informative speakers helped us put together some of the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle that go to building prosperous places.

The Lord Mayor of Brisbane Campbell Newman shared his experiences on the development of Brisbane City and the city's emergence as an economic power in the Asia Pacific region.

Campbell spoke of the role local government plays in place shaping, and made reference to the need for a core vision that identifies six key action areas that flow from that vision including infrastructure and investment.

Following Campbell we heard from Clemenger BBDO managing director Peter Biggs talked on how iconic and enduring brands are successful.

Peter gave us an insight into branding and the need for cities to align themselves with one of the 12 archetypes such as love, rules and caregiver. Peter also had some great examples identifying Queenstown as the outlaw and Las Vegas as the jester.

Today we heard from Greg Clark, international authority on city and regional economic development. Greg gave us an insight on what Auckland might look like post local body elections and what prosperity could mean for the new city.

In our technical workshops a range of topics were covered from the future challenges and opportunities in infrastructure, to economic development and the local government / central government nexus. We also canvassed local boards and whether they are the model for the future.

Alongside the workshops, sector meeting and guest speakers I found the mayoral presentations yesterday afternoon fascinating as Mayors Len Brown and Andrew Williams and Deputy Mayor Penny Hulse spoke of their experiences and lessons from the creation of the one Auckland City Council that comes into being in October.

I would like to thank and pay tribute to our conference organisers, members of our National Council, Vice-President Kerry Prendergast, Local Government New Zealand chief executive Eugene Bowen and his staff, who have worked long and hard to put the programme together, and to thank you for your time, input and thought-provoking contributions during the course of our 2½ days.

For those of you who have enjoyed conference so much you don't want it to end you may like to consider the Commonwealth Local Government Conference to be held in Cardiff, Wales in March next year.

Many of you will remember the Commonwealth Local Government Conference we organised with the Government in Auckland three years ago.

This conference is a wonderful opportunity to meet with local government people from throughout the Commonwealth and the theme for the conference next year is Energising Local Economies: partnerships for prosperous places.

The following is a short DVD introducing the conference.

Before we close a few reminders.

Anyone who is a presiding delegate for AGM tomorrow should have their voting keypad and entry card by now, but if you don't please collect them from the registration desk on level five tonight.

Other delegates will need to collect an entry card. You can do this by visiting the registration.

Also for those mayors taking part in the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs AGM, this will be held in Epsom Rooms 1 & 2 on level 4 today immediately following the close of conference.

I wish you a safe journey home and a prosperous year among your community.