



Lawrence Yule, President, Local Government New Zealand  
Conference opening speech  
Monday 26 July 2010

Thank you Prime Minister. It's an honour to have you at our conference.

Please accept this gift of chocolates, prepared by iconic Wellington department store Kirkcaldie & Stains, as a token of LGNZ's appreciation.

Now I ask you all please to be up standing as Prime Minister John Key leaves.

This is our last LGNZ conference before the largest change in Local Government is undertaken since 1989.

Prosperity and what that means is the theme of Conference 2010. I've been thinking about what this word means, and I've come to the conclusion it's a very personal concept.

For me, prosperity isn't just about making money. When I think of prosperity in the context of being a mayor, I think of economic as well as social, cultural and artistic prosperity. After all a city is the sum of its parts and city's are in the main diverse and divergent. So the challenge is in delivering prosperity to all constituents ensuring everyone gets a share and buys into that vision that we champion as mayors, chairs and chief executives.

The next challenge – which is one the conference addresses, is in ensuring our cities, regions and provinces are on the same trajectory. This is where, again, conference is important. Because it brings us together to share our stories, swap experiences and learn from each other.

Because one thing I strongly believe in is unity of purpose. Championing the role our sector plays in economic development with one strong, consistent and persistent voice.

Our role then is to champion, facilitate and support all those endeavours that help bring shared prosperity to our citizens.

I believe in this ultimate aim there is no place for parochialism – because we are all in this together.

Equally we cannot let differences between central and local government get in the way of the future of New Zealand.

Combined we have billions of dollars of assets which must be employed and funded in the most efficient and effective way. We need to be on the same page with our planning and our long term thinking.

And here we are, in New Zealand's biggest city, with our nation's biggest population base talking about prosperity. There is no place for parochialism in this discussion – or is there?

Undoubtedly the success of Auckland will affect the success of New Zealand. So its transition from eight to one super council will be watched with great interest by the rest of the sector, and the country.

So what role will the new council play in ensuring prosperity for all? And what role will other councils – metros, regional and provincial play in New Zealand's economic success and prosperity and in Auckland's.

These are questions which will be asked and answered over the next few days alongside many interesting discussions about the relationships between central and local government, the role of new local boards in Auckland and the contribution of infrastructure to economic prosperity.

So having conference 2010 in Auckland is timely...on many levels and for many reasons and I think we all have an interesting few days ahead.

This year's conference also brings a change of approach.

First, we had to start a bit earlier – apologies to those who prefer a later start but this was to accommodate the Prime Minister and I think you'll all agree the speech was worth the early start.

Second sectors are holding their quarterly meetings at conference this year. Each sector is also holding its AGM. A range of ministers is attending including, Associate Local Government Minister John Carter, Building and Construction Minister Maurice Williamson, Arts, Culture and Heritage Minister Chris Finlayson and Transport Minister Stephen Joyce will be attending these meetings. So Tuesday looks set to be very interesting for the sectors.

The key note speakers are of the calibre you can expect from the LGNZ conference. All bring significant overseas experience in the fields of leading super cities, economic development and championing causes.

I particularly look forward to listening to my Australian counterpart the Lord Mayor of Brisbane Campbell Newman. He will have many experiences to share about leading and championing economic development in a large and dispersed metropolis.

Greg Clark will bring to you fundamentally useful insights, drawing on 10 years experience in leading economic strategy for Greater London, of how cities and central governments can work together on a common economic development agenda.

Peter Biggs, always entertaining, always relevant, always fresh. I anticipate something informative but surprising – as always! Thanks for coming back Biggsy.

This year brings another break with tradition around workshops. You'll notice we have three – so they'll be larger but... believe me... content rich with top notch speakers and facilitators including Dr Ganesh Nana and Australian infrastructure expert Michael Deegan, to name a few.

The infrastructure workshop will explore future challenges and opportunities, the local government/central government nexus will be examined in the economic development workshop and the role of local board as a model for the future will be discussed.

For those of you who are coming along for the ride a fantastic partner's programme offers shopping, sight-seeing, wine tasting and pure indulgence.

For those partners who are new to Auckland there are lots of opportunities to see first hand the beauty of Auckland – especially if you have chosen the trip to Waiheke Island – the jewel in the Hauraki Gulf crown. For those who are more interested in shopping, a trip to Newmarket – one of the city's premium shopping strips will satisfy those cravings.

So this year's conference promises to deliver a well rounded experience – culminating of course in a fabulous conference dinner – always a great night out.

Now before I go....matters more prosaic... let's get the house keeping out of the way.

First...cell phones. Please switch them off during the main sessions – or at least put them on silent mode. You will also be able to pick up any messages from the conference registration desk.

For internet access you can go online by using the facilities provided by the Gen-i ReadyCloud Café located in the foyer past the registration desk on this level.

We have full houses in the main sessions so please make sure there are no empty seats. Anyway...it's a great way to get to know your neighbour.

Toilets are located on level 4a and 5a – accessed by elevator or lift.

Of course it goes without saying...no smoking inside please. Smokers have access to the smoking deck which is across the air bridge on this level.

And of course, in the unlikely event of an emergency make your way to base of the Sky Tower. SKYCITY staff will be on hand to tell you what to do.

If you have any questions about conference or would like any help – LGNZ staff will be on hand. They are the ones in white shirts and name tags ...guys can you stand up please.

Finally a word of thanks to our sponsors - Simpson Grierson - for hosting yesterday evening's splendid cocktails. The welcome reception is always an event to look forward to, it's certainly one I anticipate with relish as it's a great opportunity to catch up with people I haven't seen for awhile in an informal way.

And not forgetting of course Fulton Hogan for the conference dinner tonight – these dinners are a highlight – a chance to eat good food, drink good wine and relax amongst good people – colleagues and friends alike. And thanks also to Meridian for the splendid morning teas and lunches. ...

Well, in summing up, I just want to say I'm really looking forward to talking with as many of you as possible.

And on that note I invite you now all to join me at the Meridian morning tea.

Thank you.