

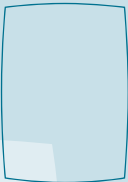
## *Priorities for 2008/09*



Commentary on the 2008/09  
Local Government New Zealand  
Programme of Activities



**Local Government New Zealand**  
le pūtahi matakōiri



## Introduction

*The Local Government New Zealand National Council elections, conducted immediately after the 2007 local elections, resulted in nine new National Council members out of a total of fourteen.*

The new National Council met first in December 2007, and also participated in the 14th Central Local Government Forum. At its meeting in March 2008, the National Council set high-level priorities for the organisation for the coming three-year term, and agreed on outcomes for five key areas of focus.

This commentary on our 2008/09 Priorities describes activities under each of the five key areas. The five key areas set for *Local Government New Zealand* are:

- achieving a genuine partnership with Government
- achieving financial sustainability for the local government sector
- jointly developing sustainable transport and utility infrastructure solutions
- adapting to environmental sustainability
- addressing safer community issues.

In 2008 we face the prospect of a general election. In any election year, *Local Government New Zealand*, as the advocacy body for councils across New Zealand, seeks to influence the local government policy of all political parties.

From late 2007, *Local Government New Zealand* began discussing with its membership both the substantial joint achievements we have made to date since the introduction of the Local Government Act 2002, and any issues that remain unresolved. The

National Council's perceptions of what has worked, what needs further work, and what remains undone, have formed the basis of the *Local Government New Zealand* manifesto, which was finalised in May. The manifesto will serve first as a basis for discussion with the Government, and will then be more widely promoted to all political parties.

This commentary describes both how we will seek to address the issues raised in the manifesto and the key areas of focus for *Local Government New Zealand* in 2008/09.

At the same time, *Local Government New Zealand* exists to engage with Government, to work with the political and bureaucratic structures that affect local government, and to influence the use of government resources in a way that promotes the well-being of communities.

Business-as-usual engagement involves a large amount of reactive activity across a wide range of fronts, on issues of widely varying importance. As with many organisations, urgent work often threatens to crowd out equally important longer-term issues. Examples of these longer-term issues are the professional development of elected members, improving community confidence in council decision-making, and original research into developing alternative models to the status quo, where we perceive that the status quo is not delivering satisfactory results.

The National Council has set clear directions for the organisation to develop a more future-focused agenda, while continuing to manage significant risk as it emerges in new legislation and new compliance requirements on local government.

Previous Work Programmes have graphically illustrated the volume of activity undertaken by *Local Government New Zealand*. We have a deserved reputation for juggling workloads with what is, by Wellington standards, a tiny workforce. However, the National Council has observed that activities and relationships must ultimately be judged by results.

*Local Government New Zealand* will continue to provide full detail of its activities through our regular reporting and accountability to zones and sectors.



**Eugene Bowen**  
*Chief Executive*  
*Local Government New Zealand*



# Priority areas

## 1. Achieving a genuine partnership with government

### Outcomes

- engagement by Government with local government is early, open and comprehensive
- Government is required, as part of the process of developing legislation and regulation, to identify and quantify the costs created for local government
- regulatory and other statutory duties imposed on local government are effective and workable at reasonable cost
- central government agencies work collaboratively with local authorities in the achievement of outcomes and the promotion of community well-being
- community outcomes exercise greater influence on the deployment of Government resources.

### Activities

Maintain and strengthen existing central/local government engagement, including:

- maintain the six-monthly Central Local Government Forums held with the Prime Minister and relevant members of the Cabinet
- participate in a review of the Department of Internal Affairs regulatory guidelines and advocate the principles for bureaucratic engagement by promoting the Regulatory Framework<sup>1</sup>
- use submissions to parliamentary select committees to influence and improve new draft legislation from a local government perspective
- publish and widely promote the 2008 *Local Government New Zealand* election manifesto to all political parties
- undertake original research into new approaches for central/local government engagement that might be able to be applied in the New Zealand context.

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<sup>1</sup> Note the words "Regulatory Framework" refer to the document: *Policy Development Guidelines for Regulatory Functions Involving Local Government*, Department of Internal Affairs, December 2006.

## 2. Achieving financial sustainability for the local government sector

### Outcomes

- councils have access to the necessary funds and funding tools to meet statutory and community expectations
- reliance on the general rate to fund infrastructure development and maintenance is reduced.

### Activities

- continue joint *Local Government New Zealand* SOLGM Rates Steering Group work on the Rates Inquiry
- advocate for generic infrastructure funding
- develop and publicise research into the cost impacts of Government regulatory activities on local government – research carried out by Pricewaterhouse Coopers
- continue to advocate for increases to existing schemes - Tourism Demand Subsidy Scheme, Transport funding, Sanitary and Water Technical Advisory Committee (SAWTAC) and Drinking Water subsidies
- maximise opportunities for local government arising from energy strategy-related Government funding and Government climate change funding
- support the Metro Sector in advocacy on alternative approaches to funding weathertight homes resolution
- advocate on local government funding tools under new waste minimisation legislation.

## 3. Jointly developing sustainable transport and utility infrastructure solutions

### Outcomes

- councils are supported to provide a safe, efficient, sustainable and adequately funded transport system for their local communities
- councils, through collaboration with government agencies and others, continue to influence the achievement of the objectives of the New Zealand Transport Strategy
- councils, through collaboration with government agencies and others, deliver to communities cost-effective and sustainable asset management of services and utilities, including broadband and information technology.

## 4. Adapting to environmental sustainability

### Activities

- continue work with government agencies on developing subsidy schemes and distribution of funding for sanitary waste water, and drinking water
- advocate on behalf of the sector with all transport agencies to achieve improved funding outcomes
- work with local authorities and relevant government agencies to develop good practice guidance relating to broadband passive infrastructure
- work with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry for the Environment on the development and implementation of the Health (Drinking Water) Amendment Act and drinking water catchment control schemes
- develop and promote a local government response to the geospatial strategy, Government's e-government legislation and policy, and the national e-government strategy (including participation in the implementation of the Digital Strategy)
- organise and participate in national conferences, forums and opportunities for sector advocacy in relation to transport, provision of utility services and asset management
- work with the National Asset Management Steering (NAMS) Group and Ingenium to promote effective leadership in asset management.

### Outcomes

- councils are supported by central government and *Local Government New Zealand* to enhance environmental outcomes and address sustainability issues in their communities
- councils work collaboratively with central government and communities to enhance the natural and built environment
- the contribution made by councils to environmental well-being is recognised by both central government and communities.

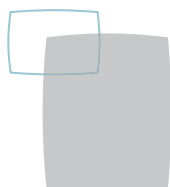
### Activities

- work with local authorities and central government to enhance the uptake of a sustainable development framework, including the sharing of information about sustainable development case studies, monitoring and reporting tools, and the urban design protocol
- continue involvement in the development of government policy under the Sustainable Water Programme of Action, including comments and submissions on National Policy Statements (NPS) and National Environmental Standards (NES), input to effective implementation of final tools and support for the Regional Affairs Committee Flood Control Sub-committee
- continue to provide input into the review of the Clean Streams Accord



## 5. Addressing safe community issues

- work with central government to assist councils to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including the sharing of information, input to government policy on climate change, advocacy for an effective climate change adaptation work programme, and support for the National Council Climate Change Sub-committee work programme
- provide a local government perspective into the development of central government policy on flood control work, including comments on NPS and NES, and promote effective tools and processes to councils
- represent local government and contribute to initiatives under the New Zealand Waste Strategy, New Zealand Packaging Accord and new waste minimisation legislation
- contribute to the effective implementation and delivery of the New Zealand Energy Strategy and the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy.



### Outcomes

- the priority of the community safety concerns of councils is widely acknowledged by Government, within the local government sector, and by the general public
- local government and Government interact more closely on the allocation of social and justice sector resources, not just in localities but nationally.

### Activities

- work with Police on opportunities and mechanisms that would enable greater responsiveness of Police to local needs
- further investigate the possibility and options for reform of the current regulatory framework for alcohol and facilitate good practice in local government
- work with Government on the implementation of the Government's Stop Tagging Our Place (STOP) strategy and encourage good practice across the country
- advocate for mechanisms to control street racing (including the option of compulsory third party insurance)
- support awareness and application of the Youth Gangs Toolkit at the local level
- collaborate with Government and community groups to implement the "Pathways to Partnership" programme: the Government's new model for working with community organisations to ensure the best outcomes for families, children and young people
- work with Government and councils to support the development and implementation of effective housing policies and programmes addressing urban renewal, affordable housing, and healthy housing.

## Other activities

*Local Government New Zealand* is involved in a wide range of other activities outside the five key areas that have been identified. As far as the activities identified and our resources permit, we will continue our involvement in these other activities, in some cases with greater reliance on the resources of Government, our member councils and the advocates of the issues themselves.

Our extensive network of sub-committees and working groups will continue to ensure the policy positions we develop are widely consulted and representative. However, an increase in the systemic issues facing local government in New Zealand, particularly in its relationship with Government and the way it is funded, will inevitably see some other issues take a lower priority.

Among the other important issues facing local government, the following have been identified for sustained attention in the 2008/09 year:

- walking access - monitoring the potential risk for councils
- weathertightness - advocacy for a responsible risk-sharing model
- Unformed Legal Roads Review – advocating for long-needed legislative change
- Public Health Bill – submission and risk management
- Food Safety Review – submission and risk management
- NPS/NES, including New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) – ongoing significant activity in this area involves policy development, participation, submissions, risk management and advocating for implementation support
- geospatial / information technology
- membership development
- Maori engagement – supporting councils in effective engagement with Maori through information and training.

## Membership support

*Local Government New Zealand* has an extensive programme of communication and support for member councils. This ensures councils are well informed of the organisation's activities and their input is captured in representations to Government.

These activities include:

- support for regular zone and sector meetings
- support for Community Boards' Executive Committee
- annual Conference in Rotorua
- ongoing communication to the sector via newsletters, website and publications
- events and workshops for policy development and best practice guidance.

## 2008/09 Budget

	Budget 2007/08	Budget 2008/09
<b>Income</b>		
Subscriptions	3,111,300	3,191,396
Project Income	1,874,000	1,261,000
Retained Conference Earnings	50,000	0
Interest	145,000	120,500
Sundry Income	27,500	43,000
Total Income	5,207,800	4,615,896
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Project Expenditure	2,431,500	1,906,200
Overheads	978,969	914,700
President/Vice President Honoraria	109,000	109,000
Staff Remuneration	1,730,000	1,740,000
Total Expenditure	5,249,469	4,669,900
<b>Operating Deficit</b>	<b>-41,669</b>	<b>-54,004</b>

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