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## Opportunities for Partnering with Pacific Councils

### Notes and Action Points from a Workshop on July 2nd at Turnbull House, Wellington

#### Welcome and introductions - Mike Reid, Chair, Local Government New Zealand

Mike welcomed those present and thanked them for making the time to attend. He noted the apologies (attached). A number of councils were keen to attend but unfortunately had to withdraw at a late stage.

Koroseta To'o opened the meeting with a karakia.

Mike outlined the background to *Local Government New Zealand's* involvement in the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF). Since the late 1990s, *Local Government New Zealand* has been working to establish connections between New Zealand and Pacific councils. It has been slowly building up, but are now seeing good progress. Mike noted the significance of Terry Parker's role in achieving this progress. The CLGF conference in Auckland in March 2007 was highlighted as key to increasing interest amongst local councils and a catalyst for this meeting.

Mike noted that this is not the only opportunity that councils have to find out about the Pacific Programme. *Local Government New Zealand* will also organise a short meeting at the July 2007 *Local Government New Zealand* conference in Dunedin for those attending. Terry will also be available to meet with interested attendees.

Action point - *Local Government New Zealand* to arrange meeting for interested parties at *Local Government New Zealand* conference and advise councils prior.

#### Introductory comments - Jenny Brash, Mayor of Porirua City Council and *Local Government New Zealand* National Councillor

Mayor Brash spoke of her experiences representing *Local Government New Zealand* at a CLGF workshop in Honiara recently, aimed at building capacity within the Honiara City Council. Mayor Brash referred to the dedication of staff and the huge challenges facing the council including waste management, roading, financial information systems, poor legislative frameworks, lack of resources and the representation of women in local government. She noted that a planner from Dunedin City Council, stayed on to work with planning staff in Honiara on their District Scheme. Key aspects of the plan for building capacity in Honiara City Council included financial management, corporate services, engineering, administrative support, waste management, health and education. Mayor Brash acknowledged the work of CLGF and NZAID in supporting the project.

## Overview of the Pacific Project - Terry Parker, Regional Adviser, Commonwealth Local Government Pacific Project

Terry provided a context for, and overview of, CLGF's Pacific Project and outlined:

- how the project works
- opportunities for councils
- what is involved
- support available

A copy of the presentation is attached and the key points are outlined below.

### *How the project works*

The Good Practice Scheme is basically a technical support initiative - linking local government practitioners in the participating councils. There are some successful partnerships already (involving Kapiti Coast and Honiara, Cairns, Townsville and Maryborough in Qld, and Orange). The programme has proven to have two way benefits - apart from assisting developing local authorities in Pacific Island countries, it also provides opportunities for management development from a global perspective for Australian/New Zealand council staff (and elected leaders if the programme is so focussed). It normally concentrates on a particular project identified by the project partners themselves. Past projects include waste management, development planning, corporate planning/institutional development, etc. However other projects have a broader dimension (such as the Honiara programme).

### *Opportunities for councils*

Terry highlighted the benefits for both councils involved in the partnerships. He referred to a study undertaken by Birmingham University which evaluated a number of similar programmes and identified a number of benefits to the UK councils (and staff) involved. Terry referred to findings of the mid term review of CLGF's Papua New Guinea Project and the type of benefits for New Zealand/Australian Council staff involved.

### *What is involved?*

The contributions expected from participating councils normally relate to provision of professional staff time and expertise - the numbers can vary according to the project, but normally include one or two focal people and others for specific activities - it is quite flexible depending on the circumstances and the level of contribution the councils and/or individuals wish to make. The projects normally have an initial span of three years, with possible extensions or additional phases if appropriate. They can start as soon as partners are identified and ready.

### *Support available*

The CLGF programme (also supported by other donors including NZAID) covers travel, accommodation and related costs. However it is up to the individual councils if they wish to contribute any other resources - this normally becomes apparent after the projects are developed.

### *Discussion and Questions*

- Q) *How can smaller councils be involved? Although they may have enthusiasm, they may not have the resources of larger councils.*

Terry noted that the key success factors include: willingness and commitment to be involved, the necessary expertise within the council, and the ability to release the necessary staff at the appropriate times. Providing councils can fulfill these factors then they are just as able to

participate as larger councils. He added that smaller councils could combine to support one Pacific Council (See also comments from Mark Dacombe below).

*Q) Do New Zealand council staff always go to the Pacific or do Pacific staff come here?*

The exchanges are two way so Pacific staff do come to visit NZ councils

## **The Broader Context for Pacific Aid and Partnership**

### **Rae Julian, New Zealand Council for International Development**

NZCID is the umbrella group for 90 NGOs in New Zealand that work internationally. They coordinate training, communications, policy and advocacy within New Zealand. They have a range of partnerships with NGOs throughout the Pacific including Pacific NGO umbrella groups.

There are around 30 NZ NGOs working in the Pacific currently, though few have many New Zealand staff on the ground. World Vision, Oxfam and Save the Children all have bases, while VSA works across the Pacific. Melanesian countries are the main focus for NGOs due to their greater need and deprivation. Work focuses on skills exchange, sustainability and partnerships, and key areas of demand include community development/income generation and education.

NZCID also work on broader issues that impact (or could impact) on poverty such as climate change, food security, and disaster relief. Throughout their work, they subscribe to the five principles of Aid Effectiveness:

1. Ownership - local ownership of initiatives
2. Harmonisation - donors work together to reduce duplication and impacts on the community
3. Alignment - of programs to local policies
4. Management for results - outcome focus
5. Accountability - mutual accountability amongst the partners.

### **Carolyn Nimmo, Development Programme Manager. NZAID**

Carolyn noted New Zealand's close links with the Pacific and the diversity of experience and wealth in the Pacific. NZAID's key areas of focus in the Pacific include governance, education, health, gender equity, children and youth. She acknowledged that some previous NZAID programs haven't worked closely enough with/within local systems.

NZAID has had budget increases in recent years, and expects to place more resources and staff in the Pacific in future. Like the NGOs, NZAID also prioritises its assistance to Melanesia, and specifically PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. It also maintains core programs in Kiribati, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu and special relationships with Tokelau, Niue and the Cook Islands.

The Government is developing a new Pacific Strategy for 2007 -2015 which reflects both the needs and interests of the Pacific community in New Zealand and the Pacific. NZAID intends to be more strategic with its aid funding in future and focus on fewer, deeper, longer programs.

## *Discussion and Questions*

*Q) If councils are looking to work with a particular country, what sort of support and information can they get for their staff, and from whom should they get it?*

It is best to talk with people from that country. In Wellington, there is the Institute of Pacific Studies which can assist in this regard.

Q) *In Waitakere there is an interest in building links between the health sector, and specifically between Waitakere and Apia hospitals. How can this best be approached?*

NZAID have a "New Zealand Agencies Fund" of \$8m per annum to which agencies can apply to undertake aid related work. This was previously (and is still on NZAID website) called the ODA Contestable Fund <http://www.nzaid.govt.nz/what-we-do/oda.html>. However this fund is currently only available to central government agencies not local government. Councils should also register their interest and projects with the desk officer for the country concerned at NZAID and MFAT so they are aware and can coordinate.

A participant noted that one of the biggest barriers to council participation can be political will and ratepayer support (or lack of). There is a need for leadership at a national level to support councils to undertake this type of work. Also the cost shouldn't be all left up to councils. If there was some support for councils from central government this could make it easier for councils to participate. Many councils have done things themselves from their own funding, but if we are to do more than piecemeal activities then some support would help.

Action point - DIA to work with Local Government New Zealand and NZAID to see if we can get the fund extended to include local government.

It was noted that Pacific Island Councillors and staff are a great resource and source of expertise in this area and we should be relating with them. Another added by saying that our strongest links and population are Polynesian, whereas the greatest needs are in Melanesia where we don't have such strong links.

**Participating in the project: a New Zealand perspective - Mark Dacombe, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, previously Chief Executive of Kapiti Coast District**

Mark Dacombe spoke about his experiences in participating in a project with Honiara City Council (HCC) over a period of two years while he was the CEO of Kapiti Coast District Council. The project arose from a need to support the rebuilding of the HCC after a period of civil unrest which effectively destroyed much of Honiara and its physical and organizational infrastructure. When the project first started, there was very little left in terms of a functioning organisation. There was no functioning plant or machinery, and very limited records left to support revenue gathering.

Terry Parker and the PNG ULLGA carried out a scoping visit in late 2004 and organised a follow up with Mark and two members of a Queensland Council attended. They spent a fortnight with the CEO, Senior Management Team and other key stakeholders. NZAID and the New Zealand High Commissioner were very keen to see progress and supported the project.

The initial focus was on the institution itself - governance and systems - and only later on the infrastructure and services. There was initially a high degree of scepticism within the council about the project, however, this was overcome overtime (particularly through the support of Terry and the New Zealand High Commissioner who was involved closely in the project). There was also a strong emphasis on partnership, it was not to be another development project where consultants come in, write a report, then disappear: it is about long term partnerships and commitments. It took a while for HCC to take ownership of the project, but once they did it really got moving, with support from NZAID who took a lead role.

Due to process requirements, it was going to take some time for NZAID to get the necessary approvals for the overall project, so Terry, Mark and the CEO of HCC came up with an interim mission to keep the project, and people's confidence, going. This required some greater input by Mark, who needed to contribute a month of time to the project. This was supported by the Mayor of Kapiti Coast. However, there was a need to build a case to gain council and community support.

Funded by NZAID and AUSAID a group of six returned and spent a month in Honiara. The team worked on solid waste management, town planning, financial management, relationship building, and supporting staff (particularly the CEO). Mark has made six trips in the past two years.

Mark spoke specifically about getting and maintaining council support in New Zealand which he noted can be quite difficult. KCDC agreed to release him for two weeks per annum. In the event this was not enough time, so he added his two weeks of Professional Development time, and some of his own annual leave. He noted the importance of making the link in councillors (and the community's) minds between stability in the Pacific and New Zealand's national interest. Feedback and support from Basil Morrison, President of *Local Government New Zealand* was also critical in increasing support within KCDC. It was difficult to argue the wider benefits early on, but the professional and personal benefits came through.

Mark finished by acknowledging that the local government structures left by the British in Honiara do not sit well with traditional structure, however they can be a good basis for service delivery. Effective service delivery (i.e. delivering the basics well) can also create the space for the community to work within local structures on wider issues.

Mark offered to speak to councillors or senior managers in councils on this subject.

### **What are New Zealand councils currently doing?**

Councils present identified their past and current initiatives:

#### **North Shore City Council**

- has recently signed MOU with Nadi Town Council and are now considering how this will be implemented
- Nadi needs parking meters and NSCC has a load of surplus ones but is having issues with its asset disposal processes
- there is interest from Nadi in support in relation to landscaping, urban design, parks and libraries.

#### **Manukau City Council**

- has 'council to country' MOUs with the Cook Islands, French Polynesia and Samoa. There has been a strong, but not exclusive, economic development focus to these
- sent staff to Tonga to support the rebuilding of Nuku'alofa
- undertook some post-disaster work in Niue
- hosted Port Moresby Councillors at the recent CLGF Conference, which has built personal links
- connections with the New Zealand Pacific Business Foundation
- Sister City relationships
- looking to develop a broader long term vision and strategy to Pacific relations.

#### **Waitakere**

- a strong focus on Pacific Community Development within Waitakere City and wider Auckland region. Developed a Pacific Economic Transformation Plan for Waitakere in partnership with Pacific communities. This could also incorporate international relationships. Looking for opportunities to link with NGOs.
- have supported countries after natural disasters.
- wanting to enhance the Sister City concept, e.g. connections between Waitakere and Apia hospitals
- would be keen to support the continuation and expansion of the Solomons/Honiara project
- linked to a network of Pacific staff in local government who could support.

#### South Waikato

- significant Maori and Pacific population in South Waikato, strong community links
- hosted delegates from recent CLGF conference
- instead of developing Sister City relationships (usually with more wealthy Asian cities), would like to look at the Pacific and explore possibilities there. Tentative at this stage, but open to possibilities.

#### Christchurch

- no international relations with Pacific nations, but want to find out more. Do have some Sister City relations elsewhere. Also want to improve engagement with local Pacific community in Christchurch.

#### Southland

- only one Sister City in Australia, no relationships with the Pacific, but want to explore this.

#### Wellington

- have a Pacific Advisor - relatively new role and has been in place one year. Not aware of any Pacific partnerships. Have a Pacific Advisory group that councils work with, and organizing the first Pacific Festival for Wellington. Keen to explore further.

#### Porirua

- has two Pacific Councillors on council, and a Pacific Forum. Do a lot in the city but want to extend internationally. Any expansion of role will probably need to happen after the local government elections in October.

### **Developing a Partnership - Terry Parker, Regional Adviser, Commonwealth Local Government Pacific Project**

Terry spoke about the current partnership opportunities possible (presentation attached), the Pacific councils interested in a partnership, key areas of interest, and the processes involved in forming a partnership.

Terry outlined the range of ways in which CLGF can support partnerships including advice, facilitation and funding. There is guaranteed funding for the PNG project, along with funding for scoping studies in other countries this year. There will be additional funding available for projects next year.

NZAID added that they will have money to invest in the Pacific and have a role in raising the profile with the New Zealand public about our responsibilities in our backyard. NZAID may be able to support councils by encouraging greater public support for these types of projects.

Mike added that local NGOs can also provide councils with grassroots community support for council activities.

### **Overview of the day**

Mike concluded the day by summarising the key themes.

Terry outlined a range of assistance available, identified specific communities that have expressed interest, and noted the support and funding that CLGF can provide. In the immediate future, funding is available to support the PNG project and scoping studies for other countries.

Rae and Carolyn outlined the key areas of focus for both NGOs and NZAID in the Pacific and the nature of support each can provide.

Mike noted that the aim of the day, and of involving the support organisations, is to remove some of the potential barriers and obstacles for councils.

1. Mike reminded the group that *Local Government New Zealand* will arrange a lunch meeting at the conference in Dunedin with Terry, Mark, and Basil Morrison so that other members will have the opportunity to learn more and ask questions about the Pacific project, on **Tuesday 17 July in the Windle Room, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Dunedin Centre at 12:30pm**. All welcome

Action point - *Local Government New Zealand* to type up notes from the day and email back to the group along with additional information requested (research, email list)

Action point - Councils are to respond to *Local Government New Zealand* within 4-6 weeks indicating an interest in principle to participate. (This does not mean councils have to commit, however it is an indication that we can start the process).

Koroseta closed the meeting with a karakia.

#### Action points arising from throughout the meeting

2. *Local Government New Zealand* to arrange meeting at Local Government New Zealand conference and advise councils prior. **Tuesday 17 July in the Windle Room, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Dunedin Centre at 12:30pm**. All welcome
3. DIA to work with *Local Government New Zealand* and NZAID to see if we can get the fund extended to include local government.
4. *Local Government New Zealand* to type up notes from the day and email back to the group along with additional information requested (research, email list)
5. Councils are to respond to Local Government New Zealand within 4-6 weeks indicating an interest in principle to participate. (This does not mean councils have to commit, however it is an indication that we can start the process).

attendees		Organisation
Alan	Bywater	Christchurch City Council
Pricilla	Agius	DIA
Warren	George	DIA
David	Ogden	Hutt City Council
Phil	Wilson	Manukau City Council
Bob	Mitchell	North Shore City Council
Roger	Matthews	North Shore City Council
Cameron	Cowan	NZAID
Charlotte	McElwee	NZAID
Matt	Halsey	NZAID
Melanee	Beatson	NZAID
Kate	Lee	NZAID
Steve	Dowall	NZAID
Neil	Sinclair	South Waikato District Council
David	Hall	South Waikato District Council
Mark	Bailey	Southland District Council
Peter	Thompson	Tasman District Council
Koroseta	To'o	Waitakere City Council

Vasi	Siohane	Wellington City Council
<b>Presenters</b>		
Terry	Parker	Commonwealth Local Government Forum, <b>Fiji</b>
Mike	Reid	<i>Local Government New Zealand</i>
Victoria	Owen	<i>Local Government New Zealand</i>
Rae	Julian	Council for International Development
Mark	Dacombe	Department Prime Minister and Cabinet
Jenny	Brash	Porirua City Council
Carolyn	Nimmo	NZAID
<b>apologies</b>		
Maureen	Crombie	Franklin District Council
Barry	Curtis	Manukau City Council
John	Forbes	Opotiki District Council
Garry	Moore	Christchurch City Council
Ken	Paterson	Northland Regional Council
Garry	Poole	Wellington City Council
Dave	Reese	Opotiki District Council
Bob	Simcock	Hamilton City council
Peta	Si'ulepa	Waitakere City Council
Lawrence	Yule	Hastings District Council



Local Government New Zealand

te pūtahi matakōkiri

## Attendees and Apologies

	First name	Surname	Role	Organisation	Email
1.	Bob	Mitchell	Councillor	North Shore City Council	<a href="mailto:Roger.Matthews@northshorecity.govt.nz">Roger.Matthews@northshorecity.govt.nz</a>
2.	Roger	Matthews	Economic Development Advisor	North Shore City Council	<a href="mailto:Roger.Matthews@northshorecity.govt.nz">Roger.Matthews@northshorecity.govt.nz</a>
3.	Phil	Wilson	Chief Advisor	Manukau City Council	<a href="mailto:erin.schumacher@manukau.govt.nz">erin.schumacher@manukau.govt.nz</a>
4.	Koroseta	To'o	Senior Analyst	Waitakere City Council	<a href="mailto:Koroseta.Too@waitakere.govt.nz">Koroseta.Too@waitakere.govt.nz</a>
5.	Neil	Sinclair	Mayor	South Waikato District Council	
6.	David	Hall	CEO	South Waikato District Council	
7.	Alan	Bywater		Christchurch City Council	<a href="mailto:Alan.bywater@ccc.govt.nz">Alan.bywater@ccc.govt.nz</a>
8.	Mark	Bailey	Senior Policy Analyst	Southland District Council	<a href="mailto:mark.bailey@southlanddc.govt.nz">mark.bailey@southlanddc.govt.nz</a>
9.	Vasi	Siohane	Advisor-Pacific Communities	Wellington City Council	<a href="mailto:vasi.siohane@wcc.govt.nz">vasi.siohane@wcc.govt.nz</a>
10.	Pricilla	Agius	Policy Advisor	DIA	<a href="mailto:Priscilla.Agius@dia.govt.nz">Priscilla.Agius@dia.govt.nz</a>
11.	Warren	George	Policy Advisor	DIA	<a href="mailto:warren.george@dia.govt.nz">warren.george@dia.govt.nz</a>
12.	Cameron	Cowan		NZAID	<a href="mailto:cameron.cowan@nzaid.govt.nz">cameron.cowan@nzaid.govt.nz</a>
13.	Charlotte	McElwee		NZAID	<a href="mailto:Charlotte.McElwee@nzaid.govt.nz">Charlotte.McElwee@nzaid.govt.nz</a>
14.	Matt	Halsey		NZAID	<a href="mailto:Matt.halsey@nzaid.govt.nz">Matt.halsey@nzaid.govt.nz</a>
15.	Melanee	Beatson		NZAID	<a href="mailto:Melanee.beatson@mfat.govt.nz">Melanee.beatson@mfat.govt.nz</a>
16.	Kate	Lee		NZAID	<a href="mailto:Kate.Lee@nzaid.govt.nz">Kate.Lee@nzaid.govt.nz</a>
17.	Mike	Reid		Local Government New Zealand	<a href="mailto:mike.reid@lgnz.co.nz">mike.reid@lgnz.co.nz</a>
18.	Victoria	Owen		Local Government New Zealand	<a href="mailto:Victoria.owen@lgnz.co.nz">Victoria.owen@lgnz.co.nz</a>

	<b>Presenters</b>					
19.	Terry	Parker	Regional Adviser,	Commonwealth Local Government Forum, <b>Fiji</b>	<a href="mailto:clgfsuva@connect.com.fj">clgfsuva@connect.com.fj</a>	
20.	Rae	Julian		Council for International Development	<a href="mailto:Rae@cid.org.nz">Rae@cid.org.nz</a>	
21.	Mark	Dacombe		Department Prime Minister and Cabinet	<a href="mailto:Mark.Dacombe@dpmc.govt.nz">Mark.Dacombe@dpmc.govt.nz</a>	
22.	Jenny	Brash	Mayor	Porirua City Council	<a href="mailto:CFotualii@pcc.govt.nz">CFotualii@pcc.govt.nz</a>	
23.	Carolyn	Nimmo		NZAID	<a href="mailto:Carolyn.nimmo@nzaid.govt.nz">Carolyn.nimmo@nzaid.govt.nz</a>	
	<b>Apologies</b>					
24.	Barry	Curtis	Mayor	Manukau City Council		
25.	Garry	Moore	Mayor	Christchurch City Council		
26.	Bob	Simcock				
27.	Ken	Paterson		Far North District Council??		
28.	Garry	Poole	CEO	Wellington City Council		
29.	John	Forbes		Opotiki District Council	<a href="mailto:JohnF@odc.govt.nz">JohnF@odc.govt.nz</a>	
30.	Dave	Reese		Opotiki District Council		
31.	Peta	Si'uilepa	Economic Development	Waitakere City Council	<a href="mailto:Peta.Si'uilepa@waitakere.govt.nz">Peta.Si'uilepa@waitakere.govt.nz</a>	
32.	Maureen	Crombie	Strategic Planning and Policy Manager	Franklin District Council	<a href="mailto:Maureen_Crombie@franklin.govt.nz">Maureen_Crombie@franklin.govt.nz</a>	
33.	Lawrence	Yule	Mayor	Hastings District Council	<a href="mailto:merrynm@hdc.govt.nz">merrynm@hdc.govt.nz</a>	
34.	Peter	Thompson	Engineering manager	Tasman District Council	<a href="mailto:robyn.scherer@tdc.govt.nz">robyn.scherer@tdc.govt.nz</a>	
35.	David	Ogden	Mayor	Hutt City Council	<a href="mailto:Lisette.Giles@huttcity.govt.nz">Lisette.Giles@huttcity.govt.nz</a>	

Whangarei?