

Report No:	RGB11-08-02
File No:	E855
Report Date:	25 July 2011

Report to: Golden Bay Community Board
Meeting Date: 9 August 2011
Report Author: Mik Symmons, Golden Bay Community Board
Subject: **RGB11-08-02** – Report Prepared for the meeting of 9 August 2011

1. Local Government New Zealand Conference 10-13 July 2011

I attended the LGNZ conference as part of the Tasman 'team', thanks to Carolyn for approaching the Mayor and to the Council for agreeing to let a Community board representative be part of the group.

The LGNZ conference brings together district and regional councillors from all over New Zealand and as well as some inspiring speakers it was a great opportunity to explore the relationship that some other councils have with their community boards and to hear what has worked and what hasn't. There was also the opportunity to talk with some industry players to highlight Golden Bay issues.

The conference was opened by John Key, who acknowledged the role of local government in building vibrant communities and leading those communities through challenging times, including the Pike River disaster and the continuing earthquakes in Canterbury. He also highlighted the potential opportunities arising from the Rugby World Cup, and the low rate rise in the Auckland region. The Auckland re-organisation was seen as a one off to speed decision making on regional issues. This was reiterated by Rodney Hide, Minister of local government who said that Auckland was not about savings but improving governance, and stressed that any other reorganisations would be driven by community not government. Current workstreams include better aligning local and central government decision making, whether Unitary Authorities are a better model into the future, and growth of shared services, for example GIS systems and procurement agreements.

Phil Twyford the opposition spokesperson on local government was less complimentary about the success of the Auckland re-organisation, however this was challenged by local board members. He also stated that there were no plans from labour to instigate any local body amalgamations.

Celia Wade-Brown the Mayor of Wellington gave a thought-provoking address about creating “liveable cities”, the diverse population that Wellington now has and the challenges of competing globally.

2. Keynote Presentations

Brett O’Reilly CEO NZICT group (represents 300 Hi tech and ICT companies)

- Broad band is transforming NZ
- 2/3 of Kiwi Bank’s 900,000 customers bank on line
- The companies represented by NZICT turnover 10 billion dollars, with over 5 billion of export sales, ICT exports now second to Fonterra.
- Average wage 90k , three times that of the tourism sector
- Now possible to be a “one person multinational”
- Need a knowledge workforce

Mellisa Clark-Reynolds (Entrepreneur runs an on-line game community with over 250,000 members)

- Member of Government advisory group on Green Growth
- Green businesses can make good money
- NZ is small so we need to collaborate
- Providing services via the net is smart business, Farmville (On line game hosted on Facebook is bigger than Fonterra!)
- NZ is becoming poorer relative to the rest of the world, as is Australia
- The service economy makes us poorer – ‘what did you export today?’
- The knowledge economy needs people who can think rather than people who know stuff
- You can create real value in the world rather than growth out of debt and consumption
- High priced quality food is a niche we are suited to, but need to be aware of whole supply chain
- Four challenges –Energy security, food security, globalisation, climate change.

3. Workshops

3.1 I also attended a workshop Dr Ganesh Nana (BERL economist) & Dickie Farrar on realising Maori potential (from an economic perspective) and the importance of building effective working relationships between Maori and Local Government.

- 3.2 Presentation from Bill Perry CEO of Fulton Hogan on the challenges of managing an organisation in the aftermath of the Canterbury quake when many of their staff were also affected by the quake.
- 3.3 Three consecutive presentations on ultra fast broadband with case studies from Hamilton and Dunedin on developing digital strategies for their communities. The buzzword is “weightless technology”.
- 3.4 Harry Verhaar from Phillips Lighting gave a very interesting presentation on energy efficient LED lighting in a world where 19% of global electricity consumption is for lighting, 75% of this electricity is used in non residential buildings and streets, and 70% of the world population will live in cities by 2050. Also how as a company they have had to move from Extract – Consume – Dispose to looking at lifecycle value.

As always it was the people connections that were important, I was able to talk with Crown Fibre holdings about the boundary anomaly with the school broadband in Takaka, and the CEO of Fulton Hogan about the great work the Fulton Hogan team do in Golden Bay, especially in dealing with floods and slips.

It was also very interesting to get a range of views on delegations for community boards. Central Otago has extensive delegations, with the boards able to recommend expenditure that covers about 50% of the rates, the downside of this is that they also have to cover major infrastructure upgrades, Cromwell is currently wrestling with how to upgrade their sewerage system, and the short answer is they can't afford it.

The Wanaka model seemed to me to have a lot going for it, this is a collaborative model that enables local decisions to be signed off locally, and involves the board in working closely with department managers to ensure community priorities and concerns are considered.

It is clear that an agreement about delegated responsibilities is dependent on the skills of the board members and the relationship between them, and also the relationship between board members, councils and staff.

Further notes on the presentations are available on the LGNZ website lgnz.co.nz

Mik Symmons