



Report 07.530
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Committee Council
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Chairman's Report

A less “busy” period since the last report meant I have had some time to devote to larger national and regional issues, particularly around sustainable land management and transport “Next Steps”. I have also been able to take a winter break to attend a few courses in sunny Queensland.

1. LGNZ National Conference and Regional Tour

The conference was held in Dunedin this year and the Regional Council delegates were hosted by Southland and Otago for three days prior to the conference. We were favoured by a great spell of fine weather (if very cold!) visiting and discussing a wide range of issues facing these councils. As a brief interlude, we were able to visit Milford Sound. This is a marvellous part of the country that I have only had a very brief acquaintance with in the past so really enjoyed the opportunity to interact with my RAC colleagues over issues in common and different approaches and solutions.

The LGNZ conference itself was very well organised and a good interactive programme provided for the second year in a row. The new (2006) approach has been well received by delegates as there is much more opportunity for structured discussion and interaction over issues raised by keynote speakers. All of the main papers and political speeches are on the LGNZ website for those that may be interested. Councillor Laidlaw attended from Greater Wellington and may wish to enlighten councillors on his impressions.

2. Sustainable Land Management

Progress on national policy settings in flood risk management, water, climate change adaptation and sustainable land use is steady but not spectacular. The NPS on flood risk is currently being drafted by MfE and its counterpart in water management is not far from the drafting stage. Local government continues to be closely involved in this policy preparation through committees established by the Regional Affairs Committee. As was expected, real engagement between central and local government, as opposed to last minute

consultation, means initial timeframes are not going to be achieved. The NPS provisions will be much more workable and achievable for this process.

Greater Wellington is setting up to provide real leadership in the implementation of sustainable land management through a Total Catchment Management (TCM) approach. Toward this end Greater Wellington is, as councillors are aware, engaging with our hill country farming community in a way that should see that component of catchment management gain significant traction over the next year or so. The first step on this partnership development is the establishment of a Wairarapa Hill Country Advisory Committee that is the subject of a paper to Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee. I commend this paper to councillors and look forward to real progress being led by Greater Wellington in this field.

3. Bioworks

It is a matter of public record that our Bioworks Unit, established primarily to achieve AHB bovine Tb contracts, has not performed as well as might have been expected. Councillors have had previous information on this, and there has been considerable public interest, particularly from the Wairarapa. The Council executive has worked through this issue and RSW Committee resolved to continue with a re-vamped Unit, subject to satisfactory conclusion of negotiations with AHB. This decision has been welcomed by Wairarapa farmers who would otherwise have been faced with significant disruption to the vector control programme, and possible set-back in the fight against bovine Tb. It may be some time before private sector operators are available to meet the AHB contracts' programme.

4. "Next Steps"

A lot of discussions about where this is leading in terms of future planning and structures in the transport area. Councillor McDavitt's transport conference report to councillors outlines some of the issues faced by the sector. Timeframes to influence central government thinking are very short, with the signalled intent to have legislation in the House in September and passed before the end of the year. One of the key components is the nature of regional structures (RLTC model vs Joint Committee model). The latter is fraught with difficulties that may lead to real problems not foreseen by policymakers. LGNZ is strongly favouring a revamp of RLTC membership to better reflect accountabilities in the local and regional transport spends. Meetings are set with the Minister of Transport next week to ensure local government concerns are on the table. More about this as it progresses.

5. Meetings other than GW

Regional Leaders' Forum
Mayoral Forum
RAHAC (Regional Animal Health Advisory Committee)
Chamber of Commerce lunch
Tour and lunch on RNZN *Canterbury*

Launch – Dowse/Petone interchange project
South Wairarapa District Council – Lower Valley Scheme rates
Mayor Prendergast
Rangitane CEO Hone Hurihanganui – Ara Tahī matters
Go Wairarapa business breakfast
Property Council (Wellington) - WRS progress
Zoo visit with Denise Church, Chair of the Zoo Trust – Education opportunities

6. Recommendations

That the Council:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the content of the report.***

Report prepared by:

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