

Priority Routine

THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Te Tari Taiwhenua

Local Government Briefing

Hon Rodney Hide
Minister of Local Government

Copy to: Hon John Carter
Associate Minister of Local Government

Title: Aide memoire for meeting with Waitakere City Mayor Bob Harvey, Deputy Mayor Penny Hulse, and Chief Executive Vijaya Vaidynath

Date: 21 May 2009

Key Issues

This aide memoire provides information for your meeting on 25 May 2009 with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Chief Executive, of Waitakere City Council.

Action sought

Note the contents of the attached aide memoire.

Timeframe

24 May 2009

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone		Suggested first contact
		direct line	after hours	
Caroline Taylor	Manager (Cities and Regions)	04 495 9426	021 936 819	✓
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DMS file reference: PLG-1765-13/1-1687574DA
Ministerial database reference: LGC200901631


Caroline Taylor
Manager (Cities and Regions)
Local Government & Community Policy

Aide memoire for meeting on 25 May 2009 with Waitakere City Council representatives

- This aide memoire provides background information for your meeting with Waitakere City Mayor Bob Harvey, Deputy Mayor Penny Hulse, and Chief Executive Vijaya Vaidynath.
- Biographical details on attendees sourced from the Waitakere City Council's website, "Scoop" independent news, and The Global Indian online magazine are attached as **Annex One**.

Background information

- Mayor Harvey wrote to you on 2 April and 22 April 2009 about Auckland governance. Deputy Mayor Hulse wrote to you on behalf of the Waitakere, North Shore and Manukau City Councils and the Papakura, Rodney and Franklin District Councils on 2 April 2009 also about Auckland governance.
- Mayor Harvey has also released media statements and been quoted in various media since the report of the Royal Commission report on Auckland governance's (the Royal Commission report) was released.
- This information forms the basis of the information listed below.

Auckland governance issues

- Mayor Harvey believes that the Royal Commission report should form the basis for the future of local government in Auckland.

Community Assets

- Mayor Harvey is concerned that community assets including theatres, parks and stadiums could be "flogged off" by the new Auckland Council. He has suggested placing these assets in community trusts and has called on other councils to join him.
- Given the Local Government (Auckland Reorganisation) Bill is expected to be law by the meeting date, any Auckland councils wanting to dispose of assets will first have to seek the approval of the Auckland Transition Agency.
- The Department of Internal Affairs was informed that a meeting of the Waitakere City Council was to take place on Friday 15 May 2009. Budget decisions were to be made at this meeting that could potentially undermine the transition agency and the future Auckland Council. Chief Executive Brendan Boyle contacted the Council's Chief Executive Vijaya Vaidyanath who told him that she would stop this meeting and investigate the matter further.

Representation

- Mayor Harvey has stated that all councillors on the Auckland Council should be elected from wards, not at large. Mayor Harvey believes this will enable the communities' concerns to be heard in a transparent and democratic manner.
- He has also stated that the 20-30 Local Boards mean that the Auckland Council will not be able to meaningfully engage with local issues as they will be too numerous and diffuse. He is also concerned that Local Boards will lack influence without the ability to raise their own revenue.

- There is also concern about the lack of Māori representation in the new Auckland Council.

Infrastructure

- Governance of water supply is seen as a critical issue. Mayor Harvey has suggested the appointment of a "water ombudsmen" or some other form of regulation to ensure the monopoly supply is best value/price delivered and he supports the retention of water in public ownership.
- Storm water management is seen to lie with local land use and Mayor Harvey believes this should be governed at a local level.
- In her letter on behalf of the six councils Deputy Mayor Hulse stated support for the Regional Transport Authority to be implemented. The letter also recognised the need to work with central government towards a resolution to transport issues.

Transition costs

- Both Mayor Harvey and Deputy Mayor Hulse noted in their correspondence that the cost of reform is beyond the capacity of ratepayers to pay and that funding shortfalls should be covered by central government.
- The Council used the Royal Commission's figures to come up with a cost of \$550 per ratepayer for the restructuring of Auckland governance. The \$550 figure is speculative and ignores predicted savings from moving to a unitary Auckland Council. Detailed costings have not yet been done as final decisions on the shape of Auckland's future governance have not been made.

Further information

- A telephone survey undertaken by Phoenix Research Limited of 401 Waitakere residents done between 17 and 20 April 2009 showed 47 per cent oppose the amalgamation of Auckland's councils. Mayor Harvey is encouraging people to make submissions on the Local Government (Auckland Council) Bill once the Select Committee calls for submissions.
- Mayor Harvey has stated that he will run for the Auckland Council, but he has not yet decided if he will run for Mayor or as a Councillor.

Unrelated to Government decisions on Auckland Governance

Proactively Released by the Minister of Local Government
Unrelated to Government decisions on Auckland Governance

Noted

signed by the Hon Rodney Hide

Hon Rodney Hide
Minister of Local Government

/ /2009

Annex One



Bob Harvey QSO, JP
Mayor

Bob Harvey has been Mayor of Waitakere City since 1992. He is the current Chair of the Local Government New Zealand Metropolitan Mayors' Sector, and former chair of the Auckland Mayoral Forum.

Mayor Harvey has been seminal in a number of ground-breaking initiatives, including the "eco city" concept, and establishing the first Maori Standing Committee, Te Taumata Runanga. He has also been instrumental in moves to permanently protect, by law and by Parliamentary legislation, the Waitakere Ranges from over development and subdivision.



Penny Hulse
Deputy Mayor

Penny Hulse has fifteen years' experience on the Council. She is currently Chair of the Policy and Strategy Committee, and a member of the Waitakere Community Board and Finance and Operation Committee.

She is married with two sons and is involved in a variety of community organisations including being patron of Waitakere Special Olympics, a trustee of the Waitakere Anti Violence Essential Services and the West Auckland Hospital Foundation Group.



Vijaya Vaidyanath
Chief Executive

Vijaya has been with the Council since March 2008. She was previously Chief Executive of Rodney District Council and has worked at both the South Taranaki District Council and the Palmerston North City Council.

She has an MBA from the University of Pittsburgh and is a Senior Executive Fellow of Harvard University. She was born in Chennai, India, and studied in the United States. She then returned to India to work before she and her husband moved to New Zealand in 1994.

Proactively Released by the Minister of Local Government