

THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Te Tari Taiwhenua

## Local Government Briefing

Hon Rodney Hide  
Minister of Local Government

Title: Meeting with the New Zealand Recreation Association

Date: 6 May 2009

### Key issues

You are speaking at the New Zealand Recreation Association seminar on 11 May 2009. This aide memoire provides you with brief background notes and draft speech notes for the seminar.

### Action sought

Note the contents of the attached aide memoire and draft speech notes.

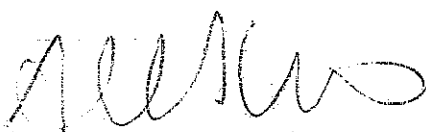
### Timeframe

8 May 2009

### Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone		Suggested first contact
		direct line	after hours	
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## Aide memoire for the New Zealand Recreation Association seminar on 11 May 2009

### *Purpose*

- You are speaking at a New Zealand Recreation Association (NZRA) seminar in Newmarket on 11 May 2009.
- You are scheduled to speak for 20-30 minutes from 3:30pm. This will be followed by a question and answer session from 4:00-4:30pm.
- Draft speech notes and potential questions and answers are attached.

### *What is the New Zealand Recreation Association?*

- The NZRA is a not-for-profit organisation that promotes recreation and provides professional services to the recreation sector. NZRA works with people and organisations associated with all aspects of recreation, leisure, parks, open space management, aquatics, conservation and sport delivery.
- On its website the NZRA states that it represents policy makers, territorial local authorities, voluntary organisations, regional sports trusts, commercial leisure providers, recreation planners, facility managers, programme and event managers, contractors and suppliers, and community arts leaders and practitioners.
- The Board has eight members and the current President is John Latimer.

### *Attendees*

- Organisers estimate that 70 to 100 people will attend the seminar. The majority will be parks and recreation facility officers and managers from local government. Some general managers with responsibility for parks and recreation will be attending.
- The seminar is primarily for the Auckland/Northland region, however, there will be a small number of attendees from other regions, who are interested in the impacts of Auckland governance reforms on the recreation sector.
- Representatives from the not-for-profit and private sectors will also be in attendance.

### *Issue of most interest*

- The NZRA is interested in the design of the new Auckland Council. In particular, the NZRA is interested in opportunities, which changes to Auckland governance may provide, for improving recreation and park services in Auckland.

Noted

seen by the Hon Rodney Hide

Hon Rodney Hide  
Minister of Local Government

## Draft speech notes for New Zealand Recreation Association 11 May 2009

### Royal Commission of Inquiry - summary of the Government's decisions

#### ***Auckland governance structure***

- There will be one Auckland Council as the first tier of Auckland governance.
- There will be one Mayor for Auckland with governance powers, elected 'at large' by the region's residents and ratepayers
- There will be 20 Councillors. Eight will be elected at large. Twelve will be elected from wards – the boundaries of which will be determined by the Local Government Commission.

#### ***'At large' and 'ward councillors'***

- Having members elected 'at large' provides:
  - electors with a much wider choice of candidates;
  - more diverse representation (including representation for minority interests which might be spread across a district) and rural representation;
  - it accentuates that an elected councillor's role is to represent the interests of the entire Auckland region – not just to represent ward constituents; and
  - it means that half of the Auckland Councillors would be elected from the same people that elected the Mayor.
- The councillors elected 'at large' will be balanced by 12 councillors elected from wards. This will ensure that local community interests and needs are represented on the Council.
- All elected members of the Auckland Council would need to act in the interests of the region.

#### ***Local Boards***

- There will be 20-30 second tier local boards, made up of between 125-150 local board members.
- Local board members will have more powers than the current community boards in Auckland, but will not be able to raise their own revenue or hire staff.
- The role of local boards will be to advocate for their communities and make purely local decisions.

- Details of the number of boards and their boundaries, as well as the boundaries of the Auckland Council and the wards within the Council, will be made by the Local Government Commission.

### **Planning**

- There will be an integrated approach to all Auckland Council planning.
- This will involve a single long-term council community plan (LTCCP) for the Auckland Council.
- This will save money and reduce duplication of roles.
- The LTCCP will be given effect to in a statutory Regional Infrastructure Investment Plan and an Auckland Spatial Plan.
- These plans will be given effect to in a Transport Plan, Regional Policy Statement, and the District Plan.

### **Transport and water**

- There will be an improved and simplified transport approach and one water and wastewater provider.

### **Economic development**

- If Auckland's economy thrives, New Zealand's economy thrives. That's why the Government is determined to set up governance arrangements that enhance the productivity and competitiveness of Auckland's businesses.
- The Government's decisions are designed to help Auckland perform well as the engine for New Zealand's economic growth and prosperity.
- The region's facilities need to be operated to maximise economic development, tourism and events.
- All regional assets, including museums, stadiums, parks, and entertainment and exhibition venues, will be transferred to Auckland Council.

### **Next steps**

- Over the next few weeks the Prime Minister, John Carter and I will continue to actively engage with the people of Auckland, Mayors and businesses to ensure their voices are heard and to garner their thoughts and ideas.
- I will shortly introduce legislation to create an Establishment Board to manage the transition to the new structures.
- I will also be making appointments to the Board soon.

- Ministers will continue to make decisions in the next few months and there will be further legislation introduced this year.
- The transition will largely be completed by October 2010.

### **Other Local Government issues**

#### ***Long-term council community plans***

- Many councils have expressed concerns to me about the current long-term council community plan process. These include:
  - the cost of preparing and auditing LTCCPs;
  - that over-consultation is occurring causing "submission fatigue" for ratepayers;
  - that the community outcomes process is being used to extend councils' roles beyond core services; and
  - that consultation processes are unduly increasing the influence of pressure groups.
- While the Local Government Act 2002 emphasises the need for transparency and accountability in local government, in practice, few new mechanisms have been introduced to apply those principles.
- The transparency principle has resulted in much more information being disclosed, but arguably without sufficient attention being paid to its relevance and usefulness.
- The Department of Internal Affairs is monitoring the draft LTCCPs that are being released and I am expecting to receive a briefing shortly that identifies the major trends in the sector.

#### ***Transparency, accountability and financial management***

- I am also focusing on council decision-making, transparency, accountability and financial management
- The local government sector is co-operative by nature, rather than competitive.
- An important issue for the sector is to share ideas and methods to improve efficiency and service delivery

- Councils can also improve efficiency and outcomes using other methods, for example, by entering into shared service agreements. The shared service department of the Rangitikei District Council and Manawatu District Council is a good example of rural districts collaborating to provide core services to ratepayers where required.

### **Rates**

- Since I became Minister of Local Government, I have received hundreds of letters from concerned ratepayers about the cost of rates and council services.
- I appreciate the challenges you face in providing services to ratepayers within the limited resources available to you.
- However, in my view there needs to be effective communication and clear information about the costs involved with projects. There needs to be clarity about the impact costs will have on ratepayers, for there to be a true mandate for councils' actions.
- In the current economic climate it is particularly important for councils to exercise financial prudence and spend ratepayers' money wisely.

### **Resource Management Act**

- With respect to regulatory reform, I am focused on working with my colleagues to streamline the Resource Management Act 1991, and other legislation wherever possible.
- These changes will help to simplify consent processes and reduce costs and delays for councils and ratepayers.

## Potential questions and answers

### Question about representation

- The mechanisms in the Local Electoral Act 2001 allow for Māori representation.
- A poll to determine the level of support for Māori wards or constituencies could be run at the 2010 local elections.
- The local community board members and ward councillors will advocate for local residents and communities.

### How will the boundaries for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> tiers be determined?

- Decisions on the boundaries of the Auckland region will be made by the Local Government Commission in time for the local elections in 2010.
- This would include the Auckland Council's boundaries, the wards within that and the boundaries and number of local boards.
- Twenty to 30 local boards would provide for a ratio between one local board for every 70,000 people (20 local boards), to one local board for every 47,000 people (for 30 local boards)

### How would the relationship between the Auckland Council wards and the local boards work?

- The relationship between local boards and Auckland Council wards, will need careful consideration.
- The primary role of the local boards will be to advocate for their local communities
- The primary role of the ward member would be to act in the interests of the region, however in so doing, they will have the important role of being a conduit for information from the local boards to the Auckland Council's decision-making processes.
- This may mean that the Local Government Commission, in determining Local Board and ward boundaries, would seek to ensure, to the extent possible, that ward boundaries encompassed, or were co-terminus with, local board boundaries.

**Why is the Government rushing the implementation of its decisions?**

- Significant decisions for Auckland have to be made before next year's local authority elections. Doing nothing is not an option for this Government.
- The legislative process I have outlined today will get Auckland there. It will provide a strong platform for greater Auckland and New Zealand to thrive.

**How can we be involved in the transition process?**

- You may wish to be involved in the Select Committee process. In doing so, I recommend you collaborate and share ideas as much as possible.
- I strongly encourage you to share ideas and collaborate during the transition phase.
- While I'm sure you will have local interests, it will be important to maintain a regional perspective.

Proactively Released by the Minister of Local Government