

THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Te Tari Taiwhenua

Local Government Briefing

Hon Rodney Hide
Minister of Local Government

Title: Aide memoire for the Committee for Auckland symposium

Date: 30 April 2009

Key issues

You are speaking at the Committee for Auckland symposium on 5 May 2009. This aide memoire provides you with brief background notes and draft speech notes for the meeting.

Action sought

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

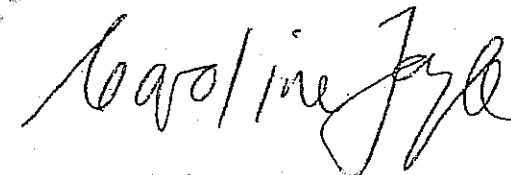
Timeframe

4 May 2009

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone		Suggested first contact
		direct line	after hours	
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DMS file reference: PLG-1779-10 Doc 1668354DA
Ministerial database reference: LGC200901351



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

Aide memoire for the Committee for Auckland symposium on 5 May 2009

Purpose

- You are scheduled to speak for 15 minutes at the Committee for Auckland symposium at the Sky City Convention Centre, Auckland, on Tuesday 5 May 2009 at 8am. This will be followed by a brief question and answer session.

What is the Committee for Auckland?

- On its website the Committee for Auckland describes itself as 'a not-for-profit organisation set up to contribute to making Auckland one of the world's great places to live and work'.
- The Committee for Auckland is an independent alliance of corporate directors and chief executives, tertiary sector, not-for-profit leaders, and mayors.
- The Committee for Auckland draws on the ideas, skills, resources, and influence of its members to:
 - accelerate progress on urban issues to strengthen private-public alliances, and work across sectors;
 - provide independent, well-researched work on key issues;
 - draw on the best demonstrated practices within New Zealand and overseas; and
 - highlight key issues and influence urban leaders in order to make progress.
- The chair of the Committee is Dr Sir Ron Carter KNZM. The Board includes representatives from organisations such as Simpson Grierson, Deloitte and Massey University.

The symposium

- The symposium will include facilitated workshops designed to discuss proposed changes to Auckland governance and ideas for making a successful transition.
- There will be approximately 70 attendees from the public and private sectors at the symposium.
- The Committee for Auckland is enthusiastic about the Royal Commission of Inquiry and would like to assist the transition process as much as possible.

Noted

seen by the Hon Rodney Hide

Hon Rodney Hide
Minister of Local Government

Draft speech notes for the Committee for Auckland symposium on 5 May 2009

Why the Government is acting on the Royal Commission of Inquiry's report

- Auckland is the engine for the country's economic growth.
- Local government has a significant role in enabling growth and prosperity through its decision-making structures and policies.
- The Royal Commission on Auckland Governance found many of the things holding Auckland back related to the way the region is run.
- The Government is therefore acting on the Commission's findings in order to provide a strong platform for greater Auckland and New Zealand to thrive.

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 the 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.

The waterfront

- The Government supports the establishment of a Waterfront Development Agency to address the fragmented approach to developing the waterfront and central city.
- There will not be a separate community board for the waterfront and central city area.
- The Government is still considering the options for a Waterfront Development Agency and announcements will be made soon.

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.

Expectations of the Auckland Council mayor

- Auckland needs strong regional leadership to help it realise its potential and provide a united voice.
- Creating a single Auckland Council with one mayor will enable simpler and stronger management of council services throughout the region. It will also simplify the relationship with central Government.
- The mayor of Auckland will be elected by the people of Auckland at the local elections in 2010.
- The elected mayor of Auckland will preside over the council and have additional powers to other New Zealand mayors, including the power to:
 - appoint the deputy mayor;
 - appoint committee chairs;
 - propose the budget and strategic direction; and
 - establish and maintain a mayoral office.
- The mayor will have a vision for Auckland and be expected to chart and lead an agenda for the region. However, all policy will need the approval of the 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.
- 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.

Building Act and Resource Management Act reviews

- With respect to regulatory reform, I am pleased to advise that my colleagues are continuing to work on streamlining the Resource Management Act 1991 and the Building Act 2004.
- These changes will help to simplify consent processes and reduce costs and delays for councils and ratepayers.

Potential questions and answers

What can we do to assist 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.

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 1st and 2nd 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.

Proactively Released by the Minister of Local Government