

REPORT TO MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT - 14 AUGUST 2009

Introduction

The Auckland Transition Agency (ATA), set up under the Local Government (Tamaki Makaurau Reorganisation) Act 2009, came together on 1 July 2009 at premises in Newmarket in Auckland. It is required to "plan and manage" the transition from the existing local government structure in Auckland to the new Auckland Council.

The focus of the ATA is on the processes required to establish the Auckland Council. Tasks have been divided into work streams to ensure the timeline is met. The ATA is also required to consider certain spending decisions submitted by existing local councils during the transition period.

The Board of the ATA was announced by the Government in May 2009. A small team is now working for the ATA on decisions, work streams and Board support. This team includes some employees seconded from the current councils and council organisations.

Report of the Agency for the six weeks from 1 July 2009 – 14 August 2009

Prior to 1 July 2009

- ⇒ Some of the agency staff were involved in reviewing the Long Term Council Community Plans as required under Section 20 of the Act and after consideration by the board, all the LTCCPs were confirmed. This confirmation was subject to a number of conditions particular to each council.

1 July – 14 August 2009

- ⇒ The Project Management Office has compiled documentation which sets out the work streams for the agency to manage the process going forward. The project plan has been discussed with the Chief Executives of the Auckland councils and no substantive issues were raised. The plan is nearing completion, though it should be noted that, due to the nature of the project, it will be subject to ongoing development and refinement.
- ⇒ Following the project plan discussions, a set of 'discovery of information' questions for the eight Auckland councils have been designed and will be sent to councils in the week of 17 – 21 August. These discovery requests will seek information from councils regarding their current assets and liabilities, operations, funding etc. to enable the agency to form a view on what exists within the region and then to determine the way forward for the new Auckland Council. It will also assist the agency in determining the 'day one' deliverables for the new council and the refinement of the project plan.
- ⇒ A website for the ATA – www.ata.govt.nz – has been established and contains information about the processes, team, work stream activity, the new Auckland Council. It has links to the Government's Making Auckland Greater website and to relevant legislation. Following discussion with the ATA, councils have provided links from their own intranet home pages for ease of access by council staff. There have been regular meetings between ATA representatives and council staff as work stream activity takes place.

- ⇒ There has been interest from Auckland and national media in the work of the ATA. There has been coverage of transition issue in print (NZ Herald, community newspapers, business publications and Sunday newspapers), online and on radio and TV.
- ⇒ The RFP for the Interim Chief Executive has been issued to commence the process of appointment as required under Section 17 of the Act. It is posted on the government's tenders website www.gets.govt.nz as well as the ATA site.
- ⇒ The RFP for the Electoral Officer for the 2010 triennial general elections will be issued next week as required under Section 14 of the Act.
- ⇒ The ROI for the provision of services will be placed next week. A general, rather than topic specific ROI process is being used as it is not yet clear in which areas external service provision will be required.
- ⇒ Work is underway on the possibility of creating a single debt office for councils to operate between now and 1 November 2010
- ⇒ Information on the third Bill is being collected for transmittal to DIA at the appropriate time.
- ⇒ There have been a number of meetings with Ministers on the purchase of Queens Wharf. The board gave approval to Ports of Auckland and ARC for their respective transactions as part of this purchase.
- ⇒ There have been a series of meetings with the Minister of Transport on the formation of a Regional Transport Agency. A paper is being prepared by the Ministry of Transport which will go to Cabinet shortly. Following Cabinet's approval, the agency will work towards whichever structure is agreed to.
- ⇒ The agency has processed and confirmed 73 requests from councils submitted under Section 31.
- ⇒ A budget is being finalised for presentation to the board of the agency on the 26th August 2009 prior to it being submitted to you and the Minister of Finance.

General Comment

The agency has had discussions with the DIA on budgets and accommodation. Their cooperation has been appreciated.


Mark Ford
Executive Chairman

Proactively Released by the Minister of Local Government