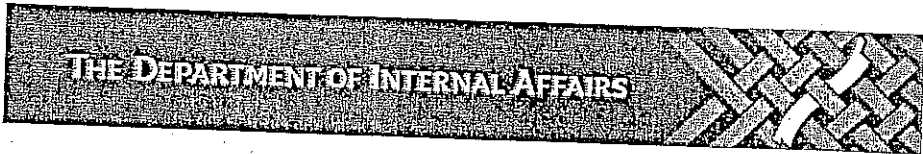


Priority Urgent



Te Tari Taiwhenua

# Local Government Briefing

Hon Rodney Hide  
Minister of Local Government

Title: Briefing and talking points for meeting with Auckland Mayoral Forum on 22 January 2009

Date: 20 January 2009

<b>Key issues</b>
This paper provides you with background to the Auckland Mayoral Forum and talking points for your meeting on Thursday 22 January.

<b>Action sought</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Note the contents of this briefing.	Wednesday 21 January

### Contact for telephone discussion (if required)

Name	Position	Telephone		Suggested first contact
		direct line	after hours	
Lesa Kalapu	Manager (Ministerial Advice)	494 0543	027 210 0194	
Marjyn Little	Director Policy	494 0589	021 228 8118	✓

Return to: Melanie Gregg, Level 7, 46 Waring Taylor Street  
DMS file reference: PLG-1765-16/2 Doc 1547360DA  
Ministerial database reference: LGC200900008

Released by the Minister of Local Government

### Purpose of briefing

1. You are attending the Auckland Mayoral Forum (the Forum) with the Prime Minister on Thursday 22 January 2009 at 2:30pm at the Mayoral Boardroom, Auckland Town Hall.
2. This briefing provides you with background notes and talking points for the Forum. The agenda and a list of the attendees are attached as Annex A. Points to note and talking points are attached as Annex B.

### Background information

3. Historically, the Forum has been an important point of contact between central and Auckland local government. It has provided an opportunity for Mayors in the Auckland region and Ministers to meet to discuss issues of common interest and co-ordinate responses.
4. The Forum has taken different forms over the years. Members of the Forum used to meet monthly. However, during the last year the Regional Sustainable Development Forum (RSDF) has come into being as a committee of the Auckland Regional Council. The advent of the RSDF has impacted on the need for the Forum to meet. Forum meetings do not operate under the Local Government Act 2002 meeting provisions and are not attended by the public or the media.

### Comment

5. This meeting will be the first formal opportunity for the Prime Minister and yourself to meet with the Mayors and Chief Executives of Auckland councils to discuss local government issues. We expect that the meeting will be a reasonably informal occasion, with the Prime Minister and yourself speaking to the agenda items.
6. The recently appointed Chair of the Forum is Penny Webster, Mayor of Rodney District Council. The focus of the discussion will be on the Royal Commission Inquiry into Auckland Governance, and how the Government will respond to the report, the role of local government in general, legislative reform, and leaky buildings. Each of these issues is covered in Annex B.
7. We have consulted the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in preparing these talking points.

### Recommendation

8. The recommendation is that you note the contents of this briefing.



Marilyn Little  
Director Policy  
Local Government & Community

Hon Rodney Hide  
Minister of Local Government

## Annex A: Auckland Mayoral Forum Draft Agenda

Date: Thursday 22 January 2009

Time: 2:30pm

Location: Mayoral Boardroom, Auckland Town Hall.

Item	Topic
Item 1	Royal Commission - how does the Prime Minister view this?
Item 2	Where does the Government see local government in general terms (eg overall role)?
Item 3	Legislation - does the Government propose any more/less (eg ease up on the Building Act, anything to reduce the cost of local government), again, in particular, where does it see Auckland?
Item 4	Leaky buildings
Item 5	Any other business

### List of attendees

Prime Minister John Key	
<b>Mayors</b>	<b>Council</b>
Penny Webster	Rodney District & Chair Auckland Mayoral Forum
John Banks	Auckland City
Len Brown	Manukau City
Andrew Williams	North Shore City
Calum Penrose	Papakura District
Michael Lee	Auckland Regional Council
<b>Deputy Mayors</b>	
Penny Hulse	Waitakere City
Murray Kay	Franklin District
<b>Chief Executives</b>	
David Rankin	Auckland City
Peter Winder	Auckland Regional Council
Leigh Auton	Manukau City
John Brockies	North Shore City
Rodger Kerr-Newell	Rodney District
Vijaya Vaidyanath	Waitakere City
Sally Davis	Franklin District
Theresa Stratton	Papakura District
Brendan Boyle	Department of Internal Affairs

## Annex B: Points to note and talking points

### Item 1. Royal Commission - how does the Prime Minister view this?

#### Points to note

- On Thursday 15 January, the *New Zealand Herald* published an article stating that the Royal Commission's report would recommend a single "super-city" for the whole of the Auckland Region, with an executive Mayor. The Mayor of Auckland City has supported the single city idea. In the article, Len Brown, Mayor of Manukau City, said that Manukau would be "buried" by a super-city. An associated article discussed possible contenders for a regional mayoral position among existing local government leaders in Auckland.
- An article was also published in the *New Zealand Herald* on Friday 16 January suggesting that the Prime Minister is in support of change and that the status quo is not a long-term feasible option for Auckland.
- The Royal Commission has issued a press release describing the Herald article from 15 January as speculative and unhelpful. The press release also highlights the publication of the Royal Commission's summary of the approximately 3,500 submissions it received.

#### Government position on inquiry

- The Royal Commission of Inquiry on Auckland Governance (RCoI) was established by the previous Government. All Government parties are on record as accepting that there is a problem and a need for change to achieve more effective governance in Auckland. The National Party pre-election position indicated an intention to consult further on the RCoI's recommendations.

#### Auckland local government view

- All Auckland local authorities accept the need for some change although there are differing views on whether, how much, and what form of institutional restructuring is required.
- Auckland local authorities have put considerable effort into submissions and other engagement with the RCoI.
- The RCoI process has been a catalyst to motivate Auckland councils to prove they have capacity to work together better, eg through the One Plan process.
- As the RCoI report becomes imminent, uncertainty and distraction from governance and business as usual is becoming greater. This is likely to increase.
- The implementation of Government decisions in respect of RCoI recommendations will take time. It is important that good governance continues over this period, in respect of both business as usual and key decisions, such as infrastructure investment, and Rugby World Cup preparations.

#### Talking points

- The Government agrees that Auckland governance needs to be improved. There is a limit to what can be achieved through cooperation and collaboration, despite the efforts and achievements of existing councils.
- The Government is preparing for consideration of the RCoI's report. It recognises that the RCoI process has involved a lot of effort from a huge range of stakeholders, including local authorities. It is reassuring that there is a widespread commitment to improving outcomes for Auckland, and hence for New Zealand. It is inevitable that there are diverse views of how this is best achieved.

- Consideration of the RCol's recommendations will need to reflect a range of factors beyond those in its terms of reference, including the immediate economic situation and this Government's policy priorities in relevant areas such as the Resource Management Act 1991 and infrastructure.
- The Government recognises, however, the need to be clear about its intentions as early as possible following the RCol report. It will be important to minimise uncertainty, and to work with existing councils to maintain good governance and achieve a smooth transition in implementing whatever decisions are taken.
- Regarding the recent media attention, my main interest at this time is that the Royal Commission does a good and thorough job. As Minister, I remain open minded on the Commission's recommendations, whatever they may be.

Proactively Released by the Minister of Local Government