



Summary of Waikato Mayoral Forum meeting on Monday 16 April

A SPECIAL GUEST

The Waikato Mayoral Forum was joined by the Hon Kris Faafoi, Minister for Civil Defence, following the official opening of the Waikato Group Emergency Management Office. Minister Faafoi provided information on the Ministerial review, *Better responses to natural disasters and other emergencies*.

During the ensuing discussion there was general agreement that the local civil defence teams have been operating effectively during recent responses, but well-resourced and well-trained 'flying teams' could provide a vital resource during a large scale event. The Minister emphasised that he saw these teams as providing relief to teams involved in the initial response at the point they are likely to tire.

TUAWHENUA PROVINCIAL GROWTH FUND

The Tuawhenua Provincial Growth Fund was launched in February 2018 with \$3 billion over three years to invest in lifting productivity in the regions. The fund has opened for applications.

John Doorbar – Director of Provincial Development, and Neasa Carroll – Senior Advisor Regional Economic Development for the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment attended the meeting. They said the fund had been established to support the regions and it was looking for projects to invest in that are going to lift productivity, create sustainable jobs and leverage opportunities in the Māori economy.

The delegation told the forum that a joined up regional approach to applications via one regional body – such as Waikato Means Business – was preferred.

WAIKATO PLAN

Chair Margaret Devlin provided an update on the Waikato Plan implementation. She said there were a number of projects in which the Waikato Plan is involved, including the Waikato DHB's virtual health initiatives that are continuing.

Nine priorities have been identified that need to be worked on based on high level principles of population, location, iwi, environment and economy. People will be identified to lead those priorities to "shift the dial to ensure we deliver on the plan".

Ms Devlin also told the forum that the Waikato Plan and Future Proof are starting to show their value, with good alignment with Government policy positioning the region well for discussions with central government.

WAIKATO MEANS BUSINESS

There is a lot of momentum around setting up the regional economic development agency, with a number of matters to be approved by the board this week following two months of intensive work, said Chair Dallas Fisher.

The Waikato Mayoral Forum heard that it's proposed to set up a trust – which will own the REDA as a company – to take the agency forward into the future. It won't be established as a council controlled organisation – the establishment board has agreed that an independent entity will enable



WAIKATO MAYORAL FORUM

greater innovation in service delivery and may increase the ability of the agency to leverage private and non-government sector resources.

Mr Fisher said plans are underway for a two day Waikato economic summit, set down for 23-24 August. It's expected the summit will be attended by 200-250 people to develop business cases for central government funding. The summit will be held at the Don Rowlands Centre at Karāpiro.

WAIKATO LASS – AN UPDATE

An update was received from Waikato Local Authority Shared Services (WLASS) Chief Executive Sally Davis on the Regional Infrastructure Technical Specifications (RITS) project, which was initiated by the Waikato Mayoral Forum. RITS set out how to design and construct transportation, water supply, wastewater, storm water and landscaping infrastructure. Prior to developing RITS, each council had its own infrastructure technical specifications, which resulted in different standards having to be met across the Waikato region.

The purpose of RITS is to provide a single regional guide and specifications for building public infrastructure. Eight councils across the Waikato have been involved in developing the specifications, and it is now up to each of them to ensure that the RITS are linked to their District Plans.

The specifications themselves will be managed and kept up-to-date by WLASS, an organisation which provides a platform for councils to work together to reduce costs and provide more efficient and effective services to ratepayers and customers.

Mayors and the regional council chair also received an update on the resource consent planning project, which came from the forum's aligned planning work. The project's purpose is to make the processing of resource consents more efficient, effective and user friendly, and to make business in the Waikato easier. A regional toolkit is being developed and is expected to be rolled out in June 2018. A resource consent forum has also been established to implement further regional improvements and standardisation.

At the conclusion of her presentation Sally Davis announced her retirement as manager of WLASS, effective from the end of this month. She said the board has signed off on a strategic transformation with a greater focus on technology and joined up customer centric approaches. A thank you was formally extended to Sally for the expertise she has brought to her role.

OPEN LETTER ON MĀORI WARDS

The topic of Māori wards has been widely discussed by a number of councils in New Zealand. Since 2002, just two councils have introduced Māori wards or constituencies – Waikato Regional Council and Wairoa District Council.

Garry Dyet, Waipa District Council chief executive officer, told the forum that LGNZ has had a policy position for some time on Māori wards and this has been recently restated in an open letter to the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the Green Party. In the letter, LGNZ requests the poll for Māori wards and constituencies be removed.

Mr Dyet told the forum that during a recent meeting with the Hon Nanaia Mahuta, the Minister had made it clear she felt legislation was driving the wrong conversation in the community around Māori wards.



LOCAL ALCOHOL POLICY

It was acknowledged during the meeting that many city and district councils have had issues around local alcohol policy. Hamilton City Council's executive director – special projects, Blair Bowcott, said there had been discussion at its council about opening a dialogue with central government to amend the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 to help streamline the appeals process. To this end, a remit had been drafted which sought a change to the Act which would enable local alcohol policies to more accurately reflect local community views and preferences.

HEALTHY RIVERS/WAI ORA: PROPOSED PLAN CHANGE 1

Waikato Regional Council's chief executive Vaughan Payne updated the forum on the notification of variation 1 following consultation with Pare Hauraki. There are critical changes around timeframes with which people had to comply in recognition of the delays in the planning process. Mr Payne said that during the meeting with the Hon David Parker on Friday 13 April the Minister emphasised his number 1 priority is reversing water quality decline. To this end, the Minister is keen to understand how to change the system to make planning processes less cumbersome and to improve consistency across the country.

AUCKLAND TO HAMILTON CORRIDOR INITIATIVE

The forum heard from NZ Transport Agency's Parekawhia McLean that Cabinet last week considered a paper around the Hamilton to Auckland corridor. The paper was signed off by the Hon Phil Twyford. The forum heard the next steps involve a stocktake of existing strategies in Waikato and Auckland, followed by an integrated spatial development strategy looking not just at transport but also at economic development opportunities and housing. From then there will be a work programme that Minister Twyford has said he would like to see by the end of September-October. CEOs and senior managers will need to agree priorities at a meeting in May.