

---

**REPORT 7**  
*(1215/13/IM)*

---

**REPORT BACK ON THE NZ COMMUNITY BOARDS'  
CONFERENCE – ROTORUA 2011 - “THE CHANGING  
FACE OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE”**

---

I would like to thank the Wellington City Council for the opportunity to attend this Conference. It gave me a great opportunity to meet with other Community Board members, and provided an insight into how others operate, what they do well, and what can be achieved, particularly in small rural areas. The conference was held at the Energy Events Centre in Rotorua, a few minutes walk from the Princes Gate Hotel, where I was accommodated along with the two Tawa Board Members, Malcolm Sparrow, and Graeme Hansen.

I set out below some **brief notes** of what the conference was about:

The conference commenced on **Thursday 5 May** with the awarding of the 2011 Best Practice Awards (9 categories). The supreme prize was taken by Henderson-Massey local board of Auckland Council, for their work since 2005 towards establishing a memorial to honour serving aviators from Henderson who lost their lives in World War II over Luxembourg.

This was then followed by an interesting speech by the Very Reverend Peter Beck, Dean of Christchurch, who spoke about how things are progressing in Christchurch.

On **Friday 6 May**, the Conference opened with an inspiring speech by Dale Williams, the Mayor of Otorohanga, (pop. 9500) who has led the charge to get a number of youth initiatives running. He found that a number of business in the town were considering moving elsewhere due to the inability to employ staff, so he organized a very successful apprenticeship programme which has resulted in **zero** unemployment of youth under 25 since 2006. The town, which used to have a graffiti problem, is now graffiti free. The resulting crime statistics are now also some of the lowest in the country.

## **Breakout Sessions**

### **1. Empowering Communities during a Civil Defence Emergency.**

The speaker was Adrienne Staples, Mayor of South Wairarapa. Essentially we need to identify in advance what needs to be done, and the role of the community board, which needs to step up in an emergency, alongside the Emergency Management organization.

### **2. Mobile Communications and Community Engagement**

Kathy Wiltshire and Rhia Williams from Chorus – a role play exercise around a cell phone tower being put into a town. Not particularly inspiring.

### **Saturday 7 May**

First main speaker of the day was Penny Hulse, Deputy Mayor of Auckland, speaking on the Super City, giving an overview of how Auckland is now set up with Council, CCO's (Council Controlled Organisations), Local Boards. Having some difficulties, but slowly working through them.

Next came Peter McKinley and David Wilson from AUT University – "Local Boards: A New Form of Local Governance".

There is a limit to top/down design and delivery, and communication is key. Government will need to work with Local Government to achieve engagement; currently there appears a lack of public engagement and confusion between "what's local, and what's regional, who decides, who do you talk to, and again who decides.

Concern by local government on voter turn out.

It all depends on public acceptance and gaining community consent, so the only way is to start at the bottom, sharing the problem, behavior change is through partnership.

### **3. Effective Relationships between Councils and Board**

Jenny Rowan, Mayor of Kapiti (four Community Boards – Paekakariki, Raumati/Paraparaumu, Waikanae, Otaki.

Spoke about concern regarding Super City, the dissolution of 31 community boards, and appointment of 21 Local Boards, much larger populations being represented by less people on the ground, i.e. Waitakere (pop. 158,000 – 5700 less than Wellington – have only two representatives on the new Local Board). The lessons we need to learn, as it is a real possibility that this is likely to come our way as well. How her Community Board operates alongside the Council. A good presentation.

#### **4. Aging Population – Graeme Ennor and Rick Mansell**

Good presentation – starting with the baby boomers – 1946-1964 – either not wanting to retire or not able to, this age group are generally a lot more active, likely to be a lot healthier than those in the past and are also going to keep themselves healthy for a longer time, apart from genetic illness, better educated and possibly have more money. Challenging people to improve their focus on health and fitness (small things like signs on door of lift – “Stairs are just there, one flight uses? Kilojoules, two flights uses? kilojoules”) and changing/challenging employers attitudes regarding employing of older people (allowing reduction of work days/part time, getting older experienced staff to pass knowledge onto younger people), ask your Council what their policy is on keeping older people working? How can policy be created which allows people to keep working if they wish?

See/read Ministry of Social Development website on “The business of Ageing: Realising the Economic Potential of Older People in New Zealand: 2011-2051.

#### **Finale**

The last main speaker was Marcus Akuhuta-Brown - Motivating Youth – also very worthwhile. Focused on the ability to learn to speak across generations, and listen also.

Creating the ability to get the youth to contribute, encourage young people, who and where do youth go to get help? How we look at them, and what it requires of us.

The Conference was closed by Lawrence Yule, Mayor of Hastings, on the greater expectations of the community, keeping councils in touch with the grass roots, and connection to neighbourhoods, bringing the people closer to council, - final words were “Just get on and do it !!

Christine Grace  
Chair Makara Ohariu Community Board.