



Minutes Core Group Meeting 15 September 2011

Present

Mayors Frana Cardno, Kelvin Coe, Jono Naylor, Bryan Cadogan, Roly Ellis, Malcolm Campbell, Les Probert, Dale Williams (Chair), Alistair Sowman, John Forbes and Deputy Penny Hulse
Annette Smithard (Auckland Council), Mariska Wouters (LGNZ), Bry Kopu and Jan Francis (MTFJ)

Apologies

Brendan Duffy, Kevin Winters and Lawrence Yule

PRESENTATIONS

Work'n' it Out

Doug Reid and Andrew Dougherty presented a proposal for working in partnership with the Taskforce on Youth Transitions. The proposal was given to all Core Group members and further copies are available from Jan on request. The Mayors agreed with the proposal in principle and agreed to discuss this further at the executive level and to progress the initiative if possible with the new government after the election.

Student Job Search

Chief Executive of Student Job Search, Paul Kennedy presented his organisation's new direction and in particular spoke to Mayors about students who wished to return to their communities in the holidays but often were unable to due to lack of holiday work. Paul noted that businesses who did create jobs for students received very good value for money and often retained these young people in their businesses for the duration of their training and in some cases once they were qualified. The STS presentation is available on the Taskforce website.

PARTNERS SESSION

Economic Development Agencies of NZ

Samantha Seath (CEO) provided Mayors with an update on the EDA's around the country. A number of interesting initiatives were developing such as the Southland work on physics and science in schools, work experience programmes in Wellington and the regional partner programme which focuses on helping business to grow. She further noted that keeping talent in NZ was a problem. The work of EDANZ was largely about relationships and people and their annual report would be available in the near future.

Industry Training Federation

Moerangi Vercoe reported from the ITF noting that the current CEO [Jeremy Baker] was leaving to take up the role of CEO at Learning State(State sector ITO) and as yet no replacement appointment had been made. There are a number of mergers taking place with ITO's at the moment e.g. Real Estate and ETITO, Careerforce and Social Services. It is expected that there will be a reduction to around 34 ITO's in the immediate future and then further reductions over the next couple of years.

Moerangi provided the Mayors with an update on vocational pathways which the ITF had been heavily involved with. The new structure within the senior school is working with industries and ITO's to ensure

industries get what they require from the education system. Initially the Ministry of Education is looking at 5 pathways which will be linked to NCEA.

The pathways are:

1. Manufacturing/Technology
2. Community/Social Services
3. Service Industries
4. Building/Construction
5. Primary Industry

There is great support from secondary schools and the PPTA. A sector advisory group has been set up and is working alongside the NZQA review of qualifications. A hand-out was provided for the Core Group. Further copies are available from Jan on request.

NZ COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS

Eileen Brown provided an update from the CTU outlining the Council's position on youth employment:

- Reduce general unemployment
- Ensure clearer vocational pathways
- Recognise the relationship between wages and qualifications
- Expand youth employment schemes
- Recognise the importance of training, and education within employment
- Do not reintroduce youth rates

There is a group within the CTU of young workers working on these issues.

Eileen noted there was an opportunity for local authorities to put youth training in procurement policies and to ensure responsible contracting policies. The CTU position on youth employment is available on the Taskforce website.

MINISTERS MEETING

Present

Mayors Dale Williams, John Forbes, Jono Naylor, Frana Cardno, Alistair Sowman, Bryan Cadogan, Malcolm Campbell, Roly Ellis, Kelvin Coe and Deputy Penny Hulse.

Ministers Steven Joyce, Paula Bennett, Bill English, Kate Wilkinson

A number of Government Officials and MTFJ secretariat were also in attendance.

Minister Bennett welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Steven Joyce updated the Mayors on the Tertiary sector. There are plenty of training places available in the sector, although the numbers are understandably down in Christchurch. There are places available in ITO's and all parts of the sector [Polytechnics, Universities, private training providers] and there are youth guarantee places also available. There is a merger of youth guarantee and youth training at levels 1-3 and that will see the current 2,700 places increased to 7,500 in the next year. He also noted the 5 pathways which will start next year at NCEA level 2, including career and study map.

10 new Trades Academies within schools from next year which will translate into 11,000 places for 16/17 year olds.

There are changes in contracts for industry training which must now show evidence of achievement to address the 44,000 who have been signed up with industry training and after 2 years have no credits. There is also a wider review of the ITO model and the Minister thanked the Taskforce for its work in this area which he said had been very helpful.

Three papers are to be produced initially:

- History of the model
- Cross country scan
- High level choices

He expected the ITO mergers to be around 30 initially and then possibly even fewer.

Mayor Kelvin Coe spoke of the situation in Christchurch where a number of young people were taking labouring work rather than gaining qualifications. Minister Bennett noted that the labour market was changing weekly in Christchurch and that MSD was checking the barriers for the under 24 year olds.

Minister Bill English spoke about cross department work which was to get a clear understanding of what is happening and what is working before making any changes. There was pressure on the budget but he wanted to ensure there was a sound analysis of how to shift the money to achieve the outcomes required. The Prime Minister was focused on hard targets to avoid the current casualty rate (within education, training and employment) which was unacceptable. The Minister noted that skill shortages will become permanent and new ways of dealing with the issue needed to be found, saying that many of the 300,000 people on welfare could contribute to the labour market, given the right support and information on what was available. He agreed with recent information about the need for business and employers to be more involved in skills and training along with the improvement in the public school sector which was the government's role. A model in Christchurch with Fletchers (New Zealanders First) with a job at the end of training should provide good information for other areas.

Mayor Frana Cardno told the meeting of a goal in Southland "***no one goes to school hungry and no one leaves without level 2***", noting the gap for some 14-15yr olds who required extra support to remain in the education system. Minister Bennett replied that the new pathways and the review of career education along with increased places in academies and youth guarantee would help address some of the issues for those young people. Minister Joyce agreed and said schools must take responsibility for those who were not achieving and/or who did not find school useful. He also hoped that the pathway programme would reduce those going on to benefit at 18.

Mayor Dale Williams noted the importance of availability of jobs at the end of training so training needed to be relevant to the labour market along with transferable skills, particularly given the rapid changes in technology and types of jobs available.

Minister Kate Wilkinson said that the 90 day trial legislation had proved successful giving business the confidence to take on new staff and that the Department of Labour was monitoring to ensure workers were not exploited.

Mayor Dale Williams argued against youth rates noting that there were other ways to support employers to take on young workers and that youth rates sent the wrong signal to young people as to their value and worth and that employers needed to take a long-term view.

Minister Wilkinson noted that research would be available on the minimum wage and that there was a need to break down barriers and to ensure that there was not perverse encouragement for young people to leave school.

Mayor Dale Williams said getting young people work ready had been what worked best in his community and support for both employer and young person to stay on the job was a key component.

There was a general discussion about the current MoU between the Taskforce and the Government and it was agreed to roll over the current document until February 2012 when a negotiation with the new government could take place.

Minister Bennett outlined the new policies which had been announced recently and said the Taskforce could take some credit particularly for the change in legislation or regulation proposed for education which would see school leaver data released. Other policies include a focus on 16-17 year olds (90% of NEET go on to benefit at 18), and a move to contracts focusing on outcomes. These policies would be further developed for introduction in the next financial year.

Mayor Dale Williams thanked the Ministers for their support noting that Mayors were keen to continue working with the government on youth employment, education and training and looked forward to assisting with the further development of the policies announced to date.

OFFICIALS MEETING

Present

- (Ministry of Social Development) Ian Richards, Hiku Edwards, Damien Edwards, Karen Bishop, Jacinta Dalgety
- (Department of Labour) Felicity Bolen
- (CareersNZ) Janet Brown
- (Te Puni Kokiri) John Doorbar
- (Ministry of Youth Development) Dibs Patel
- (Ministry of Education) Andrea Schollmann

Te Puni Kokiri

John Doorbar reported on a number of projects they were involved in with Mayors – e.g. Kawerau and with the Rangatahi Leadership Programme being run with Marcus Akuhata-Brown. Bry Kopu noted that this was a building block for introduction to local iwi for some Mayors.

Ministry of Youth Development

Dibs Patel spoke about the partnership fund which will have another round in December. There was a discussion about the difficulty of applying and the amounts available. Dibs noted that the Ministry was working on streamlining and developing new criteria and would welcome feedback from Councils.

Ministry of Social Development

Karen Bishop spoke about the youth team within the Ministry and programmes such as Job Opportunities – Training and LSV, noting that there were still plenty of subsidies available for employers. There appeared to be some reluctance due to the requirement of a training plan but there was help available for this and the plan could be very simple. Karen asked for the Mayors help with this and it was agreed that the Taskforce would send the information around to all Mayors.

Damien Edwards (General Manager Youth Policy) spoke about the youth pipeline work and the need for a new IT system to handle the information which would come available from the Ministry of Education when they were required to pass over school leaver data. They will be looking for an interim solution as he did not expect the changes to be fully functioning until 2013. He also said they would be asking for assistance with engagement with communities as Regional Commissioners would need information to speak to Mayors, community stakeholders and providers. The Taskforce recommended speaking to everyone at the same time if possible, to avoid misinterpretation of the information. Mayors asked that there be genuine dialogue, with their communities on the issues.

Careers NZ

Janet Brown provided Mayors with a written update on the work of Careers NZ which is available on the website.

Department of Labour

Felicity Bolen spoke of the department's focus on skill and labour shortages and the sector based approach, noting opportunities in forestry particularly in the Gisborne area. In addition, they are working in Christchurch with apprentice trusts and Ngai Tahu and developing Pacific scholarships. She had also been very involved with the Auckland Economic Development strategy which had a strong focus on skills, education, training and the labour market.

Ministry of Education

Andrea Schollum detailed the work of the Ministry focusing on:

- Youth Guarantee - secondary/tertiary collaboration to ensure meaningful learning
- Vocational Pathways - from February 2012
- Review of Careers Education

Mayor Dale Williams thanked Officials for the useful information and thoughtful discussion.

TASKFORCE MEETING

Eugene Bowen (CEO – LGNZ) spoke to the Mayors about the reorganisation at LGNZ which had brought the policy team into one group with a new policy manager (Kate McNaught) who was introduced to the group. LGNZ were happy to continue being the umbrella group for MTFJ but had needed to formalise some arrangements. This had occurred with the sign off by the Chair and Executive Officer on a finance policy. Kate and Eugene would be signatories for the Taskforce invoices now that the accounting function had been brought in-house rather than sitting within Civic Assurance.

Minutes

The minutes of the June meeting were approved as a true and accurate record.

Moved Malcolm Campbell

Seconded Alistair Sowman

Accounts

The accounts were approved.

Moved Jenny Rowan

Seconded Jono Naylor

Budget

A new budget was presented and approved.

Moved Jenny Rowan

Seconded Roly Ellis

National Forum

Bry Kopu presented information on the forum held in Palmerston North thanking Mayor Jono Naylor for his support and noting that evaluations showed 96% full satisfaction with the day. The Core Group thanked Bry for the work she did to ensure such a successful event.

The meetings concluded with a discussion on the way forward following the Ministers and Officials meeting and it was agreed that the day had been very positive and Mayors were confident that there would be good results at the local level. It was agreed that a greater focus on jobs and employers should bring results for our young people and that it was important to ensure employers, training providers and schools continued to work collaboratively at the local level and it was good to see that approach sanctioned from the national level.