



Core Group Minutes 16 June 2011

Present

Mayors Dale Williams (Chair), Tony Bonne, Malcolm Campbell, Alistair Sowman, John Forbes, Frana Cardno and Penny Hulse (Deputy Mayor).

MTFJ Jan Francis, Annette Smithard and Bry Kopu

LGNZ Mariska Wouters.

Apologies

Mayors Kelvin Coe, Jenny Rowan, Brendan Duffy, Les Probert, Kevin Winters, Lawrence Yule, Jono Naylor, Wayne Guppy and Bryan Cadogan

Conference Call Minutes

Agreed as true and accurate record.

Moved – Frana Cardno

Seconded – Tony Bonne

Carried

Finance

The financial report was accepted.

Moved – Malcolm Campbell

Seconded – Alistair Sowman

Carried

AGM

It was agreed to invite Minister Paula Bennett to the AGM. *Jan to follow up.*

Kawerau Project

Mayor Malcolm Campbell gave an update of the project which was being trialled in his area with all funding for youth initiatives being combined to fund outcomes which were seen by the community to address the serious social issues the district is facing. Malcolm noted that the incidence of violence particularly among young girls was worrying and it was important for his community to work collectively on the problems.

Careers NZ

Careers NZ Chief Executive Graeme Benny and Deputy Susan Kosmala spoke to the Mayors about the new vision for the organisation and the current initiatives being undertaken. His presentation will be sent to all Mayors and is available on the website.

MEETING WITH SPOKESPEOPLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

The Taskforce provided an election position paper to all political parties and offered an opportunity for a discussion with the Taskforce. The Labour Party, Green Party and ACT spoke with the Taskforce. Whilst specific policies have not yet been finalised the parties were keen to share their views with the Taskforce.

Jacinda Adern - Labour

Jacinda noted that the party was closely aligned with the Taskforce's position on the issues raised. They wanted to improve transitions for young people, develop non-tertiary pathways, develop robust plans with regard to industry needs and available and future jobs, increase awareness of career options and information, emphasise job growth in economic policy, look at regional development drivers and initiatives; all with a focus on young people and skills. Labour enjoyed working with Local Authorities and wanted a partnership approach. She complimented the Mayors on their work and looked forward to working closely with Mayors and local authorities in the future.

Gareth Hughes – Green Party

Gareth noted that youth unemployment was a crisis and that the Green Party was developing policies to address the underlining issues. The party would restore the Training Incentive Allowance, significantly improve career guidance particularly through the use of technology, support the development of vocational pathways, invest in job creation (e.g. build 800 state houses which could create 28,000 jobs, invest in local roads and public transport). The party supports a Youth Employment Strategy and Action Plan being developed, the Taskforce Modern Apprenticeship Report and the Youth Connections proposal. The party was costing its policies in these areas, which would then be part of the election platform.

Sir Roger Douglas – ACT

Sir Roger noted that youth unemployment was a concern for all and the ACT party had two key policies to address this – the re-instatement of the Youth Minimum Wage and the reform of the education system. He agreed that the education system doesn't cater for all young people and it therefore needed to be opened up for competition, through for example, a voucher system. He did not support the Mayors Taskforce work as a way to achieve better outcomes for young people.

PARTNERS SESSION

Peter Conway – NZCTU

Peter noted the worrying signs around youth unemployment particularly in relation to Christchurch. The CTU had asked Work and Income to follow up those who had used the special earthquake subsidy to find out where they were now. Is it a matter of two income families now becoming one, for example and if so what are the consequences from this?

With regard to ITO's he noted that there had been no strategy announcements but that ITO's and employers needed to be able to stay in the training area and keep on staff.

There had been a number of recent redundancies but he could detect no overall trend, rather they were separate incidents. He believes the priority should be youth unemployment and skill development. He supported the Taskforce's initiatives in the youth transition area but noted that funding was an issue, particularly for pastoral support. The CTU is opposed to the reintroduction of the Youth Minimum wage.

Minister Meeting

See attached notes from Sue Mackwell – MSD.

MINISTERS' MEETING WITH MAYORS TASKFORCE FOR JOBS

Meeting held: Thursday 16 June 2011
Beehive 5.5

Attendees: Hon Paula Bennett
Hon Rodney Hide

Dale Williams (Otorohanga - Chair MTFJ)
Penny Hulse (Auckland)
Alistair Sowman (Marlborough)
John Forbes (Opotiki)
Malcolm Campbell (Kawerau)
Frana Cardno (Southland)
Jan Francis (Executive Officer MTFJ)

Officials from Ministry of Social Development & Department of Labour

1. Welcome

Minister Bennett welcomed the Mayors and Minister Hyde.

Minister Bennett set out what she wished to cover in the meeting:

- How information could be recorded accurately, with clarity about what was confidential or not;
- The relationship between the Government and MTFJ going forward, and
- An update on the youth pipeline work.

2. Vision for Memorandum of Understanding / Action Plan

Minister Bennett gave an update on the work that is being done between local and central government through the Auckland Social Policy Forum (ASPF).

The ASPF has accepted the challenge to come up with 1200 new job opportunities for youth. This challenge has been put to both central and local government, as well as the business sector.

The ASPF has a voice and it is an opportunity to put out a message to the community. Laying out the challenge that this is the time to stand up and to take on a young New Zealander.

Work and Income can sell its existing opportunities and packages as best it can, but the Mayors have better contacts within their communities. The challenge is for the Mayors to find them and then use the Work and Income subsidies such as Skills for Growth and Job Ops to support these.

Dale Williams confirmed that the Mayors all have opportunities that they are aware of and could cultivate, for example in rural communities, not just on farms, but in the service industries that support those farms.

Minister Bennett spoke of the experiences in Ashburton where Work and Income had joined up with employers to hold an expo for youth job seekers. Of the 100 young people on the Unemployment Benefit, Work and Income were able to contact half. 33 turned up and of those:

- 17% said they wouldn't pass a drug test
- 25% said they were on periodic detention
- 55% said they did not have a drivers licence
- 70% said they did not have access to transport

John Forbes reported that in his region, there were a lot of seasonal workers from Vanuatu and Tuvalu. There was some displacement of New Zealand job seekers as these workers were prepared to work harder than New Zealanders.

Minister Bennett referred to the Marlborough region and that three years ago they had 0% on unemployment benefit. Questioned whether Work and Income had been tougher at that time and that perhaps we need to relook at what had occurred then to ensure that we had both the carrot and stick incentives for job seekers.

Alistair Sowman confirmed that his region also had high numbers of temporary workers from other countries through the RSE scheme and reported that many youth did not want to work in the vineyards.

Minister Bennett advised that [MYD] had undertaken an exercise to ring a range of young people to ask what they thought the barriers were. They raised a range of factors such as:

- Caring for other siblings
- Lack of transport
- Their convictions (Minister Bennett is getting legal advice on whether Youth Court outcomes should be classified as a conviction on the young persons record)

Dale Williams confirmed that this was an opportunity to get a message out to all Mayors to focus on youth employment.

Minister Bennett referred to the morning teas that New Plymouth Mayors held for LSV graduates and local employers. If employment opportunities arose out of this, they could be supported by the Job Ops with Training subsidy.

The group briefly discussed the UK example where the clear messaging was to stand up for young people, do it for the good of the country and that there could be zero waste.

Penny Hulse raised another example from Auckland where they are looking to be proactive in their procurement process. This could be an opportunity to give weight to contracts where employers take on a requisite number of young people.

The group discussed whether they should be ambitious in the targets for reducing youth unemployment and the target that the ASPF has for creating 2,000 new opportunities.

Currently there were 17,000 on Youth Unemployment Benefit with 6,000 in Auckland in Youth UB.

Work and Income's business as usual will reduce that by 2,000. The aim of the new partnerships with employers is to reduce that by a further 2,000.

Currently the June unemployment benefit numbers are reducing, against historical trends for this month. Jobs online vacancies are trending upwards and showing a 20% increase.

Minister Bennett will get Youth Unemployment Benefit data broken down by Work and Income sites for the Mayors.

3. Youth Pipeline Work

Minister Bennett advised that she wanted to give an update on the Youth Pipeline work currently underway. This information was for the meeting participants only.

4. MOU/Action Plan

Minister Bennett proposed that the Mayors work up what they believe they can do to create opportunities and then this can be reflected in the new MOU. The Mayors could provide some examples and advice on what works or not. The officials could provide advice on the Work and Income subsidies that are available. Dale Williams suggested that the Mayors could identify some potential sites for a trial.

The new MOU could be signed at the next meeting to be held in September 2011.

MTFJ are to liaise with Sue Mackwell and Damian Edwards who will then ensure linkages to Work and Income and Department of Labour.