



## **Core Group Meeting 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> June 2010**

**Present – Mayors** Dale Williams (Chair), Maureen Reynolds, Alistair Sowman, Kelvin Coe, Jenny Rowan, Brendan Duffy, Jono Naylor, Penny Webster and Peter Tennent  
Jan Francis Executive Officer-Mayors Taskforce for Jobs and Nasi Jenkin, LGNZ

**Apologies – Mayors** Bob Harvey, Frana Cardno, Gary McPhee, Len Brown, Les Probert, Lawrence Yule, Malcolm Campbell

### **PARTNERS MEETING**

**Present** – Josh Williams [ITF], Peter Conway [CTU], Carrie Murdoch [Bus NZ]

**Apologies** – Samantha Seath [EDANZ]

### **Industry Training Federation**

Josh outlined the ITF's vision for vocational education and training [VET] and the need to create pathways for young people in this area. ITO's were developing those pathways, i.e. looking beyond the current perception of "university, or not". There are some existing models, e.g. qualifications that bridge to industry specific qualifications within NCEA [e.g. the BConstructive model within the building trades]. They are engaging with the Ministry of Education on the need for a clear pathway and qualifications. The Taskforce and the ITF could develop a MoU.

The Taskforce supports this approach and discussed the need for a better image for trades/industry training, e.g. could be a trade's degree. There needed to be one name and a simpler system to rebuild the support and visibility of industry training. Carrie noted that we could already do a lot without major change in this area. A collaborative approach from all interested parties could be effective. *Jan to follow up with ITF.*

### **Business New Zealand**

Carrie outlined the reasonably positive indicators for employment growth from their members but cautioned that although there was overall improvement, things were patchy around the country and there is no region which stands out. The Asian growth was positive and very important for NZ as was the Australian economy. Business NZ was happy with recent government tax changes, particularly in company tax.

She felt it was important to sort out the education and skills area and get some coherence around the upper secondary and vocational education and training sectors. This was a key priority for the organisation. There is a targeted review of qualifications – Levels 1-6. There was a need to be specific about the outcome of qualifications and to take heed of the demographics. With an aging workforce we need to have youth as a focus with young people attached to the labour market and engaged in training to lift skills in areas of need. Literacy and numeracy was a huge issue and we need a clear plan with ambitious targets particularly for those currently in the workforce. Currently there is a fragmented approach involving a number of government agencies and others. There needs to be more emphasis on embedding literacy and numeracy in what you do and this is now an expectation of TEC.

### **Council of Trade Unions – Peter Conway**

Peter acknowledged the Taskforce support for Community Max and was hopeful that there would be some continuance of the programme. The CTU has been working with the Welfare Working Group and they believe that there needs to be a much closer look at the working poor within this work. There needs to be a much broader focus with looking at how the reform of the system would look e.g. would it be possible to capitalise the benefit for future investment.

Peter noted the outlook for unemployment was better than expected, but was wary of further predications given the quarter includes the holiday period. He believed now was the time for the Taskforce to look at the 2011 – 2012 budget and take the opportunity to talk with the government about priorities. Some areas to be looking at were: new equity/investment vehicles – e.g. no interest loans to local government for infrastructure improvements. Domestic

investment which would lead to real returns for New Zealanders – e.g. public- public partnerships. The local government bond issue was also worth debating further.

The skills forum had died but there was still work on the skills strategy particularly around transitions, completion of qualifications and linking across sectors.

The CTU has concerns about jobs and the effect of cost rises and inflation on low wage workers, noting that the minimum wage in Australia would be \$15 from July. However parity will always come back to pay, skills and productivity.

### **OFFICIALS MEETING**

**Present** – **Mayors** Dale Williams (Chair), Maureen Reynolds, Alistair Sowman, Kelvin Coe, Jenny Rowan, Brendan Duffy, Jono Naylor, Penny Webster and Peter Tennent

Jan Francis Executive Officer-Mayors Taskforce for Jobs

**Officials** – Jon Saunders, Kate Satterthwaite, Mark Quinlivan, Leo Shen, Debbie Barrett (MSD) Felicity Bolen, Brian Cosgriff (DoL), Graeme Marshall (DPMC) and Andrea Schollmann, Marilyn (MoE).

**Apologies** – Janet Brown (Career Services)

### **Ministry of Social Development**

Jon Saunders gave an update on Youth Transition Services stating that they were undertaking a review of 16-17 year olds and looking at priorities for this age group. They expected a report to the Minister by December 2010. Debbie Barrett noted that they were looking at reviewing current contracts with a view to deciding which services needed to be delivered within the YTS framework.

A general discussion followed in which Mayors expressed their disappointment about the time decisions on YTS were taking and that they were extremely frustrated with what seemed to be further research in an area where there was already considerable information. They noted that there needed to be a clear message to the Minister as to what was required and supported in communities, in a much shorter time-frame.

The \$12.6 million in the budget for employment services was reprioritised money and would be spread across the country for work across all benefits focusing on individuals e.g. skill investment, straight to work etc. It would be allocated to Regional commissioners and it was expected that around 50% would be allocated to those aged 16-24.

### **Ministry of Education**

Andrea Schollum briefed Mayors on the Service and Trades Academies and provided Mayors with a written update on the initiatives. They noted that they were getting very positive feedback and lots of support. At the moment the academies are a two year programme to roll out to a number of areas. Information is on the Taskforce website.

Mark Quinlivan noted that the Limited Service Volunteer programme was working well with 2,000 places and full courses until the end of the year. He noted that there was a civic opportunity for Mayors to champion the graduates in their areas. He undertook to get information to Mayors about the young people in their areas completing courses.

### **Department of Labour**

The youth snapshot report was due shortly and would be sent to all Mayors and Councils. The department was still restructuring in a number of areas with Felicity's team being disestablished and the policy team now leading this work. They have launched the *Skills Highway – Guide to Employers* to increase the skills in their workforce. There is a website at [www.skillshighway.govt.nz](http://www.skillshighway.govt.nz). The Department is also launching a new web page with basic information about rights and entitlements called My First Job. This links well to the Career Services site.

### **Mayors Taskforce**

Chair Dale Williams briefed Officials on the current work of the Taskforce and the need to ensure there was no further slippage, particularly on the YTS. He also noted that Mayors were discussing where we would be at the end of the recession and how we must make sure we move forward and are not in the position of severe skill shortages again. He noted that most of the Action Plan had been achieved and that the next one needed to be more focused on collaborative achievements between departments and the Taskforce.

### **MTFJ CORE GROUP BUSINESS**

**Present** – Dale Williams (Chair), Maureen Reynolds, Alistair Sowman, Kelvin Coe, Jenny Rowan, Brendan Duffy, Jono Naylor, Penny Webster and Peter Tennent  
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#### **Budget**

There was considerable discussion on the draft budget presented by Jan and in view of the increased work of both the Executive Officer and the Chair and the running down of reserves, it was agreed to increase the Taskforce subscription for the first time.

*“That the subscription be raised to 8cents per head of population up to a ceiling of \$7,500 with future increases tied to the CPI.”*

**Moved** Brendan Duffy

**Seconded** Penny Webster

**Carried**

The draft budget was approved in principal with changes made to income to reflect increase in subs and the deletion of the use of retained earnings.

**Moved** Maureen Reynolds

**Seconded** Brendan Duffy

**Carried**

#### **Finance/Accounts**

Report accepted

**Moved:** Peter Tennent

**Seconded:** Alistair Sowman

**Carried**

#### **Role of the Taskforce Chair**

After considerable discussion about the role Chair Dale Williams was now playing with a number of requests on his time to talk about the Taskforce and how it works, it was decided to provide Dale with an Honorarium from December 2009 to July 2011.

*“That \$10,000 be allocated in the Budget for this honorarium for Dale Williams.”*

**Moved** Maureen Reynolds

**Seconded** Jono Naylor

**Carried**

#### **Succession Plan**

*“That \$30,000 be allocated in the Budget to retain the services of Bry Kopu to work with Jan Francis.”*

**Moved** Maureen Reynolds

**Seconded** Jono Naylor

**Carried**

#### **Youth in Local Government Conference**

A general discussion was held on the Taskforce role in the future of this conference. It was agreed that Jan would facilitate a meeting with concerned parties to have a full discussion on the purpose of the conference. Peter Tennent will also be involved in the meeting.

#### **AGM**

It was agreed to follow the format for previous years with the addition of Minister Bennett as a speaker. Dale has also been given speaking slots at the sector meetings. Those retiring from the Core Group are:

Penny Webster, Gary McPhee, Maureen Reynolds and Peter Tennent.

## **MoU**

It was agreed to write a letter to Minister Bennett outlining the Taskforce's achievements under the MoU and to suggest re-signing in the current form with the inclusion of Whanau Ora and Community Response Panels as new initiatives for the coming year.

## **General Business**

### ***Auckland Super City***

The Auckland situation was discussed and it was agreed to work with LGNZ as to how membership etc should proceed under the new super city.

### ***Telecom***

Peter Tennent suggested conference calls between Core Group meetings and that we could discuss this with Telecom. Sister Cities had been able to get support. *Jan to talk with Ann Verboeket*

### ***LSV***

Dale mentioned that he had been approached to ask Mayors to be Patrons of the programme and to attend the courses at some point. It was agreed to liaise with all Mayors about this opportunity. *Jan to follow up.*

### ***Rangatahi Project***

Marcus has arranged for the first hui and Mayors are bringing their young people with a session for Mayors in the morning and then a programme for the young people over the next 2 days. There has been good response from Mayors and all are looking forward to the programme beginning.

### ***Youth Transitions***

Mayors expressed concern at the delay in the decisions on contracts for current YTS and on the expansion to cover all local authorities. There was considerable frustration with the information provided from Officials and it was agreed that this would be raised with Ministers and that the Taskforce would provide its own report by the end of July.

## **MINISTERS MEETING**

**Present** – **Mayors** Dale Williams, Kelvin Coe, Maureen Reynolds, Penny Webster, Jono Naylor, Alistair Sowman, Peter Tennent and Executive Officer Jan Francis

**Ministers** – Paula Bennett, Tariana Turia and Rodney Hide

**Officials** – Graeme Marshall, Richard Elwin, Felicity Bolen, Janet Brown, Kate Satterthwaite, Jon Saunders, Katherine McNulty, Richard Wood, Christina Connelly and Minister Hides Secretary.

Minister Bennett opened the meeting suggesting there needed to be some discussion around the format of the meetings, perhaps themed in some way. This was in response to the difficulty of getting other Ministers to attend if there was nothing relevant from their portfolios. Mayors agreed to discuss this further.

### **Minister Rodney Hide**

Minister Hide reported that the Auckland Governance Legislation was completed. He noted that central/local government interaction mechanisms to feed information through the sector would be crucial for the Auckland Council. He was preparing a discussion document ahead of the next general election. He further noted that there were issues being raised about amalgamation and he said that amalgamation in itself was not necessarily a good thing. It needed to be principle based and community driven. However, there needed to be a framework to consider proposals.

### **2010 Budget**

Minister Bennett talked about the Job Opportunities package announced in the budget with 6,000 further places. The programme had been very successful with around 94% of those who completed the placement not returning to benefits. Around 50% were remaining with the employer. Community Max did not receive further funding but the Minister and Minister Turia were working on getting some more places. Again this had been very successful with around 81% not going back on benefits.

Mayor Peter Tennent complimented the government on the budget, saying that the signals were good with looking at creating jobs and the re-focus of the major events funding was also welcomed. Mayors were pleased that in the youth employment area there had been no cuts and some increased investment. Minister Bennett said they hoped the signal was about raising aspirations noting the \$285 million for new measures.

Mayor Alistair Sowman noted that Community Max was very successful but the programme needed more time as this was an opportunity particularly for those who were not fully equipped for the labour market.

Minister Bennett said there was \$12.7 new money for Work and Income to provide individual assistance under programmes such as Straight to Work.

Mayor Dale Williams noted that Mayors had been approached to act as Patrons for the Limited Services Volunteer programme and they were keen to assist with this. He would be following this up with the leaders of the programme.

### **Whanau Ora**

Minister Turia outlined the principles of Whanau Ora which she said was a change in focus from individuals to families. The idea was to engage families with their own relatives and lift their hopes and aspirations. They would be engaging “navigators” to support and assist families with access to the resources available to them. The funding was not to assist providers to build their businesses. Over 4,000 people attended the hui to discuss the process and the Pacific Island communities were also interested in the model. There would be contracts for the navigators to ensure there was no barrier to access. Expressions of interest close on the 7<sup>th</sup> July.

### **Community Response Model**

This model is a flow on from the community response fund which had seen communities lift aspirations/expectations of their communities and hold providers to account. \$90million had been allocated in the budget for the process on 2 levels. The first level was:

- To ensure collaboration between providers
- Training and supporting Boards/Trusts etc to increase their capability

This process would enable communities to find the gaps and advocate for services which would really make a difference.

The second level would be to fund the programmes identified. Initially the model would look at the Family and Community Services \$110 million allocated to social service providers but the model has applicability across other government funds.

The Community Response Panels would be set up across 14 regions (4 in Auckland) plus a National Board.

Regional Fora would be held to explain the model to communities. The people appointed to the panels would be individuals not representatives of NGO's.

**Richard Wood** would send a letter to all Mayors asking them to be part of this process. Mayors were very supportive of this process and keen to be involved.

### **Youth Transitions**

The government had a focus on 16-17year olds particularly from the Prime Minister. They were particularly concerned about the NEET (not in education, employment or training) numbers. YTS could be the linking mechanism here. There were questions such as: are we targeting too broad, are we putting the resources in the right place, how well are we currently doing? Mayor Dale Williams said that YTS was a priority for the Taskforce and looking at the connection as they leave education was crucial to young people making positive transitions. The key principles are actually very simple but there needed to be a universal approach with an independent person. The Taskforce would prepare a report for the Minister on the way forward as we are concerned with the time it has taken to address this issue.

Minister Bennett agreed that there needed to be a good conversation, that we didn't need more information and also that we need the Minister of Education to be involved in this, that we all want the same outcome so we needed to work on a common plan.

### **Memorandum of Understanding**

The Minister agreed to a simple update of the MoU which she could then announce at the Taskforce AGM in July. Minister Bennett and Mayor Dale Williams thanked all for their participation and frankness in the meeting.