



Minutes Core Group 18 November 2009

Present

Mayors Dale Williams (Chair) Alistair Sowman, Brendan Duffy, Frana Cardno, Gary McPhee, Jenny Rowan, John Forbes, Jono Naylor, Kelvin Coe, Malcolm Campbell, Maureen Reynolds, Penny Webster, Peter Tennent and Wayne Guppy.

Apologies

Mayors Bob Harvey, Kevin Winters, Les Probert and Lawrence Yule.

PARTNERS MEETING

Samantha Seath – EDANZ

Government's Review of Business Assistance Programmes

EDANZ is involved as part of the consultation process. The review is seeking to actively engage with 14 Regional Partners, which aligns with EDANZ regions too, so some of these partners could be EDA's. Enterprise training will change as the government is to introduce a coupon system and seek some payment from the enterprise, but also looking to broaden the definition of enterprise to encourage training for managers as well as owners, in an effort to build the whole business.

Rugby World Cup

There is a nationwide training programme Kia Ora Mai to ensure skilled staff at the front line in the hospitality and tourism industries. This is a joint initiative between Tourism NZ, Hospitality ITO and TEC and the delivery is currently out to tender.

Investment

Working with Government agencies and EDA's to encourage investment into NZ – also see Rugby World Cup as an opportunity here, i.e. marketing NZ Inc. There have been changes in immigration with migrant investor category rules relaxed. If you have \$500,000 and are creating 3 new employment positions there is the ability to speed up the immigration process.

Study Tour

EDANZ is running a study tour of the South Island for EDA's to share best practice and learn from each other.

Bill Rosenberg Council of Trade Unions

The CTU is involved with the literacy alliance with the ITF and Business NZ in a work based literacy programme. Also working with Literacy Aotearoa working on English language for migrants.

Concerned about the funding cut to the training programmes currently being run in conjunction with the CTU learning representatives' programme which is working with employers to lift productivity through enhancing skills.

Also concerned about the rising unemployment, particularly for young people and that the government may pull back some of the current programmes for unemployed people. They are advocating additional training for unemployed people under 20, noting that their unemployment rate is currently 25%.

Jan Francis noted that in a recent meeting with the Human Rights Commission they stated that they had been speaking with young people and it appeared there was a need for information in readily accessible form about employment rights and responsibilities. The Taskforce had distributed leaflets printed on this matter by the CTU and wondered if perhaps this could be done again. Bill would follow up with his colleagues and get back to Jan.

Andrea Frost – Industry Training Federation

Also involved in the literacy work particularly at the sub-degree qualifications and making NCEA more effective. Working with the Ministry of Education around school/trades/education area and engaging ITO's with schools.

Produced a report (available on the website at www.itf.org.nz/publications.html)

Matching Supply and Demand – how people make decisions, asking questions around where the government training dollar goes, through the use of training data and advocating industry led vocational training.

There is an enormous amount of under skill in the workforce. Looking at performance indicators for tertiary education working with Ministers and the Ministry of Education.

Schools Trustees Association – Lorraine Kerr and Ray Newport

The Taskforce asked the Association to brief them on their role and whether a closer working relationship with the group would be useful for the Taskforce. It was a very productive meeting and the Taskforce agreed to continue the conversation and invite Lorraine and Ray to a further meeting in 2010.

The Association is a national organisation currently representing over 2,200 (from a total of 2,468) state and integrated boards/schools throughout NZ. The association's role is to ensure school Trustees receive information, professional development and the support required to carry out their responsibilities. The Association also represents Boards' views on educational issues. The key areas of activity are representing views of member boards, ensuring the role of school boards of trustees is properly understood, providing leadership and peer support, providing information and analysis, collective bargaining, and professional development.

Current issues include the inadequacy of boards operations funding and initial teacher education.

The triennial elections are next year and there will be a nationwide publicity campaign which the Taskforce may be able to assist with.

The PowerPoint presentation is available on the Taskforce website at www.mayorstaskforceforjobs.co.nz

OFFICIALS MEETING

Present

Richard Elwin (TEC); Catherine Nalty and Karen McKenzie (MSD); Ann Pomeroy (DIA); Felicity Bolen (DoL); Graeme Marshall (MoE) and John Dauber (TPK)

Apologies

Roger Wigglesworth (MED) and Janet Brown (Career Services)

Dale Williams outlined the purpose of the meeting and it was agreed that the meeting would focus on the action plan with discussion on achievement of the plan and what would be done in the following 3 months. There were a number of agencies absent from the meeting so clarification of their work would be sought and the plan re-circulated with actions attached. It was further agreed that some actions crossed a number of areas and that the plan would be re-ordered to reflect that.

Tertiary Education Commission

In response to a question Richard Elwin (TEC) noted that data was available from TEC regarding industry and modern apprentices being laid off. However the main problem was firms taking on new apprentices rather than laying off people. It appeared that many employers were continuing with apprentices, reflecting on the recent skill shortages and not wanting their business to be disadvantaged when the economy picked up.

Richard noted the concern about polytechnic numbers but stated that there would be no extra money for Polytechs and that he would send through the local liaison people for Mayors to contact. He further noted that the Tertiary Education Strategy's main priority was to reprioritise spending into youth. Mayors however were concerned that there were simply not enough training places in their districts for those wanting to learn and increase their skills while looking for work in a tight labour market.

Ministry of Social Development

Karen McKenzie gave an update on the job Opportunities package noting that there had been very good take-up of the programmes and that they would be asking for an increase in places for the programmes given the high demand.

With regard to Community Max the Ministry is working with the Ministry of Pacific Islands Affairs to support Pacific providers in Auckland to develop projects for their people. Also working with Maori providers. Karen suggested that Councils may be able to umbrella some of these groups who may not have the employment infrastructure and would therefore struggle to be involved. She also agreed to work with Frana Cardno on the transport issue for small rural communities.

John Forbes noted that he was the Chair of the Maori committee for LGNZ and that there needed to be links with the Taskforce and that he and Jan would work on this.

TASKFORCE MEETING

There was a general discussion about the Officials meeting and the pending meeting with Ministers. John Forbes noted the importance of ensuring Minister Paula Bennett saw connections between social and economic policies.

Reports

Executive Officers report was tabled and discussed and John Forbes congratulated Jan on the submission to the Minimum Wage Review.

Budget

That the budget be accepted with the following amendment: “*that the budget figure for Job Summit projects be decreased by \$20,000 and the National/Regional projects be increased by \$20,000*”.

Moved – Peter Tennent

Seconded – Dale Williams

Carried

Strategic Planning

That the Core Group hold a facilitated strategic planning session in February, include Bry Kopu and contract Mary Bourke as facilitator.

Moved – Penny Webster

Seconded – Maureen Reynolds

Carried

Action Plan

It was agreed to change the date for completion of research to February 2010.

Jan to contact Officials.

Recession Report

After discussion on how to present the report to Ministers the recommendations were agreed and would be distributed to Ministers and officials at the meeting.

That the recession report, with recommendations be approved.

Moved – Frana Cardno

Seconded – Malcolm Campbell

Carried

MINISTERS MEETING

Present

Ministers Hon Paula Bennett (Chair), Hon Anne Tolley, Hon Kate Wilkinson and Hon Rodney Hide

Mayors Dale Williams, Frana Cardno, Gary McPhee, Jenny Rowan, John Forbes, Jono Naylor, Kelvin Coe, Len Brown, Malcolm Campbell, Maureen Reynolds and Peter Tennent
Executive Officer Jan Francis and Departmental and Ministerial Officials.

Apologies

Hon Gerry Brownlee, Hon Pita Sharples and Hon Tariana Turia

Minister Paula Bennett welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Local and Central Government relations

Minister Rodney Hide noted that social wellbeing had been included in the review of the Local Government Act. He was interested in feedback on the Job Summit projects and how the Department of Internal Affairs was working with the Taskforce. With regard to issues in Auckland he said that it was hoped that programmes would be moved across and not stopped during the transition process. He was also interested in regulatory reform which would make it easier for business and to start up a business and easier to employ young people.

Mayor Dale Williams responded with an update on the action plan stating that projects from the Job Summit were working well and that the Taskforce was working well with all agencies to achieve reductions in youth unemployment and to create new positions for school leavers. The

transition from school into the community was crucial and the Taskforce remained focused on that objective.

Minister Paula Bennett noted that for 9 weeks in a row more young people were going off benefit which pointed to the success of the Community Max and Job Opportunities programmes. She thanked Mayors for their support of these programmes and Councils for working with their communities to maximise the opportunities.

Mayor John Forbes noted that there was a strong connection between the social and economic and work needed to acknowledge that and promote collaboration across sectors.

Mayor Jono Naylor noted that there was concern about the increase in numbers coming through from school as many young people had remained in year 13 due to the economic situation. There would be pressure on the tertiary sector and insufficient training places available.

Skills

Minister Kate Wilkinson said she was revitalising the skills strategy and convening a skills forum which would focus on outcomes. It was not only about qualifications but also about raising productivity within the business. The Taskforce would be represented on that forum through the Chair Dale Williams.

Mayor Dale Williams welcomed his inclusion and noted that he would be looking to make sure we don't revert to skill shortages.

Minister Kate Wilkinson said it was important for businesses to look to be more efficient and ask what will those people laid off do as they would have skills and remain in the community. She further noted that by 2025 60% of the current workforce would still be in the workforce. It was of concern that 40% of the current workforce can't read to the level required for safety procedures and 46% had insufficient numeracy skills to balance a cheque book. There also need to be better management skills. She said that there was to be a stock take of "self-improvement" courses available and that the Taskforce may be able to assist with this.

Minister Bennett noted the importance of bringing everything together – on the job training, businesses working together to keep people in towns which will facilitate succession within towns.

Mayor Penny Webster asked about the value of Gateway to those already going on to tertiary training and whether places should be allocated to those who needed support to make decisions. Minister Anne Tolley said that the programme needed to be as widely applied as possible and that there needed to be clear pathways which foster returning to education if that was needed.

Mayor Len Brown said there was a big challenge to identify the training for skills needed – i.e. repositioning communities for future demands and asked what the government was doing in this area.

Minister Anne Tolley said it wasn't the government's role to do this and that the tertiary sector locally must work with businesses to do that. She noted that the new curriculum was using a different way to prepare young people for skills challenges. Young people needed to have choice and the skill development role was that of the tertiary institutions and business and that the relationships at the local level were important.

Mayor Len Brown said that information was critical for providers and that perhaps the Youth Transition Services could be the ones to pull this together and asked the Minister to support schools to provide information to YTS.

Minister Tolley said she had little ability to direct schools but that they were already working with academies and the youth guarantee places.

Mayor Dale Williams said that the information from schools to YTS was crucial to their success and Mayor Jono Naylor asked for that to be endorsed by the Ministry of Education.

Minister Anne Tolley reiterated that she couldn't direct schools – that this was the responsibility of the Boards of Trustees. However the funding mechanism for schools would change and schools would be more accountable for the destination of students who leave under 16.

Minister Paula Bennett noted that there was a review of YTS currently being carried out and that one size would not fit all. Communities need to be able to determine their own responses.
Job Opportunities, Community Max and Student jobs update

Minister Paula Bennett noted that the latest figures are very good and targets are likely to be met well within the desired timeframe. The Ministry of Social Development is devising a template of successful projects to encourage others to participate which will be sent to the Taskforce. There is concern for placement after the 26week projects are completed. There is unlikely to be an extension of the programme although it is possible for people to go from Community Max to Job Opportunities. There is likely to be an announcement on student jobs in a couple of weeks. Running any specific student scheme ran in to the issues of targeting and ensuring those most in need got the positions. Extra funding had however been given to Student Job Search to use for a publicity campaign aimed at homeowners and employers. The Minister acknowledged that the unemployment benefit numbers did not reflect all those people unemployed and this was a growing concern.

Mayor Frana Cardno noted that an issue which was stopping some rural communities taking up the Community Max option was that of transport. Minister Paula Bennett said that there was a lot of flexibility around the programme and that communities needed to think laterally as to how to make the programme work for them.

Mayor Jono Naylor reiterated his concern about what happened after Community Max and asked what the long-term strategy was stating that we needed long term thinking.

Minister Paula Bennett said we needed to think differently. She believed that we didn't need more money but Mayors needed to identify inefficiencies in their communities and let her know how money could then be reprioritised.

Mayor Jono Naylor said that there were still silos in government departments and that the system of accounting for government money within departments did not encourage collaboration which would ensure savings.

Minister Paula Bennett replied that there was a possibility of changing the measurement to get better outcomes and she would be really responsive to ideas of how to do things differently.