

MAYORS TASKFORCE

FOR JOBS

www.mayorstaskforceforjobs.co.nz

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2010

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2010. The newsletter is for Mayors to share with Councillors and partners so please ensure it is distributed widely.

In February the Core Group of the Taskforce undertook a strategic planning session to develop a strategy for the next two years. This will be published in our annual report which will be presented at the Local Government New Zealand Conference in July.

As part of our new strategy we are developing ways to improve outcomes for young Maori in our community. Many of you will have already decided to participate in the young Maori leadership programme proposed by Marcus Akuhata-Brown and you can read more about how we see this working in this newsletter. If you haven't put your name forward you may wish to do so after reading the information.

This newsletter also highlights some of our work over this time including our discussions with the Human Rights Commission and Mayor Len Brown's work on Youth Transitions.

I am thrilled that once again we can support Mayors and their young people to run events during Youth Week, with help from the Ministry of Youth Development, and I look forward to once again reading the Youth Week Booklet which will be published in July.

We are concerned about the rise in youth unemployment with those under 25 making up around 34% of the unemployment register. Councils have been proactive in working with the Government on the programmes to help address this and 15% of the projects under the Community Max programme are within Councils. See the

example of Hastings further in this newsletter. We are now working on finding opportunities for these young people when they complete their projects. Your support for these young people is crucial so get in touch with your Ministry of Social Development Regional Commissioner to see what you can do.

The Taskforce continues to meet quarterly with senior Government Officials and Ministers and at our last meeting earlier this month Minister Paula Bennett reiterated her support for the partnership with the Taskforce, particularly noting how much she valued what the Mayors can do at the local level. She said she knows that local solutions are always best and what works is local communities taking ownership and control of the problems and solutions. So keep up the good work in your community and let us know what is working for you so we can share the ideas with others.

With the Local Authority elections coming up in October, the Taskforce is happy to provide Mayors with any information which you require in order to discuss the youth employment issue with your communities.

Please make use of the resources the Taskforce has available to Mayors – they are listed on the back page of this newsletter.



*Dale Williams
Chair
Mayors Taskforce for Jobs*

GUEST COMMENT

ANNE VERBOEKET [EDANZ]

SISTER CITIES

Sister Cities NZ aims to increase global cooperation at a local and national level, promote cultural understanding through a citizen's network of individuals and organisations and stimulate growth through international business opportunities.

The Office of the Mayor has played an important part in developing programmes around youth, cultural exchanges and business relationships in Asia across New Zealand especially in this Shanghai Expo year.

2010 has seen Sister Cities NZ work to build on its Sister City relationships in Japan, China and other parts of Asia in alignment with opportunities for young people to learn more about becoming international citizens. It has been an exciting opportunity for Sister Cities NZ to work with the Ministry of Youth Development in the development of a workshop for young people focusing on "Youth Building Global Connections" and to align the activities of Sister Cities with the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, Youth Councils and young leaders groups.

This workshop, supported by Mayor Kerry Prendergast, was hosted by Wellington City Council. Over 60 people participated on that day and an enthusiastic group have continued to meet with a specific focus on working together to encourage Youth Councils and people from other youth groups to become engaged in international relationships at all levels.

A small group will attend the Sister Cities Conference in Dunedin on the 15th/16th April with the support of the Ministry for Youth Development and will focus on culture, educational activities and connections, and enhancing economic links.

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Left to Right:

Philip Gibson, Commissioner General – Shanghai

Angela Wallace, Export Bay of Plenty

Mayor Peter Tennent, New Plymouth District Council

Yvonne Tatton, Community Development, Tauranga City Council

MAYORS PROFILE

MAYOR ALISTAIR SOWMAN

MARLBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

Marlborough Mayor Alistair Sowman has been part of the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs since 2004 and a member of the Core Group since 2007.

A second-term Mayor, Alistair's personal background before local body politics was in business and the horticultural sector, with lengthy involvement in sports and service clubs. He is Mayor of one of our smallest regions but as Marlborough's District Council is one of only four Unitary Authorities overseeing one of the largest regional coastlines, the country's biggest wine producing area and host to the bulk of the country's shellfish industry, Alistair is dealing with a broad range of significant environmental and commercial issues.

"With the sort of industries we have in Marlborough, labour force matters are always at the forefront of my mind. In the past our biggest problem was a shortage of workers – I used to joke that I personally knew every one of Marlborough's young unemployed people as there were so few of them. However, that has changed in the last year and a half. When I came on board the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs, it was because I – as a parent as well as a Mayor – believed strongly in its goal that all young people should either be in education or training or employed in paid work, or in some activity that would lead to them becoming independent and gainfully employed. To try and meet this target in Marlborough, our partnership with the Ministry of Social Development set up the Marlborough Youth Transition."

"Our three secondary schools have been very cooperative, working with us to ensure that all students who walk out the school gate for the last time are connected with this Service. In Marlborough we have always had a certain proportion of school leavers go out of the region for higher education or training. But it's those staying on in Marlborough who are of primary concern because the options are looking less and less rosy. Marlborough has changed rapidly in the last decade. We've been seeing more family groups moving into our region and that seems to be raising the teenage population faster than the projections. Certainly our secondary schools are getting a continuing inflow of students from outside the region. Unfortunately the current lack of job opportunities across Marlborough

makes it particularly hard to find work for those just out of school. It is vital that Youth Transitions continues to receive central government support. It is the foundation behind so many initiatives."

"A snapshot at late March shows our Youth Transitions had a total of 125 youngsters on its books. Of these, 9 were in training, 14 were going back to school and 23 had found work. The worrying figure though is that the rest of them [79 young people] are noted as not having anything to do; no work and no training opportunities. For many of these young people, the Government's Community Max programme has been the light at the end of the tunnel. My Council acts as a contact point for community and environmental organisations which can take Community Max workers. The kids may be getting the minimum wage, and it is only six months work, but it's teaching them work habits and work skills and giving them an employment record. The training is practical, work related and it is making a difference."

"For example, we had one Community Max worker who got his driver's licence, his first aid certificate, his tree felling ticket and his chainsaw ticket while on the scheme. He's now got a permanent job in forestry. Results like this show a very sound return on the time and money invested. In Marlborough we have 26 young people working under this programme with another dozen, who've been on the scheme, who've recently moved on to other opportunities. Another 20 or more are on a waiting list to find a Community Max position."

"Our practical experience in Marlborough shows that there is a continued need for Community Max and that it is serving a good purpose."



Mayor Alistair Sowman
Marlborough District Council

MAYORS PROJECTS



Hastings District Council has had great success with its recent Taskforce Green project and the Growing Communities project, which used Community Max funding.

The Taskforce Green programme, offered by Work and Income, provides subsidies for unemployed people to work on special projects which would not otherwise be undertaken. Taskforce Green workers were with Hastings District Council for six-months working on a variety of projects including Environmental Enhancement projects; Library/Archiving projects and Youth Experience projects. All projects offered new recruits the opportunity to gain skills associated with various Council activities. The project, which concluded at the end of January, employed 29 unemployed Hastings residents, assisting the community during a time when jobs were hard to find.

The Hastings District Council also launched its Growing Communities programme in October 2009, providing work opportunities for 94 local unemployed youth and for 16 supervisors. The programme has allowed Hastings-based community groups' access to the Work and Income Community Max subsidy by employing the recruits on behalf of community groups. The scheme is funded by the government's Community Max initiative and offers youths six months work on a range of community projects, helping them gain work experience and new skills. The programme has meant community groups have been able to locate unemployed youth in their own communities, assisting them into meaningful employment on projects that have a community benefit.

The success of the programme was due to the willingness of community groups to seize the opportunity to support their youth into work, while enhancing their communities. The Council encouraged community groups to make the most of

the Community Max subsidy and complete community projects that would not have been completed in the past due to the cost of labour.

Council supported more than 20 projects including:

- Marae restoration and enhancement
- Riverbank planting and maintenance
- Community sports facilitation programmes
- Library cataloguing in country schools

Hastings District Council agreed the programme was a success and is keen to do similar projects in future.



Mayor Lawrence Yule

Photo courtesy of Hastings District Council Website

CONTACT

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MAYORS PROJECTS MANUKAU

A new initiative aimed at getting Manukau youth into further education, training and jobs is gaining momentum. The initiative, which Manukau Mayor Len Brown is championing, is initially focusing on Mangere.

Around 90 representatives of schools, Government departments, employers and community organisations came together at a workshop in Mangere, to identify how they can work together with high schools to complement and build on existing work. Manukau Mayor Len Brown says the Manukau Youth Initiative is to ensure all school leavers are picked up.

“We want to ensure that all school leavers are picked up. Right now, too many are falling through the gaps. However, it takes the community to make this happen and that’s why we are working with government agencies, local agencies, but most importantly with schools and employers. It’s the holistic approach that is the key to helping our young people who are at risk, into constructive training and jobs.”

“Direct contact and mentoring through this initiative will support what is already being carried out. We’re first of all focusing on Mangere, but our aim is to get this initiative happening throughout Counties Manukau.”

“We are working with our Government partners, Enterprising Manukau, employers and schools to get this under way, with detailed work still going into its development.”

The Manukau Youth Initiative was developed with the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs and is endorsed by the Tomorrow’s Manukau Strategic Steering Group. It is sponsored by Manukau Mayor Len Brown and the Manukau City Council, in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development and other government and non-government agencies.

Mr Brown says that there is a significant number of young people in Manukau who don’t make a successful transition into further education, training or employment. “We need to ensure that there is appropriate support for these young people. To do this will take a co-ordinated and strategic ‘whole of community’ approach,” he says.

“Our young people need secure pathways into their future. Right now, we estimate that around 3500 to 4000 young people leave schools in Manukau every year. About 800 to 1100 of these will need support to make a successful transition out of school and into further education, training or jobs.”



The initiative builds on the Counties-Manukau Youth Transition Services support through a formalised process with secondary schools to enable follow-up for all school leavers, who will, as far as possible, be offered a customised service. School-leavers will be followed up regularly until they have made a successful transition.

Local community and stakeholder clusters will also be formed and there will be inter-agency support to address issues and opportunities to help schools leavers get on track towards gaining work.

RANGATAHI LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

MARCUS AKUHATA-BROWN

The Mayors Taskforce for Jobs Core Group, in conjunction with Marcus Akuhata-Brown, has developed a new strategy which seeks to improve the education, employment and training outcomes for young Maori.

The Rangatahi Leadership Programme is yet to be finalised, but initial plans will include four Wananga per year. Participating Mayors will select a young Maori person to participate in the programme and meet at least monthly with the young person to mentor and enter into dialogue around civic responsibility. The Rangatahi will accompany the Mayor to events which the Mayor thinks would assist the young person's development as a local leader.

It is expected that the young person would at the same time work with other young people in their community to share the learning and demonstrate leadership. Mayors expressing an interest will be contacted by Marcus to discuss the next steps.

The Mayors Taskforce for Jobs and others recognise that the demographic most affected by the recent recession is young Maori. Whilst this is true, it is also acknowledged that this group is still the worst off even in better economic conditions. Consequently young Maori feature at the high end of most negative social indicators. Most government funded programmes designed to target this disparity are ad-hoc and short term. Mayors expressed a desire to take an intentional, long term, intergenerational approach by developing the leadership capacity of young Maori in a systemic way over a significant period of time with the view that these young Maori could in time become the key drivers of social and economic change in their respective communities.

The long term aim of the project is to support the development of Maori leaders who are engaged effectively in local, national and international social, cultural and economic development opportunities.

Young people will be selected by their local Mayor against a set of agreed criteria. These are yet to be created but are likely to include young Maori who:

- Are aged between 18-25 years
- Are currently demonstrating active leadership roles in their communities

- Are involved in some form of community service
- Are able to commit to being involved in the programme for a minimum of 12 months
- Have support from others to participate in the programme (whanau/hapu/pakeke/employers/community etc.)

Participating Mayors will commit to mentor the young person for a minimum of 12 months. How this happens will be different in every location but it is expected the Mayor will meet with the participant at least once a month and involve them in some form of civic leadership activities where appropriate, over the tenure of the programme.

Mayors will also financially support the young person to attend four Wananga a year and provide the opportunity and support for the young person to apply the learning's from the Wananga to their own communities. It is envisaged that travel costs to Wananga locations will be the major cost of this component of the programme.

**Expressions of interest from Mayors
can be sent via email to
mo.pettit@clear.net.nz**



Marcus Akuhata-Brown

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

“NATIONAL CONVERSATION ABOUT WORK”

Almost 3000 people from all around New Zealand have had the chance to have their say about fairness at work through the Human Rights Commission’s National Conversation about Work. National Conversation participants agree that the need to address youth employment is crucial to New Zealand’s future employment prosperity. Engagements around the country have provided the Human Rights Commission with a wide range of views on youth employment. School education, workplace preparedness, access to higher education and trade training opportunities as well as attitudes to work have been discussed.

Disengagement of youth while still at school is one of the root causes affecting youth employment issues according to Youth Transition workers the Human Rights Commission met with. “I’ve never seen so much disengagement in the last five or six years for young people. We need to let go of the idea that there is only one place that kids can go to learn”.

Employer and employee views on youth employment around the country have been varied. Some are less than complimentary towards young workers. “The young ones need a kick up the bum, they’re hopeless. They don’t turn up”. In some centres employers openly admitted to preferring mature workers over the young. “We had employed a young male who turned up for work drunk or late, so now we try to get older workers”.

Other National Conversation participants are more sympathetic towards young workers. “We need young people to keep us on our toes”. Some employers recognised that employment was different for youth. “We have to accommodate the different values of the younger generation”.

Youth career workers thought that job re-design may be a way to accommodate the needs and expectations of youth. Others agreed that the way work is organised today does not suit the young. Young workers who participated in the National Conversation were keen to shake off negative criticism by employers. “Unreliable kids, that’s a load of shit. If it’s the right job we’ll turn up. It’s really about what they [employers] put across at the start, how they treat us”.

Other young workers pointed out that development and pastoral care was important to engagement. “Here we are encouraged to learn things. They put us through first aid and training for life. It’s not just talk talk”.

Apprenticeships continue to be a nationwide issue. “There’s been reduced numbers and no consistency from Government, the rules keep changing. Government needs to stick to one system”. Another issue with apprenticeships in small towns was that “one employer trains them and others snap them up”.

The Human Rights Commission has mooted a National Youth-to-Work Scheme that transcends political and economic cycles and that supports all young people to transition from school to work. This has received widespread support when it has been discussed.

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Modern Apprenticeships – “Give Girls a Go” Participant



22nd-30th May 2010

The theme of Youth Week 2010 is “Rangatahi Ora – Whanau Ora” and is about connecting young people and their families.

The Mayors Taskforce for Jobs still has some funding available to support Youth Councils in their Youth Week 2010 events.

The funding is available to the Mayor by virtue of their membership of the Taskforce and the following guidelines apply:

- all requests must come from the Mayor only – **no formal application is required**
- the money has to go in to a Council account
- the Mayor is accountable for that money
- it is to be used by the Youth Council, Youth Reference Group or Youth Advisory Group and may be for an actual event or activity or contribution towards other activities being run by them during Youth Week.

Requests from anyone other than the Mayor, and along the guideline laid out, are not eligible.

Applications may be sent via email to mo.pettit@clear.net.nz

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR MAYORS

- Industry Graduations – guide, support, speakers
- Fora or local project development – Celia Lashlie and Jan Francis
- Website www.mayorstaskforceforjobs.co.nz
- E-Group
- Marcus Akuhata-Brown – Partnership with Te Puni Kokiri
- Youth Week Projects – \$500 for Youth Councils
- Toolkit – Mayors Taskforce Award
- Ministry of Youth Development Partnership Fund – www.myd.govt.nz
- MSD Regional Commissioners – www.msd.govt.nz
- Support Funds – Mayors to make things happen
- Career Expos – information and advice
- Newsletters
- Submissions, Advocacy, Support, Input into policy development – quarterly meetings, advisory groups and policy fora
- Quarterly meetings with Ministers and Senior Officials

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