

**0.0 Mayor's Report - 26 September 2024****Author: Andy Watson, His Worship the Mayor**

I apologise for this report being late and therefore not included automatically in the Council agenda as circulated initially. Beth and I took a holiday and a breather for the first time in years to look around the South Island, returning just as this report was due. While I understand there will be no interest in our trip, there are a couple of reflections on the trip that have a relevance to our Council business.

- 1.1 Roothing - many of the South Island Council authorities have huge land areas but they have, from a roading perspective, significant advantages. Most of their roads are state highways with minimal roads to be locally funded and those that are locally funded are formed on a very solid and stable rock base. Metal is available everywhere, so cartage is low cost enabling very effective construction and reseal programmes. I envy them – our roads are often formed on soils that are poor, are subject to flooding, earth movement on slip zones and are built, in a lot of cases, a significant distance from metal sources. I guess these are the reasons and arguments for our enhanced FAR rates (financial assistance rates from Government).
- 1.2 The West Coast was predictably incredibly wet and challenging and that is one of the beauties of the coast. However, once you hit Bluff and start travelling north, particularly inland through places like the McKenzie District and Basin, it is a dust bowl. Because of the closure of the two mills at Tangiwai, I was interested in the power generation of New Zealand and so made a point of visiting most of the hydro schemes in the South Island. These hydro lakes, especially at Tekapo, are incredibly low hence the price of power in New Zealand. The Alps have significant snow to melt to feed these reservoirs which is great but there will be no immediate relief for those trying to farm within these catchments.
- 1.3 The South Island is swamped with tourists and Queenstown in particular is facing significant congestion and housing accommodation pressure for their workforce. Yes, tourists do spend money and support the local economy, but if travelling via camper vans contribute little (no rates) to supplying the services needed. This supports the arguments for visitor taxes.
- 1.4 For the rest of my report, I start by honouring and recognising our new Māori Queen and an acknowledgement to the service and passing of the Māori King.

It was with sadness that Rangitīkei District Council acknowledged the passing of Kiingi Tūheitia, the Māori King on 30 August. May his legacy continue to inspire and guide us towards a united future. In respect and honour of Kiingi Tūheitia's life, flags across the Rangitīkei were flown at half mast.

I would like to acknowledge and extend our respect to Kuini Nga-wai-hono-i-te-pō, the new Māori Queen. She succeeds her father, Kiingi Tūheitia, to become the eighth Māori Monarch (and only the second Queen).

- 1.5 I referred earlier to roading and there are a couple of updates –
  - i) The Government signalled that the build of our new major roads would be partially funded by way of a toll system. For us in our region this will mean tolls on the Te Ahu a Turanga linking Ashhurst to Tararua district and O2NL (the Otaki to North of Levin state highway). Submissions to these two separate tolls are due by 30 September and hopefully after a meeting with my fellow regional mayors, I may have a suggested response for this

meeting as I suspect that we need to support Palmerston North City Council, Tararua District Council and Horowhenua District Council as well as our own position.

- ii) On 30 September NZTA (New Zealand Transport Agency) confirmed our roading budgets. As indicated in our Long Term Plan, our maintenance budgets were reduced by \$5m over the three year term. Since then we have had a further reduction in what is called Low-Cost Low-Risk work that is used to improve local roads often as part of resilience work. We had requested \$12.8m and have received only \$300,000. From a short-term view this means that we have some budget available from what is a rated position of our share to reallocate. From a longer-term district view this reduction is challenging. There is also a potential trap here for authorities. Government, in making these cuts through NZTA, have also signalled that it will review some of our other resilience projects separately later so our spend could rise and that there is a further \$100m fund for resilience that can be applied for. So, if we reallocate funding now we could be in a difficult position later.

1.6 Our Capital Works Programme – at the LGNZ Conference I reported on earlier, both the Prime Minister and Minister Simeon Brown (Minister Local Government and Infrastructure) were very direct in referencing the removal of the four well-beings and the need to focus purely on essential work. They have since re-enforced this thinking by saying that if you apply for the Regional Infrastructure Funds (similar to Minister Jones’ previous funds) your budgets will be scrutinised. Council has been prudent, but we will also be facing some additional costs and uncertainty over programmed costs. These may include –

- a) Unforeseen costs for the Marton Pool which could be significant as indicated in this Council agenda;
- b) Uncertainty over budgets for two major builds in both Marton and Taihape.

Council should, in my opinion, be proactive here and as such I am making two recommendations as part of my report –

- a. Council reviews our Capex budget (capital spend) in this year’s Annual Plan and Long-Term Plan as soon as is possible.
- b. That staff provide direction/costings for this review based on best estimates available now and that staff also provide a report on the process required for an amendment to next year’s Annual Plan and this year’s Long Term Plan.

Amendments to Long Term Plans do come at a cost and I recognise that this also means a challenge to staff capacity and the need to consult. Regardless of the work that I am signalling, Council will face an amendment to the LTP already because of the Three Waters position with the likelihood of some sort of regional Three Waters CCO (Council Controlled Organisation) as required by Government.

1.7 On a positive note, I would like to welcome Linda and Den, the new owners of Fresh Choice to Marton and the Rangitikei. Fresh Choice, as I understand it, is a franchise owned subsidiary of the Woolworths New Zealand Group. The reshape of the store looks great and I would like to thank Deputy Mayor Dave for filling in for me at the official opening.

1.8 As part of the planning for the strengthening and refit of the Taihape Town Hall, Maycroft our preferred contractor, is digging a series of holes outside the building to check on the foundations that are there. Once that is done, they will be in a position to provide a contract price for the build work.

- 1.9 On Friday 27 September Rangitikei will host a Regional Growth Summit at Te Matapihi. This will be attended by the Regional Mayors/Chief Executives and some of the Councillors along with many of the region's principal industries. The event will be jointly hosted by ourselves, Department of Internal Affairs and Accelerate 35 the regional economic development group which are funded through Horizons. Several key Ministers will be there including Minister Jones. I will report back on this event later, but the format is really a given. Government has a fund that has been well publicised with the focus on creating economic growth for New Zealand that is unable to be used for a variety of things including three waters related projects. Minister Jones will want to emphasize the rules, the opportunity and stress that the assistance by and large will be on providing loan facilities. Any work that is assisted by Government will need to be consent ready etc. What will be of real interest will be the Q&A session from industries which may well include a question for example on electricity supply and cost.
- 1.10 In a similar vein, on Friday I sat in on a webinar on regional funding options called Reginal Deals which is separate to the above. The key messages are –
- i. They are regional in nature focussed on economic development.
  - ii. They are long term with a 30 year vision and negotiate 10-year plans.
  - iii. They will be linked to Council Long Term Plans.
  - iv. They should include community input and may include private/public partnerships.
  - v. Central and Local Government will establish an oversight body with an independent Chair.
  - vi. They can be used for resilience of infrastructure and housing.
  - vii. The selection of the first 5 regions should be known and signed up by the end of next year.
  - viii. The Regions are not necessarily the same as Regional Council regions. There could be various groupings.
  - ix. Regional deals in the future will need to be aligned to Local Government election cycles.

The message is also clear that for at least the first few deals Government does not have cash to support the regional deals, so assistance will be by the way of -

- a. Providing regulatory assistance/relief.
  - b. Unlocking funding tools which may be a reference to LGFA funding (The Local Government Funding Agency).
- 1.11 Three Waters or Local Water Done Well - for some time, the regional Chief Executives have been working with staff to understand the costs each Council will face to provide for drinking water and wastewater provisions over the next 30 years while focussing on the first ten years. This work has been exhaustive and has been hampered by continual changes of Government direction. Lately the regional Mayors have been part of those discussions and the first official briefings for Councillors were last week. Government has conceded that for regional CCO's there has to be consultation and at least a limited amendment to LTP's. These changes represent the most significant change to Local Government since 1989 and in my opinion must be consulted on. To meet the Local Government Act requirements, Councils will need to show a preferred Council position and the other option or options that could be considered. To understand the options Council will need to engage with other Councils as we are and to also engage with industry and Iwi. Councils will also need to determine how they intend to deal with stormwater.

Time is the difficulty - Government has legislated that Council have under a year to have a Council approved plan submitted to Internal affairs in Wellington. To meet this timeframe each Council in a possible regional CCO mix would need to have a preferred option before the end of this year. That would allow for a consultation as part of an Annual Plan prepared in April and May.

While all of the regional Councils are working together, some Councils are looking at options beyond the regional boundaries as well which is wise and while unlikely in my opinion a Council could look to go it alone and form a CCO alone. All this means is that the landscape could well change late this year.

The Councils are not yet able to share the financial modelling which still continues to change but what is becoming apparent is that financially it may make little difference over time as to which Councils are in or out.

1.12 SuperLocal Conference August 2024 - Report: Simon Loudon

Attached is the report from this conference provided by Cr Loudon, he may expand on his report at the meeting.

1.13 Marton Op Shop – At the recent AGM I was asked about whether Council would contribute to the cost of disposing of items that are not able to be sold and have to be taken to the Waste Transfer Station. I will expand more on this at the meeting.

## Mayor’s Engagements

September 2024

2	Attended meeting with Chief Executive Attended meeting with GM Department of Corrections Attended Climate Action Joint Committee Attended Mayoral Forum
3	Attended Emergency Management Standing Committee Meeting Attended Regional Transport Committee Meeting Attended Council Webinar – Water Services Delivery Plans
4	Attended monthly meeting for Q&A with Executive Leadership Team Attended walk-through Taihape Town Hall Building with Elected Members Attended meeting with BECA
5	Attended Meet & Greet with new owners of Fresh Choice Marton, Linda and Den Attended BA5 Meeting at Honest Wolf Hunterville
6	Attended Accelerate25 Meeting
10	Attended Council Webinar – Water Services Delivery Models & Financing Options Attended Weekly Meeting with Deputy Mayor
18	Attended meeting with Chief Executive Attended Risk & Assurance Committee Meeting Attended Local Water Done Well – Sub Regional Briefing Meeting

19	Attended LGNZ Transport Forum Meeting Wellington
20	Attended meeting with Chief Executive Attended Fortnightly Economic Development Meeting with Staff Attended Regional Deals Strategic Framework online session Attended meeting with Jackson Stone Recruitment Agency
23	Attended meeting with Chief Executive Attended Mayors Taskforce for Jobs Governance Group Online Meeting Attended Manawatu-Whanganui Disaster Relief Fund Trust Online Meeting Attended Marton Christian Welfare Council AGM
24	Attended NZTA Regional Relationship Online Meeting Attended Citizenship Ceremony Attended Powerco “Achieving a Balanced Energy Transition” Event
25	Attended Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa Workshop Attended Youth Council Meeting
26	To attend Whanganui Community Foundation AGM To attend Finance/Performance Committee Meeting To attend Council Meeting
27	To attend meeting with Chief Executive To attend Manawatu-Whanganui Regional Growth Summit with Minister Jones
30	To attend meeting with Chief Executive To attend LGNZ Focus Group Online Meeting

**Recommendation 1**

That the Mayor’s Report – 26 September 2024 be received.

**Recommendation 2**

That Council reviews its Capex Budget for this year’s Annual Plan and Long-Term Plan as soon as possible.

**Recommendation 3**

That staff provide updates on the likely 2024-25 Capex spend based on best estimates available now.

**Recommendation 4**

That staff indicate areas of possible Capex savings for the 2024-25 year.

**Recommendation 5**

That staff provide a report on the process required for an amendment to next year’s Annual Plan and this year’s Long-Term Plan.



# SuperLocal Conference August 2024.

Report: Simon Loudon

To begin my report, and musings, on the SuperLocal Conference, I would like to thank Mayor Andy Watson and the Rangitikei District Council for the opportunity to attend. I enjoyed the company and fellowship of the other RDC attendees, Fi Dalgety, Piki Te Ora Hiroa, Kevin Ross and Carol Gordon. I learnt much, thought more, and was inspired by the possibilities. We dare to dream. But it isn't, and it won't be, easy for local government and elected members to embrace balance as we negotiate necessary change.

The conference was attended by over 800 elected members, community committee members and Council staff from around the country. It was extremely well organised, catered for, and enjoyed by all. I thought it strengthened everyone's resolve in local government to uphold 'localism' and the four wellbeing's, despite speakers from central government wishing to pull it all down. 'Let me be clear' speak is not what this elected member wishes for our community and the push back from most that attended was 'clear', we do want and strive for cost effective workable solutions for our infrastructure, but we still need and desire a community spirit that is strong and well catered for. I refer you to an opinion piece by Wellington Mayor Tory Whanau, Sunday Star Times August 25<sup>th</sup>, for a polite but pointed response to overreaching, overbearing central government.

I start with a highlight, the opening keynote speakers address, by **John Allen**, CE, WellingtonNZ. He is also Chancellor of Victoria University.

He spoke unscripted, with passion, with unrelenting expression, and full of wonder about what's important. He challenged us all to dream of a better place to live in, to be a part of it, and to engage with it. He embraced 'localism' and what **you** could bring to **your** communities and gave examples of important projects and initiatives like Predator Free Wellington. He marvelled at the resulting joys of exploding birdlife and a regenerating green belt, and what that means to the living experiences of Wellingtonians. He celebrated the diversities of peoples in his city, and the vibrancy they bring. He championed the Arts and Culture scene of Wellington, challenging us all to think deeply about the four wellbeing's and where they might be derived from. He challenged us to stick to the mandate given to us from our communities and to embrace the wholeness of life and what it means to actually live in a community.

He gave us a poem – Harlem by Langston Hughes 1951

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up  
like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore –

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over –

like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

like a heavy load.

*Or does it just explode?*



Also offer up on Day 1 was the contrasting opening address by Prime Minister **Christopher Luxton**. ‘Let me be clear’, was a disappointment to me and many others at our localism conference. Mr Luxton came into our house, the house of local government, and cut down the four supporting posts of our roof of wellbeing. He line by line shredded any value local government offered to the people of our communities, instead placing more value on a sewage pipe, but not offering to pay for it. He offered compensation by further rate taxing our constituents by enabling local government to borrow more money, and more and more money, to fund it, to the point of no return. It was keenly felt around the room that central government is taking no responsibility. Whilst it is understood that prudent fiscal management is acutely necessary there appears to be little understanding of where our people and our communities live, work and play, and that our living environment is, and could be, important to us. That’s a dilemma elected members will face in the coming years.

## **Day 2**

Everybody looked forward to more positivity after the PM assault on local government. Rangitikei delegates had shared a lovely team building meal the night before with Tararua delegates. It was good to chat about common issues and goals. Of note though was our affable restaurant owner and host who hails from the Ratana/Turakina area. He said he is doing ok in the tough Wellington food scene but it’s not easy. He did a great job in looking after us all and spicing up our palates (much to Piki’s concern).

MC Kim Hill, always wonderfully on point, introduced our first speaker, **Simeon Brown**, Minister for Local Government and Minister for Transport. Here’s what he said:

- Let me be clear. (Yes, he opened with that, and the tone of his delivery did not suggest a step backwards nor engagement with our sector)
- Efficiency Plan
- Cost effectiveness
- Stop waste
- Basics focus – ditch nice to haves.
- Compliance
- Transparency
- Public transport investment (Rural?? NZTA have cut our budgets)
- Criticism of Labour 3 waters plan. Our plan is....
- Local control, it's what you asked for!
- CCO's – up to 500% debt to income ratio borrowing through LGFA but only for upfront costs and maintenance, and only for scaled up CCO's
- Cut red tape – fast track consents
- Regional Deal Framework for a) Economic development, b) delivery of infrastructure, c) improve supply of affordable housing. But only for 5 deals initially – the rest would seem to be left to scrap it out for what's left over.
- Central government will only respond to regional deals that focus on infrastructure and cost. You have 12 months to get your regional deals on the table, we don't want glossy, professionally designed and done documents, just your inhouse, real, matter of fact, maths orientated, A4 typed page. (We could hand write one to save money, display a cost efficiency mentality, and demonstrate how poor the region is.... just saying)
- THE END.

Minister Simeon Brown left little air in the room, in my opinion. Again, the directness, firmness and clarity of such a message suggests a one-dimensional understanding of what local government's role is in our community. It's a balancing act that elected members will have to respect as we move forward into the very challenging and difficult years ahead. The collateral damage, as we are seeing now, will be huge as this slash and burn show goes on. I kept on asking myself 'what about the people?'. We

are elected members, and we face our community each day. Our community pays the rates, which is just another tax, and central government is just pushing all those extra taxes onto us to collect and taking no responsibility for the fall out. Central government receives 90% of the tax take, local government only 10%. Will it all come unstuck?

Mayor **Alex Walker**, Central Hawkes Bay, reflected.

- We know local
- Local government bears the brunt of community unrest
- Bright, vibrant, resilient communities will lead to better outcomes.

**Susan Freeman-Green**, CE, LGNZ, spoke next and drew everyone back to the theme of the conference, localism.

- ‘Control should be placed as near to the population as possible’, an outcome of a post WWII study on reorganisation of governance delivery. ‘Localism’.
- Power imbalance between local and central government.
- Financial imbalances
- We are the last man standing and have to bear the risk.
- Levers adjustment is needed.
- Data collection will be a focus.
- And conversations as to the drivers of rates risers need to be had.
- The ‘can’ is now at the end of the road.
- Local government invests \$3.8 billion into infrastructure EACH year.
- The collective power for localism should be the message.
- And the individual power at local levels of localism.
- Recent polling says that 70% of people think Councils aren’t doing too badly, most think we are doing ok.
- Localism tailored to local areas key desire of those polled.
- And they want reduced centralised bureaucracy.

**Dr Oliver Hartwitch**, NZ Initiative, spoke next. I found this speaker inspiring, clear, insightful, well researched and had experiences over multiple country set ups. Localism is his gig, and for well researched factual reasons. I have since signed up the NZ Initiative newsletters.

- Localism is about giving Councils the right incentives.
- Tax revenues (ala GST) is about sharing revenue/royalties; presently is unfair. Funding arrangements are not right.
- Switzerland, his home country, is a ‘devolved government’ model. They have 2000 councillors for 9 million population.
- He’s very frustrated with central government, they shouldn’t hate local government! Central government has too much control.
- **Fix the game and fix the rules**
- Change the game and get on the same page, the system is not correct.
- 90% want regulations tailored to our needs.
- We need a pathway to decentralisation. It is morally correct; it’s a rescue plan for democracy and makes economic sense.
- We need a power shift to the people; we need to treat residents as neighbours, as customers, as friends.
- Central and local government need to work together.

A panel discussion took place on how to involve Council in projects led by communities. The panel included **Camden Howitt**, scientist from PWC, responsible for co-ordinating coastline cleanups; **Rawiri Richmond**, Te Wananga O Raukawa, Otaki building project – the living building sustainability challenge project diverting 99.8% of their building waste from landfill; and **Leeann Watson**, Business Canterbury.

Camden and Rawiri talked of community involvement – the love story, empowering the communities to love that stream, love that bush, love that coastline or parkland, deal with your waste responsibly. The need to respect these people, engage and support these people, by Council, for all.

Leeann emphasised bringing businesses/developers and local government together, have that conversation and make decisions (Simon’s rider, should involve all Councillors in these conversations, at a public excluded workshop). Go to central government, make your case.

Fi and I had differing views on what was said, I was more the 60's child. I look forward to Fi's take on this discussion.

Then we heard from the 'young ones.' The u40s in local government, presented by co-chairs **Alex Crackett**, 32, Councillor, Invercargill, and **Rohan O'Neill-Stevens**, 24, Deputy Mayor, Nelson. They are impressive and articulate young people.

- The average age of New Zealanders is 38, the average age of Councillors in NZ is 65(!) – alas I'm over the hill.
- Engaging the younger generation is vitally important, there are more of them, and more are voting, and more are wanting and willing to engage.
- Rohan said, in response to Central Government directions, 'yes, you can have and need the 'bread and butter', but where do you get your nutrients from?' (Keynote speaker John Allen would be a good start)
- As a young person it's a valued job at Council, but Council must acknowledge their value, they speak for an important demographic that has the future in front of them, one that we are now formulating.
- Care and caution is needed with the fast tracking approach. It's the young people that will live the results.

Comment: Rangitikei needs young voices at our table.

As I get to this point, I'm thinking, when will this end?! I am only up to session 2 on day 2. You are probably thinking the same, or even asking the question 'do I really need to read this?' You do, we lived it, some good bits are coming.

**Shane Jones**, always good to listen too, even if you don't always agree, the money man. He opened his Q & A session with MC Kim Hill by saying, "now I'm not going to argue with you Kim, I've been interviewed by you a couple of times and always come off second best." This Minister presents in

contrast to the previous two by being convivial, and happy to be here, why wouldn't you when you come with pockets full on money?

- \$1.2 Billion in fact, it is a co-fund, and it is an opportunity.
- And it is going out the door as fast as possible!
- We need to grow the economy.
- We have already started with \$100 million to mitigate climate change issues in the Manawatu (I think that's what I heard?)
- Debt is an issue.
- There will be a competitive process for the money.
- There will be a regional hui on this to create a shared understanding on priority projects for each region. We wish to find common ground.
- It's all about economic activity and jobs.
- The key people are Ministers Bishop, Willis, Potaka and Jones.
- The fast track is about the pace to process resource consents.
- Need a one stop shop to drive the process ie the developer to drive the process.
- The fast-track legislation will have types of businesses who will be prioritised.
- There has been a tendency to overstate the risks and understate the costs.
- Regional deals, if aligned with your project will have greater traction. So blending planning with regional deals towards infrastructure projects. The REGION will make things happen, not local.
- In response to questions re Winstone Mill closure. Solar/Wind farms first options through the gate.
- Energy security + costs important. Wants to change and fix the structure of business of energy companies.
- Costs must not overwhelm the affordability.
- Of the initial \$3 billion PGF money he said there is not much left, just a few million, mentioned that some port projects were in the mix. His response was a little bit cagey.

**Richard de Cani**, Arup, climate economist spoke next and asked the question "What drives productive growth?"

- Need to support drive to net zero emissions

- Better and more climate resilience will provide better economics.
- Design for heating. A focus on design to make our surface areas cooler on our houses, environmental spaces, fewer hard surfaces, lighter colours. Heating of our built-up areas is having an increasingly adverse effect on local climate change, deluge rainfall events for example.
- Need for green spaces and water run off management systems to be incorporated into any design programme. It makes good economic sense.
- Quality of 'liveability' of our communities is based around connectivity, active travel (cycle/walk), green spaces, which leads to wellbeing and wellness, which in turn has benefits in health economics, a central government issue.
- Regional deals, a devolution of decision making from central to local government and or all aspects of service delivery. They are led locally but supported centrally. Incentivises growth ie The Long Term Plan (Central Government is only a 3 year plan). Need to know the limitations of fast tracking and long-term implications.
- City deals focus on economic growth, place-based approach, a bespoke option for end place, growth focus, shared commitment, devolution of powers LG vs CG.
- The issues can be that involvement of communities is not great, can be patchwork planning, economics of today vs economics of tomorrow.
- The need to push down decision making to as low as possible (ie local)
- Need a combination blend of urban and suburban growth – density vs parks. Climate change issues with extreme heat generation and deluge weather events are uneconomic.

#### **LGFA.** The infrastructure and money panel conversation.

- Evidence based applications to these regional deals is **very important** when applying for funding.
- Financing is LENDING. And you have to repay your debts.
- LGFA, will need a guarantee for CCO lending, and that's the parent Council shareholders.

- LGFA presently lend on a 280% to 350% debt to income ratio, as of right. But CCO's, for these infrastructure projects could borrow up to 500%, but that's a LGFA Board decision and its evidenced based funding.
- Does this draw a small Council into an unsustainable debt structure? And is this unacceptable risk? My questions to myself when listening.
- The Long Term Plan needs to be part of, and co-ordinate with, the regional plan. Wellbeing is a key part of that horizon, its multigenerational and its webbing people together.
- 90% of tax goes to central government, 10% to local government.
- Local government has funding tool issues and needs to consider 'value capture', user pays, such as increased fees, developer contribution fees (it's a long term view), or, when Council invests in a plan change they should recapture that investment with a higher rating level for that development (my thought, and not a bad idea don't you think?)

Technology. Speaker **Nicole Coughlin** from Cary, North Carolina, USA spoke of her city of Cary and its technological journey as its gone through exponential growth. From a population of 8,000 in 1950 to 200,000 today, Cary has planned and managed that growth to cover an area of 61 sq miles, it boasts 100 miles of greenways and added engaging interactive public parklands spaces. It has attracted a multitude of technology companies to base there, and almost 70% of its adult population have bachelor's degrees or higher. The city has embraced the IoT, or Internet of Things, it runs a LoRoWan network (its cheaper than cellular). Examples of how it's used are

- Three Waters. In 2011 they installed Smart water meters which gave valuable insights into water usage. It enabled better pricing, better returns, changed habits on consumption, you can log into your own account and self-limit usage. Its great for anomaly reporting, ie a leak in the system is immediately signalled, reported and dealt with. They use drones as first responders to check out the issue, its very fast. Benefits are greater efficiencies of management, leak monitoring, data for planning, user planning, reduction in operational costs, able to be reactive to issues. Water meters have a



17 year battery life and so low maintenance costs. Its designed for the future and gives you actionable real-time data.

- Flooding – deluge response. Rain and flood gauges in their river systems; what will this flooding mean? Where, when and how much? All data is open and shared with the community. Everyone is connected.
- Downtown Park. ([downtowncarypark.com](http://downtowncarypark.com) ) They had an issue with declining CBD so spent \$60 million on a downtown park on 7 acres. It has been a wonderful investment tool (I sent the link to Jarrod) and worked to bring back people to the city centre. It provides a dog park, cafes, outdoor and indoor pavilions, skywalk, various garden spaces, water features, ice-cream vendor, mini-putt, splash pad and more. Maintenance of the park is paramount, sensors record public toilet usage identifying when they need to be cleaned, trash cans levels are sensor monitored for emptying, the list goes on. The park has been a wonderful investment.

The uses of technology in Cary have improved residents' quality of life and wellbeing. The uses of parks, green spaces and trees is very evident in its planned expansion and liveability.

**Sally Loudon** OBE, former CE of COSLA, (Scottish equivalent of LGNZ), not a relation as far as we could work out.

- Sally was pivotal in bringing local government Scotland back from central government Scotland, to form a partnership structure of service delivery with the region and or cities having the primary say.
- It starts and ends with communication.
- It starts and ends with communities and elected Councils that represent them.
- Devolution is the goal of central Scottish government and local government is the voice of communities.
- Instrumental in the City Deal. A gathering of 100 people representative of the community via census data (ala Citizens Assembly) from across the district speaking honestly about how to tackle the issues they faced. Spoke with one voice and set aside differences and agendas, forming relationships, shared ambitions

and agreed outcomes, done with determination and commitment. It takes time (12 months). Formed a vision for how the separate Councils across the district would work with central and local Scottish government at the local regional level, for the locals.

- To me that sounds like a hui on the Marae. And there is so much more we can learn from just having a conversation, respecting the conversation and the parties offering the words.

Which leads me into **Justin Tipa**, Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu. Chairperson. We should all engage with Justin's vision.

- His Iwi wish is for self-determination, its been granted with their settlement, however he is concerned that Central government controls over local communities make that difficult.
- Iwi and Councils should be allowed to step forward for localism – for the better. Iwi + Council, hand in hand.
- He sees his Iwi (essentially the whole of the South Island) as an enabler of progress, they have the opportunity, they want to build relationships but is concerned about the issue of trust. That conversations need to be had, openly and honestly, as Sally Loudon said.
- He sees politicians as being restrained by election cycles, Iwi are not, we have the long view, let us get on and establish our vision.

And now, an interlude. Yes, we did have interludes with lots of song and dance amongst the cerebral stuff.

It is fitting to celebrate of the winner of the SuperLocal Conference 2024 '**papers, scissors, rock**' competition. **Fi Dalgety**, our very own Rangitikei born and breed; and boy did she nail it. 800 odd competitors, she rocked it, shredded the opposition, and wrapped it all up to great applause.

Well Done Fi.

Minister of Infrastructure, **Chris Bishop.**

- Phase 1 reform of the RMA. Making it easier to get things done.
- Phase 2 Fast track bill – seen as Band-Aid around changes to the RMA
- Phase 3 Enjoyment of property rights.
- National Direction Changes, there are 4.
  - 1. Infrastructure and energy enablers, renewable energy, electrifying the economy, wind/water/sun, telecommunications, infrastructure effects on the natural environment, quarries (the cost of aggregate doubles when transported over 35km) and Port development.
  - 2. Housing. Is unaffordable, free up land, incentives for Councils, consenting improvements, mixed use facilities, min floor areas/balcony adjustments, requirements to increase density, introduce housing initiatives – Iwi, other, heritage/earthquake strengthening adjustments, urban design consistency.
  - 3. Farming – National statement on highly productive land
  - 4. Emergencies and natural hazards – climate change and natural flood protection works.
- Last statement – growth pays for growth. Concept of ‘value capture’ at local government level.

South Dunedin Project. Case study – **Cushla Loomb, Jonathon Rowe, Jean-Luc Ryan.**

- A very large area of low-lying wetlands between two sea borders, drained and developed in the 1950’s.
- Significant infrastructure issues, stormwater network designed in the 1950’s, not complying and failing.
- Much of the area is below high tide and with a rising sea level.
- 2015 flood, 450 homes affected, costing \$38 million, overall costs \$158 million
- There is a difficult conversation between the District Council, the Regional Council and the community.

- Regional Council need to establish the issues, collect data such as sea levels, infrastructure networks etc. And establish partnerships with GNS and NIWA.
- District Council needs to establish what's important, understand the issues and what to do. It must be evidence based, skilled and technical. They must form partnerships with advisors. They need a vision of possibilities and be flexible and open to change. It's always evolving.
- This is an 'urban regeneration opportunity'; its reshaping the urban form and finding the balance between 'water, people and land'. It's understanding the historical, and it's in consultation with Iwi.
- South Dunedin is out of balance. It's going to take a long time to work through.

### Day 3

**Sarah Badderley** – Martin Jenkins. The structure of Local Government Change. Spoke clearly and insightfully, producing many slides which hopefully will be in the more tech savvy Fi's report.

- Her Father was a Raglan District Councillor and Deputy Mayor. Close ties to the Raglan Footbridge that crosses the Oporu inlet signifying unification of the township to the campground. She wanted to draw attention to the concept of 'building bridges' and the conversations that go with that.
- Has 3 key points. 1) doing nothing is not an option. 2) One size might not fit all. 3) Form a framework for a way forward.
- Community voice vs declining community engagement – need to work on that conversation.
- Voter turnout in local government elections is on average 56% (I think Rangitikei was in the high 40's), recent Tauranga elections were 31%.
- Water service delivery – be clear on the REAL costs.
- Challenges of unfunded mandates, of social cohesion.
- Understand what the core functions of local government are and how they align with community ideologies.

- Structure of local government – central government says sort it out. There's your opportunity. Should drive towards devolution and localism.
- Councils need a shared view of a way forward and need to work in collaborative structures. Eg community housing space, iwi/private providers.
- What can we do – community responsiveness, scales of delivery, financial stability, strategic capacity. And partnerships add to all of these.
- And hopefully Fi can provide all those complicated information full slides on this presentation.

Panel discussion: Perspectives on Structure. **Anita Baker, Bayden Barber, Peter Nunns, Jonathon Salter.**

- Anita Baker said 'no one is brave enough nor big enough to have the conversations' regarding amalgamation. Frustrated with the lack of progress, there is little oversight and co-ordination of the process. Take politics out of the conversation. Share the conversation within your councils, between other councils and regional authorities. We need to get over ourselves, acknowledge everyone's differences without losing self. Be broadminded, wide minded – think what is best for all of us.
- Peter Nunns participated in Greater Auckland's amalgamation in 1989. Says the solution is recognising the costs of the assets you have and putting in place a financial structure to cope with that. The efficiencies of asset management are the key. Local Boards keep things local.
- Bayden Barber, it's about the long-term vision and taking the Maori view of the ebbs and flow of nature, water, environment and weather. If we're precious and here, we are going nowhere.
- Central government has no process of making decisions on infrastructure compared to local councils long term plans.
- You can't debt your way out of a revenue problem, you always have to repay it and you always have to have a revenue stream. You have to be responsible and look to the principles of a pay forward revenue

stream (example, development contributions), otherwise you go backwards.

Video presentation: **Sam Broughton** interview on an Irish **Citizens Assembly (Dublin)**. A great example of putting your big boys pants on and having that honest conversation, leaving the attitude at the door.

- Putting 100 citizens in a room for 7 weekends over 6 months.
- Chosen via census data, for example there are 51% female and 49% male therefore have 51 women and 49 men and so forth. And you breakdown the population bit by bit, such as x% are disabled, y% have a degree, z% work in agriculture etc to finally have your representative 100.
- You get the 100 in a room and fill them with information and then ask ‘what do we do with x?’ They work it out, have a consensus, and you have an informed decision.
- You then get one report from the citizens and one report from central government, and **then you have an outcome for change**. It takes about a year.
- The assembly is usually 7 weekends over 6 months. All transport, accommodation and food are paid for, it’s facilitated, live streamed and totally transparent.

**Simon Watts**, Minister for Climate Change.

- Information sharing is fragmented and not well done. New Zealanders are not well informed and the risks poorly documented.
- Must have a long-term enduring vision.
- We have diverse communities; communities are challenged to understand the risks, and to understand the communications/information, and how the community works with local and central government.
- Conversations need to happen between stakeholders including Iwi and insurers.
- Private property rights vs land use planning vs risk vs exposure vs banks

- The status quo is an uncapped liability.
- If you can't get insurance, you can't get a mortgage therefore everyone needs to be at the table and sharing information.
- "A tag on a LIM does not stop the water coming in your door."
- Self question: What does that mean for a Council? Does having a tag on a LIM constitute informed consent?? Does Council have an obligation to a buyer (beware) to ensure they understand what the tag means on a LIM? Is the Council liable and where does the responsibility lie?

**Digby Hall** – Australian Climate Change Scientist. Lots to say in this space.

- Everybody in an Australian home has a climate change risk attached to that house, and it is built into your insurance premium. Its your choice if you buy that house.
- Adaptation to climate change is being done by local government.
- Florida USA is experiencing an annual increase in rainfall between 2-3 inches. They have removed any acknowledgement of climate change (ie it's a given). The real estate market is driving the changes, not the State.
- The best indicator of climate change is the CO2 ppm levels. 300ppm is deemed 'safe'. We are now up to 424.52ppm and it goes up every year.
- Climate resilience – 1) Mitigation 2) Adaptation 3) Disaster preparation. The more we do to mitigate and adapt, the less we need to spend in disaster preparedness.
- Adaptation objectives – 1) Stop emitting CO2 2) restore nature, it soaks up carbon. 3) protect ocean health, the life in the ocean helps regulate CO2.
- Procurement Rules – we have run out of time. 1) off the shelf – invest in renewables. 65% of Australia's energy comes from sun and wind. 2) use of leverage 3) make it beautiful with design excellence (flooding controls/garden and park spaces/water mitigation). Our urban areas are heating up, which leads to deluge flooding, design to 'cool' them down. Decrease in hard surfaces, colour changes and material use can decrease heating effects.

- New York case study. 2006 hurricane floods closed the city for 6 days, subways inundated etc etc. They re-wrote the GREEN PLAN called the green streets project. Scalable and repeatable small low cost changes accumulated over time to give real value, decreasing the city scape heating, mitigating water absorption and flow, resulting in an increased in real estate values.
- Other examples given involved solar panels incorporated into roof designs, there is a business case to put powerlines underground on streets and plant trees along the streets instead. A green sewage plant, running wastewater through a 'green' vegetative treatment facility. The roof top hospital food pantry, supplying fresh food to patients and the community whilst reducing heat emissions from the hospital.
- The 7 generations design team for large projects. Japanese concept of one design team designing for today and one team designing for 7 generations, and they combine and work together to produce a sustainable design outcome.
- A third of our climate change issues are from food production – associated with meat production, machinery use, and clearing the land.
- Renewables for power generation beats fossil fuels. Only issue is costs of battery storage, but these costs are coming down 11% pa. Payback in 3-4 years.

Panel discussion – letting locals lead the charge.

- Consultation – understand 'who' haven't we heard from and seek them out.
- Intergenerational knowledge in communities, especially rural, know how their land behaves and consultation with them can speed up the process incredibly. Likewise with Iwi.
- Rural – issues of social isolation. How can a plan bring people together; gather them in?
- Rural peoples have been used to adapting to climate change and that's their attitude – but where is the tipping point where adaptation is not dealing with the root causes.



- How do people perceive change before they are felt? Is it communal discussion over the fence, informed and or knowledge based.
- Forming an adaptation plan. Seek advice from other Councils, talk to Iwi at the start, be guided by local advice, talk to communities and partner with businesses and Civil Defence.
- Reference 'Climate Change Module' LGNZ website.
- Book - Net Zero by Dieter Helms, or any of his writings.

Last speaker, **Jemarl Paerata**, an inspiration to us all. A key note speaker and a life lived that epitomises every aspect, every line, of the Langston Hughes poem 'Harlem'.

Jemarl runs the Te Kaiarahi (elevate your life) programme. He says his destiny lies in his history and he has walked a journey. He spoke of the depths, and his path to the surface, and that ride on a wave to his vision. Your values and beliefs are the action on your words. Be present, be in the now, feel your breath, and experience the natural world around you. Please enjoy.

And now we pause for thought.

For me these SuperLocal days was about 'having a conversation'. About being open and receptive to change, responsive to, and responsible for, our environment, and maintaining and strengthening the four pillars that hold up the roof of our community house of wellbeing. It's the long view.