

Report 99.5

File: E/6/1/5 (sm)

28 January 1999

Report to Wellington Regional Council
From: Stuart Macaskill, Chairman

Chairman's Report

The Year Ahead

Welcome back to councillors, managers and staff. I trust all have had a relaxing and enjoyable break and return refreshed and fit for the year ahead.

Now we must get down to serious business – 1999 is going to be a momentous year, not just because it is the last year of the millennium (actually the purist would rightly argue that the Year 2000 is the last year of the second millennium).

At the national level it is election year. You can be sure that roles and functions of local government, and no doubt regional councils will be the subject of some attention – it is probably too much to hope that those views will be well considered and rational. From the right wing in particular, local democracy is very much under attack, supposedly in the name of economic efficiency. To me it has more to do with self interest of some big businesses, as advocated by the Round Table in particular, rather than genuine concern for quality governance and local community choice and service.

There are of course a number of matters that will require a considered response by Council to Government proposals, including:

- Resource Management
- Water and Waste Water
- Roading and Transport
- Rating and Funding
- Tertiary Health Services in the Wellington Region

The Council has major initiatives of its own to consider too, including:

- The Triennial Review of the Long Term Financial Strategy “Facing the Future”
- The Review of the Regional Land Transport Strategy
- Transmission Gully Roading
- Water Management in Metropolitan Wellington
- Port Company Ownership
- Commercial Forestry Ownership
- This Council's Role in Regional Advocacy

- Relations with the Region's territorial authorities and mayors

This is over and above delivering on our annual plan!

All in all, a daunting programme which means the year clearly will be demanding, challenging, and at times frustrating. But it has the potential to be a very satisfying one when, I believe, we will achieve much for our regional community.

Our Council is well placed to deal with these complex questions and, in my view, every councillor and staff member is well placed to play a vital part.

To Dave Benham and Family

Your many friends at Council extend their heart-felt sympathy to you, Jenny and your family with the sad loss of Jenny's father around New Year.

Cr Gibson

I am advised that Cr Gibson has been appointed by the Minister of Justice as a "Lay Observer" to the Wellington District Law Society. His appointment also includes the Nelson and Marlborough District Law Societies. Congratulations Michael.

Western Australia Delegation

Margaret Shields, Terry McDavitt, David Watson and I hosted Deputy Premier Hendy Cowan and his group on Tuesday of this week. Their main interest was in roading and passenger transport issues, with regional development matters as well. It was most interesting to find many aspects of common ground, and problems with the issue of funding the most significant.

They were most impressed with the potential for further regional development of our wine industry. Margaret and Terry may have further comments to make.

Recommendation

That the report be received.

STUART MACASKILL
Chairman