



Report **04.563**
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Committee **Council**
Author **Margaret Shields Chairperson**

Chairperson's Report

1. SOLGM Conference

From 5-7 September I attended on behalf of the Council, the SOLGM (Society for Local Government Managers) Annual Conference.

On balance, I would say that this conference was a little less successful than last years in Palmerston North due mainly to the fact that the speakers were not of all the same calibre.

The theme of the Conference was "Leader of the Pack", although much of the entertainment was involved with the southern theme "Southern Man" which also under-pinned the conference dinner where we had a haggis dinner complete with piper and the Auditor-General in full scottish regalia taking the role of sword bearer.

In a more serious part of the programme, useful contributions were made from the international arena with Tom Aitchison, giving some insight into the political climate of Scotland following the formation of the Scottish Parliament.

However, the best speaker of the programme was probably a French fellow, Claude Fussler, who was an expert in business innovation and issue management with a focus on sustainable development and corporate social responsibility. His book "Raising the Bar" was due to be published in June of this year and could be well worth circulating among councillors. Of interest to New Zealanders is the fact that he was the Vice-President of Dow Chemical in Europe for more than 30 years.

I also took the opportunity on the day before the conference to take a ride on the Taieri Gorge Railway and quizzed a staff member about the extent of patronage, etc. They claim that cruise ships regard the railway as a very important and popular attraction and when cruise ships are in town they routinely carry around 400 passengers through to Middlemarch and back again on the Taieri Gorge train. They also say that when the train trip is not

available, the cruise ships bypass Port Chalmers. It is certainly food for thought when considering the Rimutaka Incline in some distant future.

2. Wellington Regional Council (Water Board Functions) Bill

Together with Renewable Energy Project Manager, Murray Kennedy, I presented the Council's submission on the above Bill to the Local Government and Environment Committee. Two other submitters also presented submissions to the Committee, raising issues about the status of the land covered by the Bill and its management, and the botanical values of Mount Climie. A further submitter, Genesis Energy, supported the Bill but did not appear before the Committee.

The Committee asked the Council to supply further information on a number of matters and this has been forwarded for the Committee's consideration. Additional information in relation to the submissions has also been provided to the Committee's advisors from the Department of Internal Affairs, and staff have met with them to discuss the content. We must now await the report back from the Committee.

3. Mayoral Forum Meeting With Ministers Cullen and Hodgson

Councillor McDavitt and I attended the Mayoral Forum meeting with Ministers Cullen and Hodgson to discuss the Wellington Transport Project. We are cautiously encouraged that they have a good appreciation of the problems faced by the Region and will work with their colleagues to assist us to address these issues in a similar manner to the assistance provided to the Auckland region. It was heartening to hear both Ministers volunteering their opinion that the Wellington region was more "together" than our Northern counterparts.

4. growOtago®

The Chairperson of the Otago Regional Council, Duncan Butcher, has kindly forwarded us a copy of the growOtago® climate and soil map resource that have been prepared for the Otago region. The project was undertaken to comprehensively map climate and soils across the Otago region. It provides information for improving existing land uses, developing new high value, land-based activities and fostering regional economic development, through the optimum use of Otago's varied climate and soils.

Regional councillors who attended last year's regional tour prior to the LGNZ National Conference were shown examples of the work and it is a credit to the Otago Regional Council that it has now been completed. The maps come on a series of CD ROMs held by the Council Secretary.

5. A Word of Thanks

As this is my final Chairperson's Report before the election, I would like to pass on my thanks to all Councillors for a job well done. It's very pleasing to note the enthusiasm and commitment to the work of the Council, as evidenced

by the high level of attendance by all Councillors at formal and informal meetings and events. This enthusiasm and commitment has made my job as Chairperson easier and more enjoyable, and I thank you all for that.

At the first meeting of the triennium I said that we needed to make the best use of all your talents. I believe that we have done that and it is for this reason that so much progress has been made. We can all take pride in the developments landcare, flood protection and in the very important business of selecting a new Chief Executive.

Finally, I wish all of you contesting the election good luck, and hope to see you all returned for the new triennium.

6. Recommendation

That the Report be received.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Margaret Shields".

Margaret Shields
Chairperson