

[contents](#)

[news](#)

[partnership](#)

[learning](#)

[summit](#)

[about SOLGM](#)



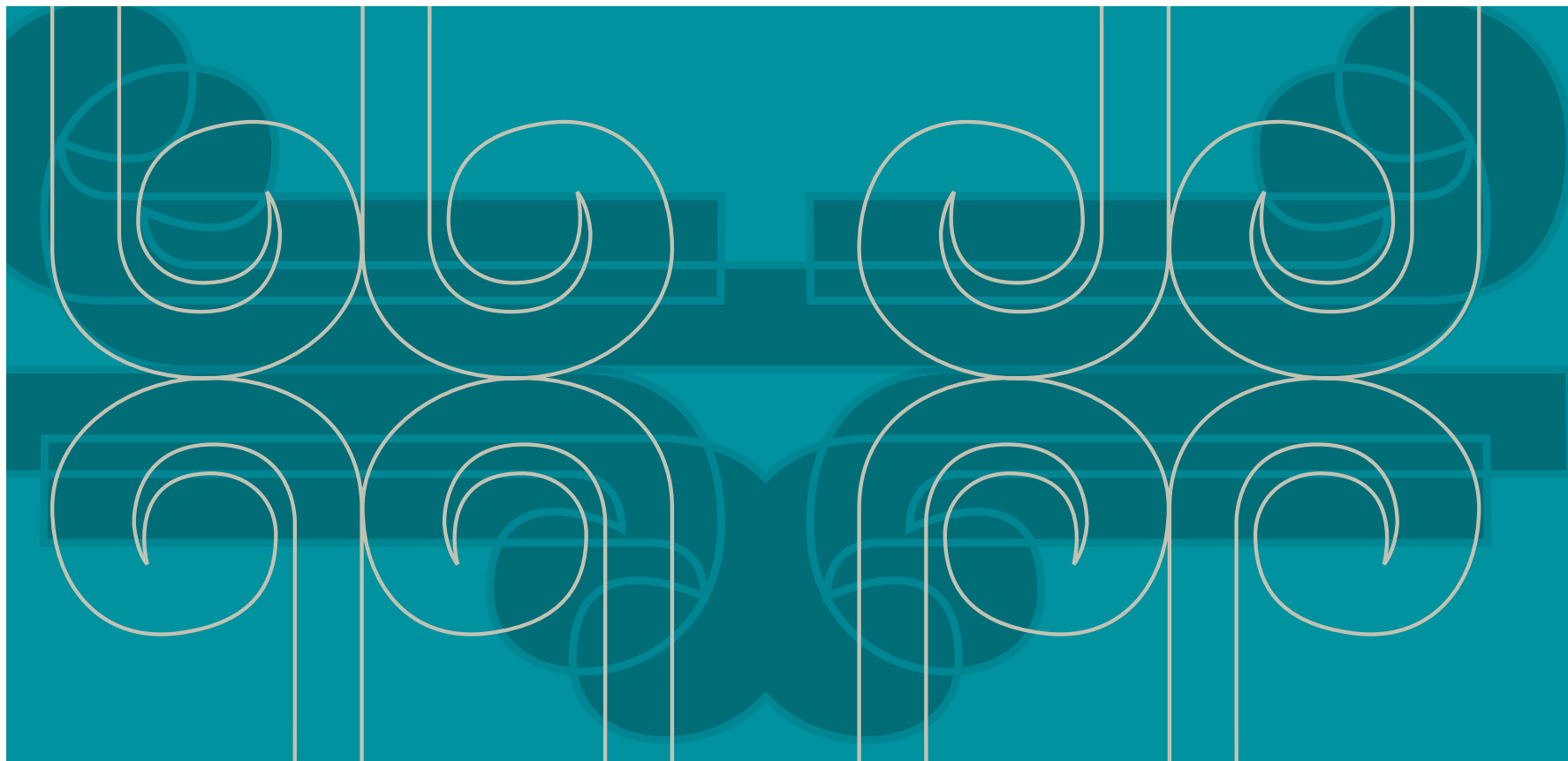
# PULSE HOTU MANAWA

The electronic magazine from the New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers

## DECEMBER 2013 IN THIS ISSUE

**5** Rating Guide released

**19** 2013 Annual Summit



Principal Sponsors:

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

# Contents

## NEWS

**Change the only constant**  
From the Chief Executive

**Rating guide rocks**  
Financial Working Party

**Inspiring messages**  
Boston ICMA conference

**'Best training ever'**  
LGMA Management Challenge

**Get away to Wanaka**  
45 South retreat

**Auckland takes top award**  
Excellence awards

**Commitment recognised**  
Long service awards

**Subs set at AGM**  
Membership

**Dunedin – Summit city**  
2014 Summit

## PARTNERSHIP

**Cyber security for 2014**  
SOLGM sponsor: JLT

## LEARNING

**Good enough for Obama**  
Workshops

## SUMMIT

**Inspiration a-plenty**  
2013 Summit

**Valuable experience**  
Attendance awards

**'We're all human'**  
Opening address

**A highlight for Manawatu**  
Regular attendees

**Grass not always greener**  
Barry Quirk

**21st century US challenge**  
Robert O'Neill

**New ways of thinking**  
Barry Quirk

**The keys to success**  
David Keane

**Don't waste a good crisis**  
Stephanie Pride

**Pulling no punches**  
Ian Hunter

**In the fishbowl**  
Neryl East

**A journey of change**  
Mark Weldon

**New CEs' view**  
Panel discussion

**Better local government**  
Panel discussion

**Can we work together?**  
Panel discussion

## ABOUT SOLGM

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

# Change the only constant

## **The challenges facing local government are constantly changing, says SOLGM Chief Executive Karen Thomas.**

"Without wanting to sound like a broken record, change continues. The recent announcements from the Local Government Commission regarding Northland and Hawke's Bay remind us that local governance is a fluid beast. It ebbs and flows to meet the challenges of the day, whatever the century."

Karen says compared to the relatively large 19th century provincial governments, and a plethora of smaller local governments in the 20th century, we are now experiencing 21st century consolidation readjustments.

"My recent exposure to local governments in a number of countries around the world reveals that the issues for this century are

"The recent announcement from the Local Government Commission regarding Northland reminds us that local governance is a fluid beast. It ebbs and flows to meet the challenges of the day, whatever the century."

similar across the globe. Put simply, it is about how to manage the gap between the politically desirable and the administratively sustainable.

"We have all heard variations on that theme but mostly it amounts to simply doing more for less."

Karen says these days there is a wealth of new ideas on how to achieve this feat.



Karen Thomas

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here](http://click here)  
[www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

# Change the only constant

"It's possible that while today's managers aren't necessarily smarter than their predecessors they have more knowledge, better tools, access to highly specialised staff and systemic ways of transferring knowledge from one generation to the next that previous generations didn't.

"This means we are probably better equipped to meet the new challenge."

Karen says building trust through authentic relationships – with councillors, ratepayers, communities and with central government - is the latest in a long line of measurable activities required of local government managers.

"Speaking at the SOLGM Summit in November, the Chief Executive of the London Borough of Lewisham, Barry Quirk, gave the formula as:

$$\text{Trust} = \frac{(\text{credibility} + \text{reliability}) \times \text{intimacy}}{\text{self-orientation}}$$

"He said 'intimacy' is defined as the ability to let people know who you are (your values, etc) and self-orientation is about whether you are more interested in what's in it for you or for others.

"Building trust between people is what allows us to have courageous conversations and assists us through difficult times."

Karen says she has brought back a wealth of ideas which she will be drawing on to help shape SOLGM's learning and development programme over the next few months.

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

FINANCIAL WORKING PARTY

# Rating guide rocks

**In the past few months the SOLGM Financial Working Party and Local Government New Zealand have been hard at work on a second edition of the Rating KNOWHOW guide.**

We're pleased to announce the guide is now completed and was released in early December.

The initial version of the guide was launched immediately after the Local Government (Rating) Act was passed in 2002. While it reflected the best wisdom of its time, since 2002 the Act has been amended four times (by our count). Concepts such as the funding impact statement, lump sum contributions, and the "for public inspection" database simply did not exist 10 years ago.

The state of practice has moved on –

examples of the innovations have begun to appear. Voluntary targeted rates are perhaps the best example of an innovative but lawful use of the toolkit.

Of course, the sector has taken its share of "hard knocks" especially in the past few months as some practice issues have come to light. The lessons of the past few months have been absorbed and turned into an all new sample resolution and FIS, a self-review tool for these documents, and checklists for rates assessments and rates invoices. Councils that use these tools should avoid significant problems.

SOLGM thanks all of those who worked on the guide: Aneel Anthony, Diane Brandish, Angela Jane, David Paris, Steve Paterson, Toni Wilkinson, Mike Reid, Jonathan Salter, Lizzy Wiessing, Philip Jones and Svea Cunliffe-Steel.



contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here](http://click here)  
[www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)

BOSTON ICMA CONFERENCE

# Inspiring messages



## **SOLGM attendees at the ICMA conference in Boston took away a range of inspiring messages.**

SOLGM Chief Executive Karen Thomas says the ICMA (International City and County Managers Association) conferences are incredibly well run and are packed with fantastic speakers.

She was joined at the conference by SOLGM President Ross McLeod, and the Chief Executive of Gore District Council, Steve Parry.

"These conferences start with breakfast meetings at 7am and finish late at night. To take it all in you just have to accept you will catch up on your sleep on the plane on the way home," Karen says.

A highlight for her was a speech by Harvard Professor Amy Cuddy.

"She spoke about the physiological effects

on the body of non-verbal behaviour. Her message was 'fake it until you become it!'

"She said research shows that if you adopt a powerful stance your testosterone levels rise, your cortisol levels drop and you are perceived by others as more employable and powerful. She told us body language shapes who we are."

Another highlight for Karen was the Tuesday night event at Fenway Park, the home of the Boston Redsocks baseball team.

"This is the most famous of all the baseball parks in America and to attend an event there, in such a beautiful city as Boston, was fantastic. I also really enjoyed the informal dinner I organised for the 25 Kiwi and Australian delegates, which is an annual event at these ICMA conferences."



"These conferences start with breakfast meetings at 7am and finish late at night. To take it all in you just have to accept you will catch up on your sleep on the plane on the way home." – Karen Thomas



contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here](http://www.solgm.org.nz)  
[www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)

BOSTON ICMA CONFERENCE

# Inspiring messages



Steve Parry is the International (Australasian) Vice President of the ICMA. He was particularly impressed by the Monday keynote speaker, American commentator Daniel Pink.

"What I took out of this latest conference is the need to be less timid and more assertive in terms of what we do, and to take pride in what we do as local government managers.

"Daniel Pink told us we do a lot of very worthwhile work for people and we should not be reticent about that. We should be confident and proud of what we do when talking to both the community we serve and the people close to us."

ICMA has 9000 members. About 3500 members from all over the world attend the annual conferences.

The ICMA conferences are organised eight years in advance and next year's conference, the 100th, is in Charlotte, North Carolina.



"What I took out of this latest conference is the need to be less timid and more assertive in terms of what we do, and to take pride in what we do as local government managers." – Steve Parry

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)

## MANAGEMENT CHALLENGE

# 'Best training ever'

**A member of the team that won this year's LGMA Australasian Management Challenge, Rachael Davie, is encouraging all SOLGM members to enter next year's event.**

"I would encourage anyone to take part. I experienced more personal and professional growth during this challenge than I have from any other training opportunity."

Rachael is the Policy, Planning and Community Manager at the Western Bay of Plenty District Council. She was one of six members of the Great Western Bay Collaboration which took out this year's Management Challenge title.

"I joined the team partly because I was specifically invited to do so. But more than anything I joined up because it gave me the opportunity to be in a team with a number



Rachael Davie

of my peers, mostly third tier management. I am a competitive person and I like being challenged in a new environment and testing my leadership skills."

Rachael says it's unlikely she'll enter next year's challenge but she would still like to be involved in some way.

"The Chief Executive, Glen Snelgrove, deliberately created a team of third-tier management to leverage their experience right across the board – to create greater

accountability, improve performance and to break down silos.

"Those goals were more than met through the Management Challenge. Now it is time for us to continue to build on the momentum we've created."

Rachael says she would like to help pass on her learning experiences to another team within the organisation.

"Taking part in the Management Challenge was the best training experience I have ever had. It was practical, relevant to the sector and tested and developed those capabilities that are critical for leaders in local government. Everyone should have a go, at least once!"



contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)

45 SOUTH RETREAT

# Get away to Wanaka



**SOLGM'S 45 South Branch is hosting a retreat from 2-4 February at the Edgewater Resort in beautiful Wanaka.**

The retreat is a biennial gathering of SOLGM members and attendees will hear from inspirational speakers, discuss topical issues and network with others

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

45 SOUTH RETREAT

# Get away to Wanaka



from the local government sector, while soaking up the relaxing environment of Wanaka. The theme of the retreat is “Be Inspired”.

Speakers for the retreat include: Tahu Potiki, Chair of Te Runanga o Otakou in the Otago region and former Chief Executive of Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu; Julie Woods, motivational speaker (also known as “that blind woman”); Bruce Robertson, Assistant Auditor-General at the Office of the Auditor-General; Adam Feeley, Chief Executive of Queenstown Lakes District Council; Dr Sue Bidrose, Chief Executive of Dunedin City Council; and members of the SOLGM executive on the latest happenings, with further speakers to be announced.

Wanaka and the surrounding Central Otago area are known for their stunning scenery and offer many fantastic leisure activities, including wine tasting, fishing, hiking, cycling, canyoning, climbing, horseriding



*Photos: Lake Wanaka Tourism*

and skydiving. Tour one of the numerous well-known Central Otago vineyards, shop in nearby Queenstown, check out the new Highlands Motorsport Park in Cromwell, visit sunny Alexandra, explore historic Arrowtown, or simply sit in a café and watch the world pass by.

For those who wish to extend their stay in the district, several other organised events are also being held in the area at the same time. The renowned Rippon music festival will be at the Rippon Vineyard beside Lake

Wanaka on Saturday 1 February, featuring performances by many New Zealand artists. The 2014 Central Otago Pinot Noir Celebration runs from Thursday 30 January to Saturday 1 February in Queenstown and the surrounding wine regions, showcasing some of the best of the district’s wines and vineyards.

Registration fees for the retreat are \$350 per person (\$300 early bird rate applies on all registrations received before 9 December) and closing date for registrations is 17 January.

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)

## EXCELLENCE AWARDS

# Auckland takes top award



### **Auckland Council won the Supreme Award at the SOLGM GHD Local Government Excellence Awards which were presented at the SOLGM Summit in Wellington.**

The council won the Supreme Award with its Draft Auckland Unitary Plan after winning the Council-Community Relationships award.

Auckland Council also won the Building Organisational Capability category with its Capacity for Growth project. Taupo District Council won the Better Services for Less category with its Automated Land Information Memorandum (LIM) project; and Taranaki Regional Council on behalf of the Northland, Waikato, Taranaki, Horizons, West Coast and Southland regional councils won the Joined- up Local Government category for the IRIS Development Project.



Accepting the Supreme Award at Te Papa was Oliver Roberts, Manager Unitary Plan Communications at Auckland Council (centre). With him are GHD New Zealand Manager Barry Potter (left) and Local Government Minister Chris Tremain.



contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)

## EXCELLENCE AWARDS

# Auckland takes top award



The awards celebrate and recognise local government projects that demonstrate leading practice, innovation and excellence.

Auckland Council's Manager of Unitary Plan Communications, Oliver Roberts, says the Unitary Plan sets out the rules for how Auckland will grow for decades to come.

"It is very complex and deals with a lot of sensitive issues. However we had to overcome those barriers to help our communities understand what the plan means to them, to get the debates out in the open and to get input to help the plan progress. This has been a massive undertaking.

"Winning the Supreme Award means a massive amount. It's brilliant to have all that effort, by so many people, recognised in this way."

The judges said they were particularly impressed by the effort to engage with such



Accepting awards from Local Government Minister Chris Tremain were (clockwise from above): Georgiana Johnson, Taupo District Council Project Manager Business Development (Better Services for Less category); Mike Nield, Director Corporate Services for Taranaki District Council (Joined-up Local Government category); Land Use Analyst Craig Fredrickson and colleague Kyle Balderston for Auckland Council (winner Building Organisational Capability).



## EXCELLENCE AWARDS

# Auckland takes top award

a diverse group of people and that it was an example of good practice of which all local government professionals could be proud.

The Unitary Plan team's success recognised Auckland's commitment to community engagement in helping develop the plan. The results over the 11 week engagement included:

- More than 2000 people attended the launch in March
- 90,000 unique views of the Shape Auckland website
- 70,000 video views
- 30,000 copies of the plan overview distributed
- 15,000 people attended a total of 250 community and stakeholder events
- 6500 social media comments, blogs and tweets
- Almost 2000 news items

- 21,210 pieces of feedback at the close of the public information feedback phase on 31 May.

Oliver, and Carol Hayward, Unitary Plan Engagement Leader, who have been seconded to the Unitary Plan team, say the plan was the key to helping Auckland meet its potential.

"It sets out rules to help protect our environment, heritage and so on, while helping Auckland become an economically stronger and more fun place to live, with a greater mix of quality homes. It's the main bit of the jigsaw that will help deliver the Auckland Plan," Oliver says.

Carol says local boards have been a key partner in delivering the engagement, and the team has worked with library staff and customer services to ensure they have the skills and processes to support the community in accessing the plan – either on

paper or online.

"We have worked with IS to make sure we have the right tools and software in place to deliver the e-plan and we have worked with technical experts across council who have helped to shape both the plan, plus the communications and engagement approach. On top of that, we have also been liaising with external stakeholders and members of the public."

Oliver says working on the plan has been very intense, but hugely rewarding.

"It's been amazing to see how enthusiastic and positive people are about Auckland's future."

## LONG SERVICE AWARDS

## Commitment recognised

**Eight SOLGM members were recognised at the 2013 Summit for their long service in local government.**

These members epitomise commitment and dedication to the craft of local government and they bring with them a wealth of knowledge and expertise that can't be easily quantified.

At the top of the list this year was Phillippa Wilson, Corporate Service Group Manager at South Taranaki District Council. Phillippa is a former SOLGM president and has been in local government for 40 years.

Others recognised were:

Glenn Snelgrove, Chief Executive of Western Bay of Plenty District Council (35 years); Richard Simpson, Manager Planning and Regulatory, Westland District Council (35 years); Graham Bunn, Finance and Administration Manager,



Phillippa Wilson receives her 40-year service certificate from SOLGM President Ross McLeod at the 2013 Summit.

Otorohanga District Council (35 years); David Bewley, General Manager Strategy and Planning, Whakatane District Council (25 years); Jan Johnston, Contact Centre Manager, South Taranaki District Council (20 years); Dean Heiford, Manager Support

Services, Marlborough District Council (20 years); Andrew Besley, Chief Executive, Marlborough District Council (20 years).

**PULSE**  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here](http://www.solgm.org.nz)  
[www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)



contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

## MEMBERSHIP

# Subs set at AGM

**Membership subscriptions for the 2014/2015 period were set at the Annual General Meeting held during the November SOLGM Summit in Wellington.**

A quorum of 50 members attended the AGM and decided to set next year's subscriptions at the same levels as this year's. This means full members will pay \$275 plus GST, honorary members will pay \$200 plus GST and associate members will pay \$150 plus GST.

The AGM also approved the 2012/13 annual financial statements and the auditor for next year, BDO, as well as adopting the strategic plan and budget for 2013/14.

The passing of former Corporate Services Manager for the Ashburton District Council, John Rollinson, was also noted. John had been a SOLGM member since 1996. He



SOLGM President Ross McLeod and Chief Executive Karen Thomas at the AGM in Wellington.

retired in April this year and sadly passed away in October.

Just before the start of the AGM there was an informal discussion about the proposed merger between SOLGM and *Local Government New Zealand*. SOLGM President Ross McLeod outlined progress to

date on the negotiations and members had an opportunity to seek clarification and ask questions.

LGNZ national council member and the Mayor of Palmerston North, Jono Naylor, was also present at the meeting to answer questions relating to the proposed merger.

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

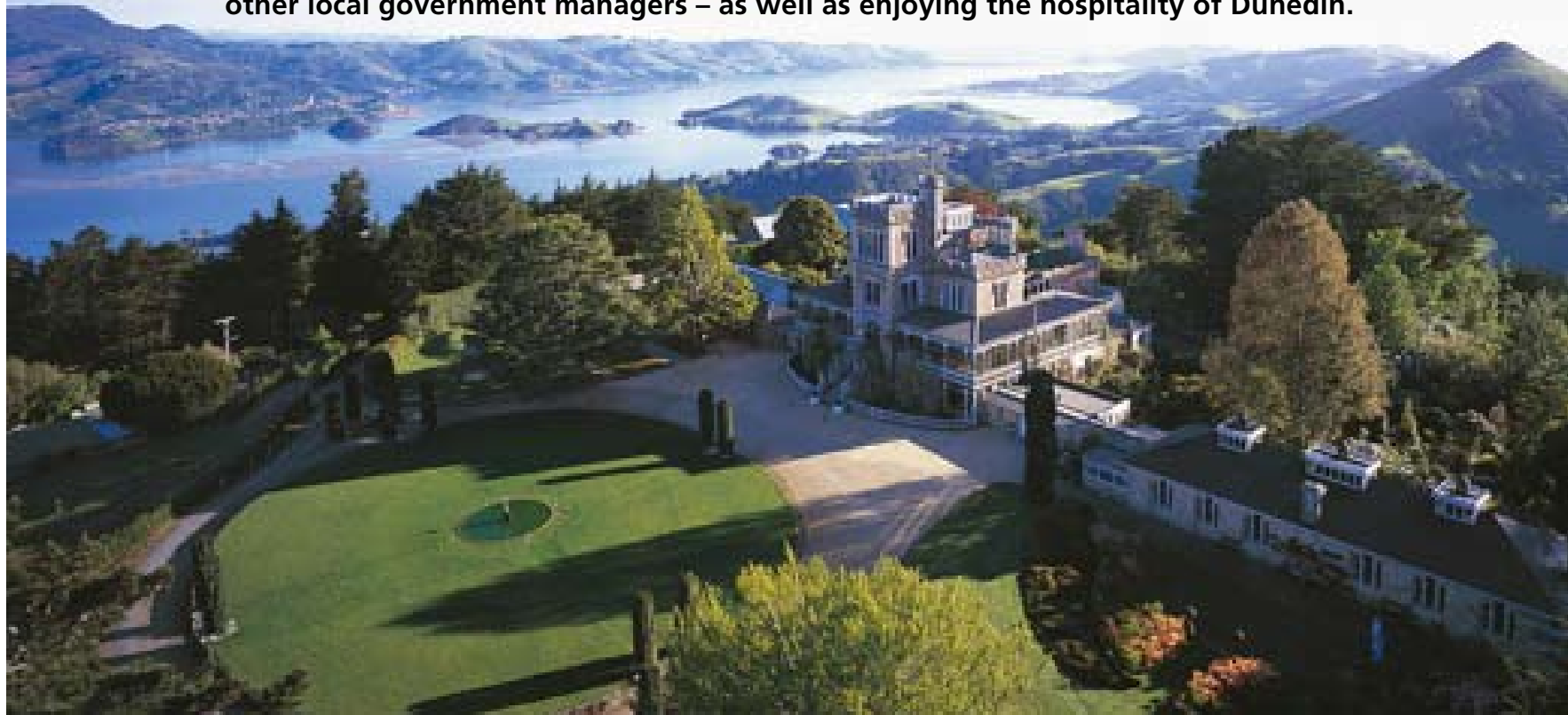
LIVE WEB LINK: [click here](http://click here)  
[www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)

2014 SUMMIT

# Dunedin – Summit city



**Note it in your diary now. The 2014 SOLGM Summit will be in **Dunedin from 12-14 November**. Following feedback after the recent 2013 Summit at Te Papa in Wellington, there will be an exciting new format. So get your team together and make the most of an opportunity to hear some great speakers and network with other local government managers – as well as enjoying the hospitality of Dunedin.**



SOLGM SPONSOR: JLT

# Cyber security for 2014

**As we head into 2014, JLT's commitment to deliver quality risk advice and insurance solutions to local government is reinforced by our continued sponsorship of SOLGM.**

As we leave 2013, from our "risks to think about in 2014" files comes cyber risk; any organisation holding personal information risks harmful exposure if its data security is compromised.

In the United States it's estimated that the average breach of network security exceeds \$7 million and the average cost per record is about \$200 – the more records compromised the greater the cost.

Enter cyber risk protection. One such product recently released in New Zealand by AIG is CyberEdge insurance. Coverage

includes:

- Breach of personal information.
- Breach of corporate information.
- Breach of data protection by an outsourcer.
- Damage from breach of duty resulting in
  - contamination by malicious code of third-party data,
  - wrongful denial of access by an authorised third party to data,
  - theft of access codes,
  - destruction/modification/corruption/damage or deletion of data due to security breach,
  - data disclosure due to security breach.
- Defence costs.

Cyber risk insurance is something to think about for 2014. Contact your JLT account manager for more information.

Merry Christmas and happy New Year from JLT.



contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)

## WORKSHOPS

# Good enough for Obama



### **Two unique SOLGM workshops coming in the new year could revolutionise the leadership skills of those who attend.**

The Glasers – Drs Peter and Susan – are bringing their unique set of skills to New Zealand in February. The couple have been coming to New Zealand for a decade to work with local government managers. They have worked with all levels of government in the USA, UK, Canada and New Zealand.

It has been rumoured their latest book has been seen sitting on US President Barack Obama's desk.

Closer to home, Sheryl Bryant, the General Manager, City Future at Palmerston North City Council, says the Glasers have been working with PNCC during the past three years, with very positive results.

"They delivered their leadership programme

which includes collaborative leadership, breakthrough conflict and persuasion and influence. The response from the staff who attended these courses was very positive and the tools are very practical.

"These have been taken and applied in everyday situations in the workplace. The Glasers provide a safe learning environment which maximises participation."

SOLGM is running two individual workshops:

#### **27 February**

– Persuasion and Influencing Skills

#### **28 February**

– Hardwiring Teamwork: The Power of Collaborative Leadership



Peter and Susan Glaser

You can take both courses or choose the one that meets your needs.

For further information or assistance registering please email:

[clamp@solgm.org.nz](mailto:clamp@solgm.org.nz)



contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here](http://click here)  
[www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)



It was another successful Summit for SOLGM as members, speakers, sponsors and exhibitors gathered at Te Papa, Wellington, in November. The buzz of the Summit is captured in the following pages.



contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

2013 SUMMIT

# Inspiration a-plenty



By Ian Carson

**Having attended a dozen or so SOLGM summits, I can attest to the value of this annual get-together of New Zealand's local government managers.**

As a journalist, rather than an active participant, I can take a wider view of proceedings, observing the interactions between attendees, whether they are SOLGM members, speakers, sponsors or exhibitors. Each year, the conversations are different, depending on the big matters affecting the sector at the time.

In 2010, it was very much in the minds of managers that an earthquake had struck Canterbury only the day before the Summit opened. The Local Government Minister at the time, Rodney Hide, also stirred things up with some strong comments about the



pending Auckland amalgamation.

In 2013, the conversations were inevitably about managing change – a common theme and one that is always on the agenda.

Interestingly, these conversations are never confined to the workshops or formal

proceedings; they go on at the breaks over a coffee, at the Monday night dinner, at the Industry Networking Zone and in the local bars and cafes.

The Summit offers a unique opportunity for SOLGM members to not only hear what



contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

2013 SUMMIT

# Inspiration a-plenty



speakers from New Zealand and around the world have to say about leadership, but also discuss topics relevant to themselves with these leaders, and with others.

The success of the Summit can be judged by surveyed feedback, which this year showed 50 percent felt it exceeded their expectations – only 6 percent thought it didn't meet expectations.

It's a credit to SOLGM that it can entice world-class presenters who challenge our latest thinking, sometimes with science and analysis, other times with personal experience.

It was certainly no different in 2013. There was a mix of top New Zealand and international business talent.

Barry Quirk made his second visit to a SOLGM Summit and was never going to disappoint with his view of what it's like to be Chief Executive of the London Borough

of Lewisham. ICMA Executive Director Robert O'Neill came from the United States to talk about the challenges in his country, and Neryl East offered valuable advice from her Australian communications experience on how councils could manage "the fishbowl" of local government. Annalisa Haskell had plenty to say in a breakout session about the reforms for the local government sector in New South Wales.

For local business leadership, former NZX Chief Executive Mark Weldon is hard to beat – Mark talked about his challenges returning to New Zealand after several years in New York. Dr Ian Hunter pulled no punches with his view of trends that "just don't work", so he offered his own suggestions for improving organisational capability.

Futurists always offer fascinating observations, and Dr Stephanie Pride was no exception. She painted a gloomy but realistic view of our future, tempered with the

advice that it wasn't all doom and gloom; we just needed to do things differently. Dr David Keane has written a book, *The Art of Deliberate Success* (a successful book, of course), and encouraged his audience to follow some simple steps that would help them be successful in their life. Generously, he offered a copy to everyone in the audience. I can thoroughly recommend it.

Summits should never be all work and no play, epitomised by the Manawatu contingent who consistently rock up to the annual dinner dressed in suitably outrageous costumes (see following pages). Along with Upper Hutt (noticeably outdone this year), these staff remind us that despite the glare of public attention – and often opprobrium – we're all real people doing our best for our communities.

We can only do better having attended a SOLGM Summit.

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here](http://click here)  
[www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)

## ATTENDANCE AWARDS

# Valuable experience

### Five SOLGM members were recipients of the 2013 SOLGM Simpson Grierson Summit Attendance Awards.

The awards are open to SOLGM members who have either not attended a SOLGM Summit before or who work for a local authority with a population of less than 15,000.

Steven May, Sheryl Poulsen, Rebecca Beaumont, Andrea Smith and Barry Vryenhoek were this year's successful candidates and they received up to \$1000 each towards travel and accommodation costs to attend the November Summit. Their awards were presented to them by Simpson Grierson Partner Jonathon Salter at the opening ceremony.



Recipients of the Simpson Grierson SOLGM Summit attendance awards, with some of their chief executives. Left to right, Westland District Council Chief Executive Tanya Winter, Barry Vryenhoek (Gisborne District Council), Rebecca Beaumont (Westland), Steven May (Grey District Council), Andrea Smith (New Plymouth District Council), Grey District Council Chief Executive Paul Pretorius, New Plymouth District Council Chief Executive Barbara McKerrow, Sheryl Poulsen (Kaikoura District Council), SOLGM Chief Executive Karen Thomas, and Simpson Grierson Partner Jonathan Salter.

## ATTENDANCE AWARDS

## Valuable experience

Steven May, the Environmental Services Manager at Grey District Council, says the award allowed him to attend the SOLGM Summit and to be exposed to high calibre presentations and inspirational local government leaders.



Steven May

"This opportunity really made me feel part of LG 'INC', that I have an important part to play and I am ably supported by like minded local government managers whom I met.

"It was refreshing to be able to participate in thought-provoking presentations, among open-minded peers, that challenged the status quo in a collaborative manner.

"The experience at the Summit highlighted that council's boundaries are only lines on a map and it is the committed and passionate

**"The experience at the Summit highlighted that council's boundaries are only lines on a map and it is the committed and passionate professionals from local government who make the difference to the ratepayer and New Zealand."**

professionals from local government who make the difference to the ratepayer and New Zealand."

Barry Vryenhoek, CFIO, Gisborne District Council, joined the local government sector the month before the Summit after previously working in the defence and health sectors.

"For a person new to the sector, this Summit is extremely important to understanding the wider context and key



Barry Vryenhoek

inter-relationships within local and central government.

"I came away from the Summit with a better understanding of the significant change impacting the sector, the complexity of the legislation governing it and the collaborative approach to the sharing of good ideas and ways to improve the delivery of our business."

Andrea Smith, Manager People and Organisational Development with New Plymouth District Council, was also a first-time attendee to the SOLGM Summit, and also relatively new to local government.

## ATTENDANCE AWARDS

# Valuable experience

"I was unsure what to expect from the two days. I believe the ability to continually learn and open our minds to new ideas are critical for all leaders. Stepping out of the busyness of our day-to-day roles provides us with the breathing space to do this.



Andrea Smith

"The speakers throughout the plenary sessions all had their own unique stories and knowledge to share which I found to be particularly thought-provoking. There is something quite powerful in learning from others' journeys and experiences."

Sheryl Poulsen says the Summit was an eye-opener.

The "Managing the Gap" theme emphasised the gap between governance

and management, between generations, the widening gap in household incomes, the technologically savvy versus those who prefer traditional forms of communication, and council versus community (the inevitable "us and them" mentality).

"I enjoyed Barry Quirk's presentation, affirming the need for political leaders to think about who they represent, and to re-establish public trust."

She says the Summit was a fantastic opportunity for her to discuss common issues with her peers from other councils, to learn about industry developments in the "Industry Zone" and – just for a few days – to lift herself out of her day-to-day responsibilities and take in the enormous role local government



Sheryl Poulsen

plays in people's lives.

Thanks to Simpson Grierson from all award recipients for sponsoring their attendance and for giving them the opportunity to attend the Summit.

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)

## OPENING ADDRESS

# 'We're all human'

### **The Summit theme, Managing the Gap, was picked up by Wellington Mayor Celia Wade-Brown in her welcome address.**

Sadly, she said, the gap could be between the elected members and officers, and the personal and political.

"We have different roles, but to the general public, it's all 'The Council', and that's if they're being polite."

She suggested one advantage of being a council officer was that people were much less likely to recognise you on the street.

"Those elected members you work with, even if they drive you mad, can't go to the supermarket without being recognised.

"I'm feeling quite emotional about this because one of our longest-serving elected members, Leonie Gill, who was not elected back in October, died this morning. She was

very closely connected to her community and they all knew her ...

"In a perfect world, where governance and management were quite separate, they wouldn't expect their local councillor to ring up about their drain or sort out the signage or the little park at the end of the street.

"Leonie was that brand of elected member who took the day-to-day issues of her community to heart and followed up on those."

Celia urged her audience to consider, when managing the many big issues in local government, that "we're all human beings and we're all here for a limited amount of time".

"Let's use that time well and let us be kind as well as strategic."



Wellington Mayor Celia Wade-Brown



contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

REGULAR ATTENDEES

# A highlight for Manawatu



**SOLGM Summit dates are deliberately highlighted in red on the Manawatu District Council's yearly calendar of events.**

The Summit has become the perfect opportunity to allow MDC staff to shake off any misconceptions that may be wrapped around job titles and simply enjoy each other's company and that of other local government colleagues. It is also offers exposure to future opportunities and the latest national and international trends, thinking and challenges.

MDC Chief Executive, Lorraine Vincent (Vince), offers a sponsorship opportunity for an MDC colleague to join her and other executive team members at the Summit.

Via a monthly Chief Executive's internal newsletter and all-staff emails that carry a SOLGM poster and application form, anyone who would like to learn more about



The Manawatu contingent never fails to impress with their enthusiasm for a good party, as again this year at Te Papa. The theme was racing – in this case not the horses, but a recognition of the famous Manawatu motor racing circuit at Manfeild.



contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

## REGULAR ATTENDEES

# A highlight for Manawatu

management in local government and the diverse challenges the sector faces are encouraged to put forward a case to attend.

All applicants receive a “thanks for applying” letter from Vince (also placed on personal files). She then interviews them and the successful applicant is announced and congratulated at a full staff meeting.

SOLGM “newbies” are traditionally in charge of organising “the wardrobe” for Monday evening’s Summit dinner (with absolutely no resistance or interference permitted from other members of the Summit team)!

At the conclusion of the Summit, the first-time attendees each provide a few paragraphs about their Summit experience for inclusion in the Chief Executive’s Column.

And so starts the build-up for the next MDC team SOLGM experience...



The Manawatu team brought their green buckets (made famous by fans of the Manawatu Turbos rugby team) to the 2010 conference in Queenstown. The conference began the day after the first Canterbury earthquake, so the team auctioned their buckets at the Monday evening dinner to help the recovery effort. Aided by the Topp Twins as MCs, several thousand dollars was raised.

**PULSE**  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here](http://click here)  
[www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

## REGULAR ATTENDEES

# A highlight for Manawatu

Impressions contributed by the 2013 MDC team after their first SOLGM Summit:

**Wayne Keightley:** The Summit was a brilliant mix of motivating and experienced practitioners from around the world. It was fantastic to see what makes them tick and the inspiration they emit. Although I picked helpful bits and pieces from all the leaders, the greatest experience of attending was refocusing my own ambitions. If you have the opportunity to attend a leadership Summit, do not pass it up. The networking aspect has some merit, too.

**Vicki Wills:** Upon returning to the normality of day-to-day operations, I have been reflecting upon the wisdom and knowledge that the Summit speakers and panellists shared. I conclude that those Councils and Management teams who are agile, able to think outside the box, prepared to make courageous decisions, are engaged with their staff and communities

and who have mastered the art of story telling will be best equipped to meet the future challenges and changes. I have come back revitalised with a positive focus on the challenges ahead.

**Tracey Hunt:** My favourite quote is "The antidote to exhaustion is not rest – it is inspiration". These words were so relevant to my attendance at the SOLGM Summit. The weeks leading up to the Summit had been extremely busy, so upon arrival my energy levels were a little low. A long time ago, I discovered that learning is one of my key motivators - the Summit programme promised to provide the necessary boost!

The Summit covered a wide range of relevant and interesting topics. The presenters were high calibre. I thoroughly enjoyed the learning, sharing of knowledge and having some of my own thinking challenged. I came away feeling inspired and energised.

**Glenn Young:** As a newbie, I would thoroughly recommend to anyone that if they get the opportunity to attend a SOLGM Summit, then they go for it.

It is a rare situation that as a staff member, you get the chance to spend time with the whole of a senior management team in an informal environment. This enables you to understand better what goes in to decision-making at an organisational level.

The Summit consisted of a great range of specialist speakers including professional leaders and motivational speakers to technical experts in local government governance and decision-making. There was something for everyone. My best take away line was a personal challenge "...what can you do to add the most value to your organisation?"

BARRY QUIRK

# Grass not always greener

**It's always tempting to look over the fence and envy your neighbour, assuming they've got it easier or better than you.**

Well, anyone who heard Barry Quirk's opening address at the SOLGM Summit will now appreciate how good we've got it on our side of the fence compared to some of our counterparts in the United Kingdom.

For 20 years, Barry has been Chief Executive of the London Borough of Lewisham, where he runs a council that services 280,000 people. He's worked in local government since 1977 and has spent four years as an elected politician.

Barry gave a fascinating presentation, not only for the insights he provided on how to manage and lead a successful team in difficult circumstances, but also because of the descriptions he gave of the challenges



Barry Quirk

facing local government managers in some parts of the UK.

Barry described the sector as being "on a downward flight path with no landing place in sight".

He said financial constraints are biting hard, yet at the same time, the sector has to

address growing social issues.

"We are seeing the generational effects of the 2008 recession. Those in Generation Y are particularly less inclined to believe they have a better life than their parents."

This puts more of a strain on UK local government, which itself is under extreme financial pressure.

Barry's council budget has been cut by 28 percent (£85 million) in the past four years. And he's got another 30 percent cut looming over the next four years. Yet he must still provide services for 280,000 people, a number expected to increase by 3300 a year during the next 15 years.

The Lewisham council's annual budget is nearly £290 million a year. But almost half of that (£136 million a year) goes to provide essential social services to 6000 elderly people and 2000 vulnerable children. Despite budget cuts, that is a difficult service area in

BARRY QUIRK

# Grass not always greener

which to make major efficiencies.

As a consequence, just £134 million a year is left to spend on the day-to-day infrastructure and other city services needed to run a region of 280,000 people. On top of all that, central government has a very strong say in what local government must and must not spend.

"There's no doubt there are challenges. It will be hard to make serious savings in the social care budgets, so the bulk of the cuts will come from other operational budgets.

"Councils in the UK are becoming dominated by their emerging role as social care agencies."

One could forgive Barry for being a bit pessimistic about the future, given the challenges he faces. But he prefers to think of himself as a "meliorist".

"Pessimists have a negative view of the future. Optimists have a positive view.

## LEWISHAM – THE NUMBERS

**280,000 population**

**1 mayor, 54 councillors**

**3600 staff**

**£1.2 billion gross turnover**

**£300 million of suppliers**

**250 different service functions**

**90 schools**

**170 languages**

**4500 births a year**

**15,000 unemployed (9.9%)**

Neither makes things happen, they just have different expectations about the future. By comparison, meliorists take steps to change the future – to make things better," he says. "Our job in local government is to go beyond optimism and instead take practical

steps to make things better."

Barry also noted the UK's local government environment was much more openly party-political than in New Zealand.

"Elected officials are usually aligned. They are usually involved with one of the mainstream political parties.

"It could be said that there's too much party politics in the UK and maybe not enough in New Zealand. You have many more candidates standing as independents and that must make it harder for voters to appreciate a candidate's political allegiances and therefore to understand the type of policies they'll pursue in office."

As conference presentations go, Barry's was definitely worth attending. Don't miss the chance to hear him speak if you get another opportunity.

See also Barry's address on new ways of thinking, page 33

ROBERT O'NEILL

# 21st century US challenges

**Robert O'Neill took the audience through the recession journey and how local authorities in the United States were dealing with the resulting challenges.**

As Executive Director, International City/County Management Association (ICMA) in the US, Robert had a unique perspective on the issues. He was interested in how high performing organisations dealt with the recent global financial crisis, so he developed a series of articles for Governing magazine (see [www.governing.com](http://www.governing.com)) and video interviews with some of the most influential managers in the US (these have been made available to SOLGM).

The fundamental questions asked were: What made some organisations extraordinarily successful in the most difficult times we've experienced since the Great Depression; and how did the leaders

and leadership characteristics of those organisations distinguish them from other organisations that didn't perform well?

The context is an ageing population and the "browning" of America. By the 2020 Census it is very likely there will not be a majority population in the US; it will again be a nation of minorities. That has implications for the public service in terms of how it engages citizens in the community.

"What challenges us the most in the United States is the increasing disparity between the haves and the have-nots," Robert said.



Robert O'Neill

"For the first time, we might have a structural category of unemployment ... people who in a 21st century economy cannot lift themselves up by the sweat of their brow. It is now fundamentally difficult if not impossible to do that."

In this decade, federal and state institutions are unable to offer financial aid to local authorities, so they are going to have to fend for themselves and even fight to keep what they have.

So what do Americans want? They want jobs in their community, they want to feel safe, have access to good education and health care, a healthy environment and they're interested in the infrastructure necessary to support all the above.

Part of the problem in the US is that there are 89,000 local government jurisdictions, all trying to get the scale required to address the issues that people feel are important.



contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

ROBERT O'NEILL

# 21st century US challenges

Many local bodies are very small and some have time limits on the term allowed for elected officials – much like the two-term presidency. They have powerful short-term thinking, so much of the long-term focus comes from staff.

“As we enter the 21st century, we will retain a lot of the capacity and practices that have been successful but we will have to invent a new set to deal with the challenges that confront us today.”

The organisations that have succeeded in recent years say that leadership matters, that leadership functions matter, and that it's leadership at all levels, not just the CEO or mayor.

“Most of these organisations have a distinctive set of values that allow them to negotiate their way through these difficult times.”

Robert showed a short clip of one of his

interviews, with leadership expert Jim Collins. In it, Jim talked about a hierarchy of leadership capabilities.

Level 1 is about good individual characteristics; level 2 is being a good team member who gets things done in teams; level 3 is being a very competent manager able to organise people and resources; level 4 is for leaders who determine direction and have teams who get things done; and level 5 has all the other capabilities but an extra dimension – a special blend of humility and will.

Level 5s, Jim says, have the kind of humility that gives them an ambition greater than themselves. They're ambitious for the organisation, the community or the cause, and for what's important to get done – even if they don't get the credit. Local government needs these people because they'll make things happen knowing that if things go well, they probably won't get the

credit, but if they don't go well they'll get the blame.

They work in an environment where they usually don't have the power on their own to get things done, but the negative powers in the community can stop things.

“You have to architect the conditions for the right decisions to happen, even though you don't not possess the power yourself to make those decisions happen. It's a much more complicated and nuanced skill set,” Jim says.

Robert concluded by saying that most of us more interested in the story, rather than the data. The challenge for managers was how to connect the data and the evidence to the compelling stories in local government that needed to be told.



BARRY QUIRK

# New ways of thinking

**In a rapidly changing world, the skills of local government managers are becoming more challenging and require new ways of thinking, says Barry Quirk.**

In a session paired with ICMA's Robert O'Neill (see page 31), the Chief Executive of the London Borough of Lewisham said a survey by SOLGM's equivalent in the UK, SOLACE, believed the top skills required by future leaders in local government were, in order:

- political astuteness
- vision setting
- strategic management
- change management
- financial strategy.

When compared with what skills were required by current leaders, political astuteness and financial management had



leapt up the table.

"It's almost like we know we haven't got enough resource, we know there's going to be a lot of redesign and reorganisation, so how is this going to be achieved and how are we going to convince the politicians?"

Citing an Institute for the Future study from Phoenix, Arizona, Barry said future

generations would require skills such as sense making and cognitive load management – "I particularly like that one. It's not a term that's used much in South London but it makes sense if you read it slowly." In the internet age we're all subject to what Spanish sociologist Manuel Castells called "informed bewilderment" – an overload of information.

Barry said one of the leadership problems in the current era was the gap between skills and challenge. Quoting from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's theory of flow, he said there needed to be a balance between skills and challenge.

"The problem in the world today is there's a reduction in challenge because things have been simplified. It's easier to do loads of stuff."

Csikszentmihalyi says low skill and low challenge brings apathy; medium skill and low challenge brings boredom; and high

BARRY QUIRK

# New ways of thinking

skill and low challenge brings relaxation. If the challenge is moderate and skills low you're worried; low skills and high challenge brings anxiety.

A balance of skill and challenge puts people in "flow", where concentration is easy and performance high.

"It's actually what human beings like. They don't like low challenge or challenge greater than their skill," Barry says. "The problem we often have in organisations is that we have highly skilled people and we give them Excel spreadsheets to work with."

There are many young people desperately trying to find opportunities in what he called "winner takes all" labour markets.

"They're essentially all trying to be an Andy Murray. He's a multi-millionaire who plays tennis. No-one knows the name of the guy that's No 10.

"If you're the 100th best tennis player,

you're not going to be earning anything. It's a great hobby but when does this hobby become a productive skill?"

Too many young people were trying to develop the skills for a winner-takes-all market.

Barry asked: What skills are you advising your kids to develop? Will those skills make them the best in Wellington, the best in New Zealand or the best in the world so they can derive value from those skills?

He the story of sitting on a bench in his inner London school playground at the age of 12. A teacher told him to look to the fellow pupils on his left and on his right, saying only one of the three would be successful.

"If you're a child in Lewisham now and you look to the left and the right, you're not going to be competing with these children, you're competing with children across the world. With the population increasing, the

race with other children is much harsher than it was in my day."

Barry was concerned about a loss of craft in modern society.

"Craft gives you lots of respect, but it's reducing immensely. There are fewer opportunities and people are realising that craft doesn't protect them from the future."

His own father was a newspaper typesetter who retrained every few years to keep up with the skills required in the trade. Upskilling nowadays was required much more regularly, and like the skills of his father, soon became redundant in a fast-moving technological world.

Barry's son, who had a business partner working with him in the IT sector, no longer needed the partner because his skills had been replaced by an app.

That was the reality of the new world.

DAVID KEANE

# The keys to success

**Having an accent, especially an Irish one, was always going to get extra attention, but it wasn't the accent that held the SOLGM audience early on the Monday morning of the 2013 Summit.**

As an internationally acknowledged expert in the field of human achievement and success, Dr David Keane not only offered insights into how to be successful, but also encouraged plenty of interactive participation. What does it mean to be successful, he asked? Who in your professional life and in your personal life do you consider successful? What qualities about them do you admire?

Author of *The Art of Deliberate Success*, David has been studying success for more than two decades. He's come up with a definition, though admits it could still be subject to change in the next 25 years:

Success is:

"The pathway to the achievement of worthwhile dreams, whatever they may be."

The "pathway" to success is a journey, he said. The trouble with defining success as a futuristic idea – "I'll be successful when ..." – is that you can die at any moment. You don't want to be living with a definition of success that hasn't happened yet. And the dreams are yours, no one else's.

"It's incredibly individualised. If you pick up someone else's definition of success, such as the media, it's a dangerous strategy. If you work out your own definition of success, you're well on your way."

When he first started the research, he tracked the habits of 10 chief executives, half each from the public and private sectors. Carrying a clipboard, he followed them through their work and private lives for two weeks each, "a bit like an early



David Keane

form of reality TV". He then ranked each chief executive from one to 10 measuring effectiveness.

"I noticed something really interesting. The number one person didn't seem very

DAVID KEANE

# The keys to success

busy. The number two person was a little busier and the number 10 person was absolutely frantic. What I uncovered was an inverse relationship between busy-ness and effectiveness. If you have a lot of busy-ness in your life, I question how effective you really are."

He told the story of a woman called Katie, who he said was the most successful person he's met. David was asked by the manager of a factory in a small town to talk to Katie, who the company knew was a smart and model employee. They wanted her to join the management team, believing she would add huge value to the business because of her leadership skills in the community, where she was well known and respected. However, she had refused, preferring to stay on the production line.

"I'm here to help you become more successful," David told her.

Katie said: "I really like working in the factory because I like having a boring job. My life really begins at 5 o'clock [with community work] so having the time to think between 8 and 5 is really good for me."

"I left," David says.

Her definition of success was quite different from her managers, and she was arguably much more successful than they were.

Some people have a very narrow view of success, defining it in terms of themselves and what they can get. As the view expands, the orientation changes and moves through some tricky territory. Pleasers, such as mothers, are in this territory. Mothers will often say their children are the most important priority in their lives, but self care is important, too, because you can look after people better if you look after yourself. In the wide view of success, the true value of

what you're offering is thinking not about what you can get, but what you can give.

"It's about contribution, just like Katie in the factory ... the people who make that journey find it hugely satisfying."

Successful people have three things: clarity, priority and execution.

Clarity is about what's important to you. Few people have it. He urges everyone to write it down and refer to it often – he carries his "compass calibration" in his wallet. It can act as a filter to help you decide what you should be doing.

"When people take the time to figure out and be clear what's important to them, magic starts happening ... suddenly because they've registered their interest, they see opportunities that other people don't see."

One of David's favourite quotes, by American author Napoleon Hill in 1938, summed it up: "Whatever the mind can



DAVID KEANE

# The keys to success

conceive and believe, it can achieve.”

The key to the second characteristic of successful people – priority – is simplification. “Successful people simplify their life down to the few things that really matter.”

His analysis of the 10 chief executives showed that the most successful were those who viewed things through the lens of four or five hot issues they were working on; the less successful had about 20 issues and were busy constantly trying to deal with all the issues at once.

Simplification is akin to “decluttering”, and hard as it might seem, this could even include associates and relationships that add little to your life.

He also suggested that people who are less successful see failure as a place to stop, to give up; more successful people see it as an opportunity for learning and for moving on.



“Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve.”

Napoleon Hill, 1938

The third key to success is execution. David says action is in the now, not in the future. Procrastination, a trait 80 percent of us have, is rife because too few people have “clarity”.

Multi-tasking, he says, is not the great attribute it’s made out to be, because constantly switching between tasks doesn’t allow us to concentrate on any of them well. Multi-tasking is often the result of boredom

and a failure to concentrate on what’s important.

Optimum success comes with all three traits – clarity, priority and execution. Achieving any one or two has benefits, nowhere near the combination of all three.

STEPHANIE PRIDE

# Don't waste a good crisis



Stephanie Pride

**As a professional futurist passionate about New Zealand's prospects, Dr Stephanie Pride of StratEdgy painted a sobering picture, suggesting we were at the end of a golden era.**

In her presentation, "Negotiating a Decade of Transition", Stephanie was not all doom and gloom, however, suggesting that we still had opportunities to improve our future by being innovative and "doing things differently".

Citing a comprehensive piece of research work with Victoria University, Stephanie (and others) identified four key challenges for the public sector:

- affordability, which requires the capability for trajectory change;
- more complex problems involving many players which require the capability for

leadership of issues, co-construction and co-production;

- a more diverse and differentiated population which requires the capability for differentiated responses;
- and a world of faster, less-predictable change which requires the capability for constant scanning and learning.

The elephant in the room is affordability, she says, which is bigger than any of us want to think about on a daily basis.

"It's really hard for us to believe that in the future we'll likely be worse off, even though we might know it intellectually and theoretically," Stephanie said.

From the end of the Second World War New Zealand had experienced increasing prosperity that has lulled us into false expectations.

"We're at the end of the golden era in both

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

STEPHANIE PRIDE

# Don't waste a good crisis

our personal and household economies, and as a country. We're likely to be a lot poorer unless we start doing things a lot differently."

Stephanie said there was, however, good news for New Zealand. We're a high quality food producer and we have a relatively low population density. Compared to many countries the proportion of older people is low, and we're being affected less by climate change than many parts of the world.

In a global context, the next 10 years will see the world's population increase by 1.4 billion, all needing water, energy, food and land. At the same time, the availability of land fit for crops is lessening, due to various factors including climate change (increased drought and flooding, more frequent and severe storms and sea-level rises). It's estimated that by 2050 more than 200 million people will be displaced by climate change. Despite climate change being seen

as a future issue, 20 million people have already been displaced.

Population growth and rapid modernisation are driving up the demand for energy, while reserves of fossil fuels are declining.

These factors will all push up the price of water, energy, food and land, causing global affordability challenges. Everything will cost more in the next 30-40 years.

"In a lot of ways it's quite depressing. But when I lie away thinking about the future of my kids in New Zealand, I think there's no point in wasting a good crisis. Given everything we know, we can't carry on the way we have been, so we need to seize this opportunity to radically re-imagine the way we do everything. It's never been a better time to be innovators."

In 2013, she said, we were at the beginning of in a crucial decade of transition, where the operating systems of the world were



We're at the end of the golden era in both our personal and household economies, and as a country.

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

STEPHANIE PRIDE

# Don't waste a good crisis

undergoing change.

There's been an assumption that we will always have abundance, limitless cheap resources – natural, human and space. The future will be based on assumptions of scarcity, not abundance.

In the next decade we will move from ownership to use. We now have individually owned cars that are garaged at one end and driven to a parking space at the other, leaving them unused 92 percent of the time. New cars – already being deployed overseas – will be shared and stored on their end so they use less space. You won't have to own one but will be able to use one when you need and book one online.

Neighbourhoods will be pooling resources, and websites are already operating where people are posting what items they're prepared to share with neighbours, whether it's a ladder, a cake mixer or a book.

Land will be shared. An example now is [www.landshare.net](http://www.landshare.net) which brings people together who have a passion for home-grown food. It connects people who have land with people who need land to cultivate food. It has a community of 55,000 in the UK.

Shared working spaces will be the norm, rather than office spaces for individual companies.

Power sources will be widely distributed, rather than from single-source power plants.

Manufacturing is already being revolutionized by 3D printing. Rather than having large manufacturing plants, people will be able to 3D print items they want locally. The US Army was one of the original developers, aiming to have 3D printers in the field to avoid delays in delivering vehicle and weapon parts.

"The future is about bespoke, highly

There's been an assumption that we will always have abundance, limitless cheap resources – natural, human and space. The future will be based on assumptions of scarcity, not abundance.

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tailored and therefore often unique. It is fit for purpose, easy to use, easy to access, user-driven and/or user designed."



contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

IAN HUNTER

# Pulling no punches

**Dr Ian Hunter wasn't going to pull any punches when he made his presentation to the 2013 Summit.**

"You [local government managers] have been around a long time and seen many things come and go," he said. "The last thing you need is another conference speaker to stand up and give you a lot of fluff about innovation that doesn't work. I'll tell you about what works and what doesn't, what you can trust and what you can't."

Ian, an author, publisher and speaker on innovation and economic development, cited US management guru Tom Peters who popularised the phrase "the only constant is change" (attributed to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus). In local government, Ian said, you either respond to the change or you get left behind.

Spawning a whole new industry of change



Ian Hunter

consultants, we developed vision statements and mission statements.

"I'm sure like you, I've sat in hospital waiting rooms for three hours and looking for something to do and read, there on

the wall is the mission statement: 'Our aim is to be the greatest health provider in the Southern Hemisphere delivering world-class medical services'. And you go 'yeah, right' because the rhetoric doesn't match the reality."

The quality movement talked about writing things down and everything would be alright. As long as they kept writing it down, and no matter what was actually happening, they would still be a quality organisation. Then organisations want to be "transformative" or "innovative", but what does that mean in terms of the nuts and bolts?

Ian said there were only four or five things that actually delivered results.

The first was leadership. Good leadership can bring dramatic changes, and good leaders bring people along for the ride, they carry the flag.

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

IAN HUNTER

# Pulling no punches

 **SOLGM**  
NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGERS

"You influence your organisation by virtue of your position. People begin to achieve things that before, they could not accomplish. Leadership delivers."

Hiring and firing works, too. Hire those who are committed to where the organisation is going, and get rid of those who don't. "It's a bit messy, but it will bring transformation."

Management by objectives works. "If people have objectives – whether they're set for them or whether they set them themselves – their performance increases."

Innovative organisations work. Research has shown them to be better performing in a myriad of areas. But how can your organisation be one of them?

Ian suggests you need to know what you're working with. Innovation is not invention, which is creating something new. It's also not just ideas or doing things differently – sub prime mortgages and asbestos were

different but not very good for society.

"Innovation is the process of generating wealth from new ideas, whether it's a product, a process or a service."

Local government can be innovative, and in different ways. Small councils can have an advantage because making a few things go a long way is their modus operandi. They're more agile than larger councils, their decision-making processes are faster and they're quicker at launching new ideas. On the flip side, they can be so fast with new projects that they find themselves with more than they can physically cope with.

Larger councils have the advantage of people, resources, money and clout to do just about what they want. But innovation terrifies chief executives of big councils because the councils operate by sameness and routine. Processes are organised to deliver consistent results.



You influence your organisation by virtue of your position. People begin to achieve things that before, they could not accomplish. Leadership delivers.

IAN HUNTER

# Pulling no punches

“Sameness and routine are polar opposites to difference and innovation.”

Ian offered some fallacies about innovation.

- You need lots of money and resources to innovate. Not true. New Zealand Steel in the 1980s was in strife and needed to innovate to survive. Staff were asked for ideas, which to implement should not cost a penny. The resulting innovations brought a \$20 million cost saving, at no cost.
- Innovation means technology. Not true. It just needs concentrated thinking about the important processes. Mail order company Montgomery Ward could process 75,000 orders a day in a two-hour turnaround cycle. That was in 1912.
- You need to appoint an innovation manager. No! That can kill innovation because it's assumed that person is responsible for finding the solutions.

- Generation Y has the answers. Think Steve Jobs, Steven Spielberg and Henry Ford who at 40 began to revolutionise the car industry, and Walt Disney who opened Disney World when he was 54.

Ian had some final tips for his audience:

- Assess your capabilities to see how ready it is for innovation.
- Ask your staff, “what are we good at, what do we do poorly”? It's not a question they're often asked.
- Teach your people to think differently.
- Match your innovations to your situation. Example: Immigrant Irish boot-maker Robert Hannah opened his first store on the West Coast in the 1860s. It was a disaster. In 1868 he'd had enough and decided to head home to Ireland. His ship was to leave from Wellington and his trunk was already on board when he wandered down a busy Lambton



Sameness and routine are polar opposites to difference and innovation.

IAN HUNTER

# Pulling no punches

Quay. He noticed a long queue outside a bootmaker's store. Not one to miss an opportunity, he retrieved his trunk from the ship and set up the first Hannah's shoe store, which became one of New Zealand's enduring company brands. On the West Coast he had the right idea but in the wrong situation.

- Test and test again. Never release an innovation cold.
- Resist the hubris – the pride – of merger. Everyone talks about economies of scale and the logic of eliminating duplication and saving costs. It rarely happens, Ian says. Costs usually go up. In a recent New Zealand company merger, the combined companies previously had 310 managers earning between \$100,000 and \$500,000 a year. A year after the merger, the number of these managers had increased to 928, with no increase in productivity.

- Halve the list of innovation projects to make them manageable and ensure they are done well. There's no point in celebrating innovation by the number of projects if they can't be managed well by the staff available.
- Remember that change brings success, and success brings no change.

Resist the hubris – the pride – of merger. Everyone talks about economies of scale and the logic of eliminating duplication and saving costs. It rarely happens.

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PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here](http://click.here)  
[www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)



NERYL EAST

# In the fishbowl

**As a corporate and local government communications manager, plus a public relations commentator, Neryl East understands the complexities of reputation.**

She talked about the “fishbowl” of local government where the public have never had greater opportunities to comment on and create a perception – good or bad.

In what she calls a reputation economy, more people will form and voice an opinion about a council based on what they’ve heard, including through social media, than on what the council actually delivers.

“So the fishbowl is a huge part of our lives.”

In the 20th century, local authorities used to operate with a “decide and tell” mentality, where councils would make decision behind closed doors and then decide when, if

In a reputation economy, more people will form and voice an opinion about a council based on what they’ve heard ... than on what the council actually delivers.

and who they would tell. It was tidy and structured.

“Fast forward to the reputation economy and the fishbowl environment, and things have absolutely changed. We don’t decide whether we tell people all the time. They’re already finding out and talking about it before we even know about it.

“We no longer communicate in a straight line – it’s all about networks.”

Mayors and chief executives used to be the “gatekeepers” of council reputation. That’s



Neryl East

also changed.

“Our reputation is the sum total of the [public] perceptions of everybody around the council, and we can’t control that.”

The era of “spin” has gone. We can no longer manipulate and manufacture communications effectively – now the only

NERYL EAST

# In the fishbowl

thing that will fly is authentic behaviour and transparency.

Reputation is built on three pillars:

- What we say about ourselves.
- How our communities experience us – online or personally.
- What people are saying to others about us.

Neryl said that councils had no choice now but to embrace the power of social media. It was already having a huge impact not only on councils, but also on corporates. A recent example was where Coles supermarkets recalled a line of disposable nappies because a mother posted on Facebook her concerns about safety. She never communicated directly to Coles, but Coles responded on the basis of what was happening in social media.

In a positive example, a council officer

noticed a social media post about a park that needed repair. He visited the woman who posted, and a couple of hours later, a new post appeared full of praise for the council and its officer.

“You can’t buy that sort of outcome.”

People will always complain on social media, so councils can’t ignore it.

Recent surveys of trust and credibility are showing that respondents are more and more trusting people like themselves, rather than elected officials, senior managers and chief executives. The regular employee therefore has greater opportunity to influence opinion.

To survive in the fishbowl, Neryl suggests three strategies:

Take a broad and a narrow view. This means looking not only at the immediate issues that require attention, but also the bigger picture – the things that demand attention



Reputation is built on three pillars: What we say about ourselves, how our communities experience us, and what people are saying to others about us.

NERYL EAST

# In the fishbowl

if they're not to develop into urgent issues.

"I'm talking about having a very clear view in your external environment, in the networks you're already operating in. It's what people are saying about your council, your services and your sector. Think about the implication of issues that are allowed to build up because they're not addressed."

The second strategy is being active in our ecosystem of influence. Everything we do is influenced by other players in our ecosystem. It means we need to consider what effect our decisions will have on these people, and build relationships with them. Customers fit within this system.

The third strategy is about equipping our "reputation ambassadors". This is everyone in our organisation.

"It's a scary prospect in a lot of cases. But do your staff have the information they need to talk to people about what you do? Do they

have the structures and procedures? If they post on social media – whether as a council employee or not – do they know the rules around that? Are they trained in how they interact with people?"

Chief executives, Neryl suggests, now have a role that's less to do with controlling the messages, but rather enabling people in the organisation to convey the messages.

Like someone aspiring to be a winner of the Nobel Prize, reputation is not something that can be chased as a goal.

"It's not something you can manufacture or fabricate. It's something that we have to be and do. It's about being great at who we are, at what we deliver and how we interact with our communities.

"That's what's going to set us up in this new paradigm and help us avoid being on the back foot plagued by issues all the time."



Chief executives now have a role that's less to do with controlling the messages, but rather enabling people in the organisation to convey the message.

MARK WELDON

# A journey of change

## Mark Weldon's had plenty of experience working with high-flying companies both in the United States and New Zealand.

As one of this country's acknowledged business leaders, he had some interesting insights to share with his SOLGM audience, into what leadership meant for organisations navigating through a journey of change.

In 2002, after spending several years in New York as an attorney and senior adviser to chief executives in several Fortune 500 companies, Mark was head-hunted by businessman Lloyd Morrison to run the New Zealand Stock Exchange. Lloyd had successfully campaigned to prevent the stock exchange from being taken over by its Australian rival and needed a new chief executive.

By the Thursday in his first week at work, he

had a run-in with a bank that had bought a large amount of stock. Alarm bells rang when it was clear the stock had been quickly on-sold to a bank client for considerably more than it had been bought. Mark contacted the bank and said he would fine it and suspend it from trading the next day. It was after 5pm when he got his first phone call.

"I got a call from the managing director of one of Auckland's oldest and largest blue-chip law firms. Down the other end of the speaker-phone – I kid you not – I got the 'do you know who I am' comment. It was the very first thing the guy said. One of the benefits of being on speaker-phone is that you don't always feel the need to talk back, so I just sat there in stunned silence, which he followed up with more versions of 'do you know who I am'. Of course, I had no idea who he was."

During the next four or five hours the



Mark Weldon

urgency of the calls escalated, but about midnight, the caller twigged that Mark just didn't care who he was and agreed that the money would be paid back to the client.

By the Saturday, on a walk down Oriental



contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

MARK WELDON

# A journey of change



"I put out a phrase for the board and the staff called 'Fixing the Franchise'. It created a fact that it was broken."

Parade in Wellington, Mark realised the new job was not about strategy, politics, IT or regulation. It was about changing the culture of the organisation, which he felt ill-equipped to handle. He almost bought an air ticket back to New York, but for reasons he still can't explain, he decided to stay and complete the job.

Managing change was going to be his challenge. He pondered what he would need to do to build positive change into the organisation.

The first thing he did was to communicate clearly to everyone that it was going to be difficult.

"I put out a phrase for the board and the staff called 'Fixing the Franchise'. It created a fact that it was broken."

He looked at three values that would help decision-making.

The first was "Brave". It recognised that

change was difficult but there was a system that supported decisions that were difficult.

The second was "Leader". It recognised that change was not going to happen through pure management; it required leadership. Mark recounted the story of a personally high-performing manager who unfortunately couldn't deal with times of high stress. He amplified the problems, so he was encouraged to move on. Once he'd gone, his former team became more focused and considerably more productive on many levels.

"When we asked him to leave because his leadership wasn't in line with our key values, it showed people that we would make really hard decisions ... and we would stick to them if we were going to be resilient."

The third value was "New Zealand".

"It became clear that we would have to do difficult things long term and be motivated

MARK WELDON

# A journey of change

by a higher purpose than the organisation itself.”

It played out when Mark was asked to help fundraise for three months, following the Canterbury earthquakes.

“It was as simple as saying to the board: New Zealand is one of our core values. I’ve been asked to do this. There wasn’t a lot else to discuss. These things send signals through the organisation about what matters.”

Turning to strategy, Mark said that consultants would usually say that if you write something down you’re going to execute it. “We all know that’s not true.”

Mark’s concept of strategy is: “Pick one organising idea and do absolutely everything consistently with it.”

Discussing leadership, Mark said there was always a lot of focus on time management.

“If you think about periods in your life when you’ve been really happy, and everything’s been in a ‘flow’ situation, your energy level has probably been really high. It didn’t matter how much sleep you got or whatever came at you, you could just nail it. People around you, most importantly, were positively infected by your energy and stuff just got done.”

Conversely, when you’ve felt miserable, things would go well no matter how much you tried to manage your time. Your ability to bring people along with you is low.

“The point is that time is finite and energy is variable – infinite at the top and extinguished at the bottom. For me, part of leadership is figuring out what gives me energy. I figured it out ... that if I had more than seven meetings in a row, no matter how I tried I couldn’t give that other person – who in most cases and being factual about it was probably attending the

Mark’s concept of strategy is: “Pick one organising idea and do absolutely everything consistently with it.”

most important meeting of their day – the attention they deserved. I couldn’t engage, my ability to listen and work through with them what they wanted to talk about was close to zero.

“It took a while to realise that while some of my energy comes from being with people, I needed a break. So I started scheduling about 2 o’clock every day a swim or a walk where I’d spend 30 minutes or an hour by myself in a quiet environment. I would come back and the next meeting would be like starting a brand new day.”

## PANEL DISCUSSION

# New CEs' view

**Three men were sitting at a table. One was from Newcastle, one from the private sector and one from within local government.**

It wasn't the start of a joke, but the three participating in the panel discussion were clearly enjoying their roles as new chief executives, despite the challenges they saw ahead.

As the new Chief Executive of Wellington City Council, Kevin Lavery is a newcomer to New Zealand. However, he has plenty of experience behind him as CE of his native Newcastle and of a newly formed unitary authority in Cornwall, England. The Cornwall council was an amalgamation of seven former authorities, with 22,000 staff and 123 councillors.

Despite cuts in government funding of NZ\$400 million a year for four years and a raft of failing services, Kevin and his team



New chief executives, from left David Clapperton (Horowhenua District Council), Kevin Lavery (Wellington City Council) and Craig Hobbs (South Waikato District Council).



turned around the dire position of Cornwall with a range of efficiency measures and rationalisation of services. Budgets were met and a revival began, but then a council coup threatened to stop the momentum. Kevin began to dream about working in a far-off city that was in control of its own destiny because it raised its own money and did not depend on central government.

He dreamed of a city that had potential for

high quality growth, an outdoor lifestyle "and a sensible number of open-minded politicians who would put their city first and help it be the best it could be".

He arrived in Wellington in March 2013. The city economy was flat, but there was potential. It has the wealthiest, best educated, most cultured and most tech-savvy population in the country.

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://www.solgm.org.nz)

## PANEL DISCUSSION

# New CEs' view



"If only we could revive the economy, the world would be our oyster, and we absolutely can. New Zealand has a stable deregulated low-tax environment and a growing economy."

He said Wellington had all the ingredients to make a world-class city and its politicians wanted to make it a "yes, we can" city.

"That's why I'm so excited to be here in Wellington and New Zealand. To manage the gap, we need a 'yes, we can' attitude, to be brave and inject some commercial nous."

Quoting Roman poet Virgil, he said: "They can because they think they can".

"It doesn't really feel like that in the US and Europe any more, but it does feel like that in New Zealand. Yes, we can in Wellington, and yes, we will."

Horowhenua District Council Chief Executive David Clapperton came from a different

background, having worked for several years in local government but also having had finance and marketing roles in the private sector.

Being by far the largest employer in the Horowhenua district, his council needed to operate as a business, David said. The biggest challenge he had in his role was to get staff to think with a business head, not a bureaucratic mind.

"We need to develop leaders who have a long-range perspective rather than a short-range view, those who challenge the status quo rather than accept it. We have to innovate and we have to inquire."

He believed local government was too risk-averse because it had always done things a certain way. Generalising, he said it was not a sector noted for being creative or responding rapidly, nor one that was quick to embrace new technology.

"We need to develop leaders who have a long-range perspective rather than a short-range view, those who challenge the status quo rather than accept it. We have to innovate and we have to inquire."

Attracting young people into local government was critical.

"I firmly believe we need to remarket local government to attract the best, not the second best. Largely, the best are going into the private sector."

David said when he started at HDC eight years ago, the average age of staff was



## PANEL DISCUSSION

# New CEs' view

53. It's now 42 after a concerted effort to attract young staff, including several graduates.

The new Chief Executive of South Waikato District Council, Craig Hobbs, came into the role after being in various senior management positions in the private sector.

What struck him initially was the "phenomenal" range of functions required in a local authority.

"The legislative and regulatory functions are so complex and cumbersome in the way they're written. It's taken a while to get my head around them."

He's been impressed, however, by the quality of people in local government, and their willingness to help him.

"The sector attracts very passionate and community-minded people. A lot of the positions are very specialised, and many people have forged long careers in local

"Until we start making mistakes and learning from those mistakes and learning from them, or trying new things, we're not going to make the step changes that our environment, our economy and our population require."

government. That's a strength, but also a challenge for us.

"The challenge is how we get a new perspective on how we do things."

He said it was important for senior managers to empower staff to try new things and support considered risk-taking.

"Until we start making mistakes and

learning from those mistakes, or trying new things, we're not going to make the step changes that our environment, our economy and our population require."

Craig noted that it was difficult to control the local government "product" as a private business might. Prices and merchandise lines could be changed in the commercial world, but much of what happened in local government was dictated by central government.

Working on limited budgets meant that councils had to be innovative in how they used the available funds.

"It's very important that we go back to looking at what we deliver for our shareholders. Sometimes we do lose sight of who those shareholders are, which are our ratepayers and the businesses that drive our economies and actually stimulate what's good about our districts."

## PANEL DISCUSSION

# Better local government

**Local Government Minister Chris Tremain kicked off a Summit panel discussion about what better local government actually looks like with five key points.**

Better local government, he said, required:

- clarity and consistency of purpose, which minimises crossover with taxpayer services;
- a culture of transparency, excellence and constant improvement;
- long-term asset planning and financial prudence;
- a paradigm shift towards digital services for citizens and ratepayers; and
- significant community reorganisation of the sector.

In discussing digital services, the Minister said local libraries would in future be enablers of the shift towards these services,



Discussing "What does local government actually look like?" were, from left: Local Government Minister Chris Tremain, Auditor-General Lyn Provost, Victoria University Associate Professor Bill Ryan, and local government consultant Peter Winder.

for both local and central government.

"I can see that someone is going to have to step up to the mark to provide accessibility to those members of the community where a tablet or iPhone or a computer is not available to them.

"I think libraries can play a pivotal role in providing hosted assistance."

Auditor-General Lyn Provost knew that

change in local government was inevitable, as it always is, but was wary of making any predictions. She said 10 years ago she had no idea what Facebook or Twitter were, she believed any serious earthquake would occur in Wellington and that the eight Auckland councils would stay divided.

"I've patently been wrong in everything."

However, she believed local government had

## PANEL DISCUSSION

# Better local government

to be agile, willing to move with the times and wherever possible shape those times.

Looking at what's going to be constant in the next few years, Lyn said people and local communities would remain the focus of local government. Challenges will come in the form of changing demographics, including an ageing population that will have different service needs, and being on a fixed income they will have different views about rates increases.

Local government will need good governance, good management, good asset management and good reporting that is ratepayer-centric.

Victoria University Associate Professor Bill Ryan was succinct in his view of what local government actually looks like – "It's one-sided and unbalanced".

Two significant trends were strongly influencing our current political systems.

One is the effect of a globalised economy dominated by finance capital and international trade. As a result, there is a tendency towards recentralisation and control – both national and regional.

The position of local government relative to central government is ambiguous. Central government has the power to legislate for local government, leading to the latter becoming a creature of the former.

The second trend goes in the opposite direction. Citizens have been demanding greater participation in political and policy processes. When they can't participate, the effects are a decline in the legitimacy of institutions and the creation of new ones that sometimes confront the existing political systems. The internet has rapidly increased the magnitude and speed of this trend.

Bill suggested the discussion should be

about the relative roles of local and central government in the overall governance of the nation in the 21st century, "not just the relegation of local government by national government to the operation of local regulation, services and infrastructure."

Local government consultant Peter Winder said that with his role as Kaipara District Council Commissioner, he was mindful of the considerable skill and capability challenges faced by local authorities in both governance and management.

"To me one of the key ingredients of success would be basic compliance with legal requirements, setting rates resolutions that are legitimate, processing building consent applications in a way that complies with the law and consulting with ratepayers in a way that meets the obligations of the Act. All of these are housekeeping things and I've been stunned and amazed at the struggle [some councils] have with it."

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

## PANEL DISCUSSION

# Can we work together?



**It was agreed – local government and central government can work well together if they understand each other.**

That was the broad consensus that emerged from a panel discussion with four chief executives – two from each sector – in the final session of the Summit.

Kicking off the discussion, Department of Internal Affairs Chief Executive Colin McDonald said it was recognised that everyone was committed to building stronger communities and had common interests. However, there were some natural tensions where local and national interests didn't align. He said the Productivity Commission had indicated that a better understanding by both parties of the other's business would be helpful.

He said that the Kiwis Count survey conducted over several years had scored



The chief executives who discussed whether central and local government could work together. From left, Colin McDonald (Department of Internal Affairs), Bill Bayfield (Environment Canterbury), Paul Reynolds (Ministry for the Environment) and Barbara McKerrow (New Plymouth District Council).

both local and central government well. However services delivered jointly, for example a central government policy delivered by local government, tended to score poorly. Improvements were needed.

"Central government is committed to trying to figure out how we bring more co-operation and coherence to this quite dispersed set of relationships."

He said ongoing dialogue as early as possible was essential.

"Increasingly, as we implement the Better Local Government changes, we're working much more closely with individual councils, through SOLGM and LGNZ, to identify councils that can help us make sure that the policies we develop are more easily implemented."



contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

## PANEL DISCUSSION

# Can we work together?



He said central government was always good at policy work, but then it would hand it over and walk away.

"We do that to ourselves and I think we do that to you as well. Figuring out how we can phase policy work into implementation with more support is an area that will help us drive towards an improved delivery.

There were several initiatives under way that would prove valuable for both sectors. One was the Real Me digital identity system. Using the system, citizens would have to use only one login to conduct all their transactions and engagements with government, whether central or local. The Government was already working with several councils who were keen to put more services online.

Bill Bayfield, Chief Executive of Environment Canterbury, said the question about whether the sectors could work together was almost

a stupid question because they undoubtedly could.

"But if this is as good as it gets, New Zealand is in trouble."

Having reported to a variety of people in his time as a chief executive, including elected and appointed officials, Ministers and commissioners, his basic role had changed little. It worked if he was clear about what his job was. In relationships with other people – such as central government – it made a huge difference to understand "the rules and protocols that run around that guy's work and allows that guy to function, and therefore how you can work with them to make stuff happen".

He felt that it was "almost demeaning" to suggest that either sector was playing any lesser part.

"So do we make more of the differences between central and local government than

"We are doing each other a huge disservice by constantly undermining and criticising each other when we both have an incredibly difficult job to do."

we need to? Do we actually make a bit more of it so that it turns into a lack of respect between the two sides of what is basically one government of New Zealand."

Respect was the key to understanding.

"We are doing each other a huge disservice by constantly undermining and criticising each other when we both have an incredibly difficult job to do. The trade-offs we've both had to make have been very hard to date, but if there's one thing I read in the tea leaves, they're going to get even harder yet."

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

LIVE WEB LINK: [click here  
www.solgm.org.nz](http://click here www.solgm.org.nz)

## PANEL DISCUSSION

# Can we work together?



The Chief Executive of the Environment Ministry, Paul Reynolds, said the successful reform of the Resource Management Act depended on collaboration and close co-operation with local government.

"We must work together to implement and finalise these important reforms."

The Ministry recently completed 17 seminars around the country which more than 1200 people attended. The seminars helped council and RM practitioners understand the most recent changes made by the Resource Management Amendment Act 2013.

"We will continue to work with councils to provide the support and guidance they need."

The size and scale of reforms had required a different relationship than in the past.

"Not only do we need to work in partnership with our council colleagues as together we implement the reforms, but

also we need to collaborate as we frame the important policy questions, and work together to develop solutions."

The fresh water reform programme was a good example of successful collaboration. Policy direction was set by the independent Land and Water Forum, which had local and central government observers playing a key role in supporting the forum's discussions.

New Plymouth District Council Chief Executive Barbara McKerrow related the story of her new mayor, who at a recent workshop was astounded at the amount of legislation his council needed to consider when making decisions – especially when it was compared to the average company.

"My mayor has been a councillor for two terms, but it really was the first time that he'd thought about the complexity of the environment we work in."

She said one of the tensions between central

and local government was a belief in local government that the system was far more complex than was necessary or productive. It made it difficult to explain to elected representatives and the public "why we do the things we do".

The keys to successfully working together were structured and frequent engagement, doing some real work together, genuinely collaborating on the issues and working together on the design of legislation.

"There is no new and dramatic panacea for improving collaboration. It's always been about the willingness of people to open their minds to what's really going on and what's needed."

contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

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**SOLGM is the national organisation that supports and develops local government professionals in New Zealand.**

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SOLGM is the voice for managers and staff in local government. We understand the importance of providing leadership and guidance on the role of good local government management. We work with integrity and diligence for our members and the rest of the local government profession.

## LEARNING

Because the management of local government requires specific skills, SOLGM offers a range of activities and resources to support the growth and development of local government staff and managers. Our aim is to build capability of the local government



workforce to enable effective delivery of services for New Zealand communities.

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SOLGM is a membership organisation with more than 500 individual members comprised of chief executives, senior managers and

emerging managers from 78 local authorities across New Zealand. SOLGM members receive benefits and have access to activities that support their career in local government.

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DECEMBER 2013

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contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

PULSE  
DECEMBER 2013

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contents

news

partnership

learning

summit

about SOLGM

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Level 8, Civic Assurance House, 114-118  
Lambton Quay

PO Box 5538, Lambton Quay  
Wellington 6145

Tel: 04 978-1280

Fax: 04 978-1285

Email: [info@solgm.org.nz](mailto:info@solgm.org.nz)

## Who's who?

### President

Ross McLeod

Email: [rossm@hdc.govt.nz](mailto:rossm@hdc.govt.nz)

### Vice Presidents

Barbara McKerrow

Email: [mckerrowb@npdc.govt.nz](mailto:mckerrowb@npdc.govt.nz)

Michael Ross

Email: [mross@waitaki.govt.nz](mailto:mross@waitaki.govt.nz)

### Chief Executive

Karen Thomas

Tel: 04 978-1282

Email: [kthomas@solgm.org.nz](mailto:kthomas@solgm.org.nz)

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and activities, 'Like' SOLGM's Facebook  
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