



SOLGM's Financial Working Party Newsletter

SOLGM's Financial Working Party met on 3 July.

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LTP 2015 Done and Dusted

As of the time of writing 75 local authorities have adopted 2015/25 long term plans. SOLGM notes that no local authority has received an adverse audit opinion in 2015, making this the first 'clear round' since the introduction of the LTP audit in 2006.

As to the post LTP debrief, a survey will be sent to all LTP project managers seeking views about the process, SOLGM guidance and the legislation. We suggest you get alongside your project manager as they do this.

BERL Revision

We received a briefing from Ganesh Nana on the proposed changes to the adjustors and the Local Government Cost Index. BERL are currently reviewing a sample of local authorities to consider both cost drivers and patterns of expenditure between different activities.

The degree of change will be substantive. The report releasing the adjustors will contain a mapping that will help local authorities determine which of the new adjustors will fit their circumstances best. The new series will be forecasted and retrofitted to give some back data.

FWP will approve the report at its next meeting (September 25) with release shortly thereafter. The release timeframe is driven by Statistics New Zealand's release of June quarter economic data and is beyond SOLGM's control (or BERL's).

SOLGM strongly advises local authorities to attend the webinar that will be held on release.

Save the Date - Local Government Funding Forum

The next Local Government Funding Forum will be held on 19/20 November in Wellington. Last week we issued a call for papers or topics. As usual day one will be a policy oriented day and day two a technically oriented day.

Accounting Committee Re-established

After a two-year IPSAS related hiatus FWP has re-established its Accounting Subcommittee. This will be monitoring accounting issues and standards and providing advice to SOLGM on which need

submissions. The Committee will be convened by Pam Bicknell and currently consists of Greame Trevathan, Azeem Mohammed and Phillipa Wilson.

We are on the lookout for volunteers from a regional or unitary council to join.

Rating of SUIPS

Several councils have been challenged on their definition of SUIP. SOLGM will circulate advice it has had on this in the near future.

Rating Policies

DIA have commenced a review of the operation of the Rates Rebates Act. The aim is to streamline the application process and related administration. DIA will present on this at the Funding and Rating Forum.

We also received a briefing from Te Puni Kokiri. They are looking anew at the rating and valuation of Māori freehold land. Those councils with large amounts of this land will be hearing from TPK in the near future.

SOLGM Sector Good Subscriptions – Action Needed

A housekeeping matter to finish on. SOLGM will invoice local authorities for the Sector Good Subscriptions on 6 July. Formerly known as the Work Programme Levies these fund SOLGM's Sector Good Work Programme, which in the coming year will include:

- the redevelopment of the BERL adjustors and Local Government Cost Index (our #1 most demanded resource)
- redevelopment of the SOLGM Code of Good Electoral Practice and other electoral readiness matters
- work with the Department on the policy and regulatory framework to support the trial of online voting
- continued redevelopment of the Sector Good Toolkit (formerly known as the Legal Compliance Programme)
- guidance on service delivery reviews (the so-called section 17A reviews)
- review of the guidance on the pre-election report
- the first work on LTP guidance for 2018 (yes that will begin towards the end of 2015/6)
- various pieces of thought leadership – the first on technology will be released in August, others include managing retreat, demand management and managing under austerity
- SOLGM's work on policy and regulatory matters – the ones we know about include the RMA package, Better Property Services, the consequences of the Rules Reduction Taskforce (which might include another Local Government Bill), accounting standards and the like
- services inherited from the wind-up of LGOL – such as LG Connect (the service formerly known as listserves).

Local authorities that have not done so should email purchase order numbers to accounts@solgm.org.nz .

Payment is due on 31 July.