



Sector Futures Working Party Newsletter March 2016

Sue Bidrose here, filling in for Bill.

SOLGM's Sector Futures Working Party met on 16 March. In this edition:

- managed retreat
- heads up – demographic challenges event in June
- resilience
- Better Local Services
- What we've we've been reading.

Managed Retreat

We reviewed an outline of SOLGM's guidance on conducting a conversation about managed retreat options.

We identified five key messages

1. overseas experience suggests the community are more likely to accept a retreat option if they've selected it having themselves ruled out other options
2. having credible science explained in plain English is critical to the success of the process (and make sure the scientists stick to the science ...)
3. engagement on these options will take time and resource
4. other agencies, such as the banking and insurance sectors, have significant interests in the conversation and will factor information into, work to establish a relationship with them
5. managing the transition is also critical.

Managed retreat and the circumstances that make it necessary can be a complex and highly emotive conversation to have with the community. We don't pretend that we have sole ownership of the good ideas in this area.

For that reason, we'll be issuing an exposure draft of SOLGM's guidance towards the end of June.

Heads Up: Demographic Challenges Event In June

SOLGM has been considering a proposed piece of thought leadership that looks at the implications of demographic change, and how these can be managed. Getting the community to accept that change is occurring (and is generally irreversible) can be particularly challenging.

There are some local authorities that have undertaken work in the area. For example, our research turned up this really useful piece of work done for the Waikato LASS <http://www.waikatoplan.co.nz/PageFiles/300/Strategic%20Interventions%20to%20population%20decline.pdf>

We've decided to hold a Demographic Challenges Workshop that is an opportunity for local authorities nationwide to come together to gain an understanding about how changing demographics could impact their communities and how to plan for those changes.

The event will explore, in multiple workshop sessions, many of the issues facing New Zealand due to changing demographics within both rural and urban communities. Delegates will hear from experts in the field, have the opportunity to share ideas and information with their peers and learn about potential strategies, particularly around the principal role of service delivery, for meeting the future needs of their communities.

Included in the event are a series of interactive workshops on:

- ageing population and local authorities
- applying international lessons and strategies to changing demographics in rural New Zealand
- engaging communities on changing demographics
- working with local partners
- strengthening the relationship between rural and urban areas

Please note that numbers are limited to this event.

Resilience

"Being a resilient community means investing now, to be future ready. Resilient communities honestly assess their vulnerabilities, their assets and are willing to consider the worst case. This isn't headline-grabbing work. It won't make you popular – and it doesn't win elections. But when your community is rocked by disaster, this is the work that gives us a path forward through the mess."^[1]

Bill's pre-Xmas newsletter talked about a wider definition of community resilience that focuses more on adaptive capacity and less on the traditional notion of resilience as readiness and recovery. SOLGM has engaged Dr Roger Blakeley to

^[1] Alliance for Innovation (2015), *The Next Big Things: The Next Twenty Years in Local Government*.

prepare the resilience framing paper mentioned. This will be completed in early May.

This paper will:

- provide a working definition of resilience and distinguish resilience, preparedness and recovery
- discuss the role of local authorities in helping build community resilience and recovery.

We know that McDEM will be holding a series of three workshops on the so-called National Disaster Resilience Plan in early and mid April. Roger will be presenting the key findings and directions for the paper by webinar on 5 April. This will be useful preparation for those planning to attend.

We have recommended that SOLGM undertake a project that considers the role of local authorities in building a resilient community. The SOLGM Executive will consider this alongside project proposals in its deliberations on the SOLGM work programme for 2016/7.

Better Local Services

As luck would have it, the SWP meeting fell on the same day as the Minister's announcements on the Better Local Services programme. I had the good fortune to attend a pre-announcement briefing on behalf of the SOLGM Executive.

For those who haven't seen the announcements yet the key points are:

- Government intends to legislate to allow councils to collaboratively set up CCOs with a focus on transport, water and economic development. As we understand it councils may choose from some legislated 'off the shelf' models or design their own
- in the transport area there will be two off the shelf models, one that is a land transport CCO, one a pure roading CCO (or councils can design their own). The off the shelf models presume existing regional council boundaries as a basis – councils that say want to set up a CCO within a region (say South Canterbury roads) would need approval from the Minister of Transport
- the water model appears to be based on a joint committee. Departure from the off the shelf model in this case appears to require approval from the Minister of Local Government. A water CCO will be prohibited from distributing surpluses to its shareholders
- there are changes being made to beef up local oversight – including changes to SOI preparation, links to LTPs and infrastructure strategies

- transfers of functions will be better enabled. A proposal to transfer water, transport or RMA will require a successful poll.
- reorganisation will be streamlined – amalgamation proposals must go to a poll.

Legislation will be introduced in mid-year with the intent that it will be enacted in time for incoming councils to consider whether and how to apply the new flexibility. It seems likely that there will be a raft of consequential issues and changes, for example should CCO charges fall within the ambit of the Rates Rebate Act, or do provisions around CCO disclosures in accountability need tweaking.

You can find the Minister's announcements at

<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/major-reforms-improve-services-ratepayers>

What We've Been Reading

The Next Big Things – Alliance for Innovation and ICMA

The Alliance for Innovation is an American thinktank that describes itself as "the premier resource for emerging practice in local government" and is partners with ICMA and Arizona State University.

The Next Big Things is a report that focuses on issues and trends that will impact on local government over the next twenty years (twenty years being the length of a generation). While designed for an American audience, most of the trends and issues identified in this report are relevant for New Zealand, and we found the four scenarios (steady as she goes, nomentum, we're not gonna take it and democracy 3.0) fascinating.

You can find this at [TheNextBigThings](#)

We noted that SWP has considered more than a few of these. We'd be interested in your thoughts on which of these warrants further discussion.

Park Life, Street Life

And finally for this edition an interesting, if a little quirky, report from the New Local Government Network and APSE.

In previous editions of this newsletter we've attached papers from various UK thinktanks that discuss the impacts of austerity on local services. The so-called public realm (streets, parks and other open spaces) has been particularly affected by austerity.

Park Life, Street Life considers how local authorities can use insights from the behavioural sciences to manage demand and discourage behaviours that create needs for expenditure. The report also considers community fundraising.

Park Life, Street Life can be found at [Park Life Street Life](#)

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