



The Sector Futures Working Party (SWP) met on 9 December. In this issue:

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Resilience

“Preparedness is about the next three days, resilience is about the next five years”.

Policy-makers overseas are paying an increasing level of attention on resilience and community resilience. We’ve had a discussion exploring what resilience means in a New Zealand context, and where SOLGM’s role should lie in promoting resilience concepts.

We don’t use the term ‘resilience’ to mean the community capacity to prepare and recover from shocks (though that is an important part of a resilient community). We take resilience to refer to the capacity of a community to adapt to stresses and hazards in a timely and efficient manner.

Some of the biggest and most complex issues we currently face (or will face in the future) have a large resilience component to them. We noted two on our work programme in the work we are doing around managed retreat from environmental risks and managing demographic decline.

Our view is that resilience may well be one of the key themes that drives the policy and practice environment in the next few years. We’ve asked SOLGM to commission a piece of work that frames this wider concept of resilience and the local authority role in building resilient communities.

Some examples of literature around resilience can be found later in the newsletter.

Age of Austerity: Has English Local Government Adapted to “the Cuts”?

What do you do when central government cuts your funding 37 percent? And when it tells you that more cuts are on the way?

We've been working on *Age of Austerity* – a report that looks at whether and how local government in England has adapted to the so-called austerity regime that has been in place since the global financial crisis.

The result is an interesting read – both for the strategies that our English colleagues have employed, but also for the story it tells about the impact of the cuts. Our thanks to Shivani Makwana, who did all the hard work, and to Denise O Shaughnessy, Gill Payne and Charlotte McGimpsey who contributed their perspectives on earlier drafts.

We are likely to look at the Republic of Ireland next. The powers to tax are similar. Some of the policy options that have been implemented in Eire have been pursued or touted as options in New Zealand – including a (forced) amalgamation of local authorities and the establishment of a state run water company.

We may also look at some parts of the United States. While 'the GFC' has had an impact there, fiscal constraint in the United States is also partly a story about population movement and some extremely generous fiscal policy.

What We've Been Reading

Resilience

We have previously mentioned the work of the Rockefeller Foundation and its 100 Cities project (currently 67). New Zealand is fortunate to have two cities within the first two groups of selected cities (Christchurch and Wellington). There are a range of resources available through www.100resilientcities.org

Matthew Leighton from Tauranga drew the Local Government Information Unit's report [Resilience in Practice](#) to our attention. This is the first output from an ongoing programme of research into resilience that we are keeping our eyes on. There is a very simple but neat framework that helps assess resilience and the actions you can take.

We also noted that the night before our meeting a private sector agency Resilient New Zealand released a report [Contributing More](#) which looks at the role of the private sector in recovery.

Sea Level Rise

For those who haven't seen it yet, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment has released the report *Preparing New Zealand for Rising Seas: Certainty and Uncertainty*. This can be found at:

<http://www.pce.parliament.nz/media/1390/preparing-nz-for-rising-seas-web-small.pdf>

The commissioner has made several recommendations that central government provide clear guidance that are quite similar to some of the conclusions in our own report *Climate Change: Local Government Can Make a Difference*.

Future Technologies

Those who followed our work on the implications of future technology might also find the following two reports from the World Economic Forum of interest. Reports like these are the reason we are likely to take a fresh look at technology every year or two.

Raymond referred to Deep Shift at the conclusion of the webinar on Fit for the Digital Future - it presents the predictions of a panel of IT experts on a series of technological tipping points. You can find this at

http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GAC15_Technological_Tipping_Points_report_2015.pdf

The Top Ten Urban Innovations of 2015 presents developments in technology and its use that will change the urban environment. Particularly relevant is the first page and its description of four key trends: unlocking spare capacity, cutting the peaks, small scale infrastructure thinking and people centred innovation. You can find this at

http://www3.weforum.org/docs/Top_10_Emerging_Urban_Innovations_report_2010_20.10.pdf

Making Devolution Work

For those interested in the ongoing discussions around devolution in England, this report from Localis and Grant Thornton (UK) surveys what lessons have come from the first sets of negotiations. Thanks to Jane Turnbull for sending this to us. This is at:

<http://www.localis.org.uk/images/GT1171%20Making%20devolution%20work%20-%20FINAL.pdf>

Seasons Greetings

This was our last meeting for 2015.

In 2016 we'll commence work on projects managing retreat and managing demographic decline as well as completing our research on fiscal constraints. And, with the help of our SWP aides, we'll continue to bring the most interesting and useful of the overseas literature to you.

For now, SWP wishes all a safe and happy Christmas and a successful 2016.

Bill Bayfield

Chair, Sector Futures Working Party

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