

LGNZ 2023 CONFERENCE SUMMARY

By Mayor Tania Tapsell

Presidents address:

Sam Broughton was successfully elected as the new President for LGNZ and replaced outgoing President Stuart Crosby. Sam Broughton is the Mayor of Selwyn District Council, comes from a rural background, and will be focused on change. He believes in long term planning and balancing urgent needs with maintaining focus on long term. President Sam wants to connect with all Councils. Regarding the FFLG report, he says we need to pick it up and run with it as we will do it better when we do it together.

Te Maruata Address:

The key points from the Co-Chairs of Te Maruata were focused on relationships and working together as equals. They also emphasised that change needs to be transformative, status quo has not served us in the past and won't serve us in the future. There was also an encouragement to think about succession planning and who is going to follow us as the next leaders.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations, Sophie Howe:

Wales was the first country in world to legislate to protect future generations interest. Acknowledgement that environmental changes are occurring and inactions will not be in the best interests of people. There is a moving direction to prioritizing environmental wellbeing over economic. Sophie emphasised we've got to think about the big things - while doing the small things - so all the small things go in the right direction. Also reflected that if we're not sure where we're going, action may not last after elections, so we need to have the vision. So much of what public service does is only intervening when something has already happened e.g. let's not just lock people up after the crime. "We've got these goals, show me how you're delivering on them" - hold a mirror up to them and see if it's actually delivering. For a long time there's been a better way of doing things, but we need to pick them up and get ahead of it. A "Future generations declaration" is an option. Never think you are too small. Consider a 'wellbeing economic alliance'. Sophie believed lowering the voting age was a way to ensure young people have a say. There was also an excellent example of a 'future leaders academy' in Wales which paired them with senior leaders in public service. Interestingly this was seen as an

opportunity for young people to share their wisdom with older people, as opposed to traditional methods of mentoring.

Asset Management:

Need to know what are the benefits of this work. What happens to the data, and are we building knowledge we can carry forward that isn't connected to individuals. Collect data and manage it collectively as well as develop institutional knowledge. It takes some time for this info to then be useful to customers (Ministers, Council, and community). Need to know the value of the asset and replacement value, this was a tough lesson learnt in Christchurch and is very important to assist with good planning and decision making. Leave a legacy of information that's beneficial when you move on. Link climate change and infrastructure plans together, this is important to knowing your existing asset base.

Prime Minister Chris Hipkins address:

Joint partnership approach. Mayors Taskforce for Jobs (MTFJ) provided practical benefits on the ground. Work together for positive long-term change. Water investment required, maintaining status quo would be expensive. Heard concerns on water reforms, took them into consideration and redesigned process. Te Mana o Te Wai is a critical part of reform. The refocus doesn't change the commitment, to build a world class system we need to work alongside mana whenua. Must take opportunity to build back better and mitigate future risk. \$6B is just the start to invest in mitigating climate change, managed retreat needed in some areas. In due course will need more legislation to make decisions quicker and help communities affected by these events. NZ has a centralised model to government services in NZ. Many New Zealanders are having hard time paying bills, acknowledge these issues focus on short-term. LGNZ sector needs to come together and tell government what we need.

A Journey to Balance:

Tuahiriri - care for your people. We care about what we do, and how we do it. Used example of Takapūneke reserve and the consultation and collaboration to develop it. History provides the context to how we live our lives now. Co-governance is still about trade, trust and truth. "Tell the people, let them know what it is, and why we have cried over this land". Renegation; measure it by as many

visitors as possible, can we break even, do locals love us, what are our ratings and reviews? Looking after locals is important with local rates.

Opposition leaders address, Chris Luxon:

Invest and focus on growth of economy. Local Government issues are a symptom of a broken system. Replacing co-governance. Do water infrastructure well; repeal Labour's 3W legislation, scrap entities, set water quality rules. Establish an independent water regulator to require infrastructure to be maintained. Housing growth and poor infrastructure investment has artificially constrained growth. House prices are up 430%, and government spends \$4B on social housing a year. Need to target underlying drivers of the housing crisis. Councils will be required to zone up to 30 years of land. Reform acts to cut costs. National will provide \$1B build for growth fund which will pay councils (to support growth). Infrastructure for the future policy; establish national infrastructure agency, create city and regional deals to prioritise investment to most beneficial and fast outcomes. NZ has endless potential but it's up to us to make it happen.

Managed Retreat:

Can do a modified version where move is only voluntary. Hawkes bay example are looking to relocate up hill. If you try to make it mandatory it wouldn't work. It's about people. Need to get the groundswell. It's about community and bringing people on the journey, share stories and videos in support. Engagement and data of it is important to get their feedback. Codesign over consultation, engagement is very important. Example: recovery welfare hub was set up for people to go in to. Need to give people good examples. Employed community navigators who also assist with insurance and mental health issues.

Supercharge Localism:

Covid rollout; wasn't until trusted voices, faces, and places advocated for it did it work. Only those with social infrastructure that are setup and already intact can deliver, there has been degradation of civil society, when there's a crisis people go to marae and schools. Social enterprises & not-for-profit are able to pivot and deliver much quicker, power shift occurred during red alert levels. Were able to help and deliver during that time but then after was stripped of it again and the power went back to central government agencies. Shifting that power back for good will assist with solutions. Challenge

for councils is how willing are you to allow space for community. "Truth is nobody relinquishes power willingly".

Focus on your circle of influence. We need to lift our game to give central Governance confidence in us. When Council is at the table are we 'together', do we trust each other. If people are not leading change then what are they there for, should step down and get out of the way. Capabilities of councillors needs to be looked at, ensure we have the right skills around the table. 'Crisis of governance', how much time goes into what is meaningful? Get really clear about what the job is, which is about reflecting the communities we serve. People who have no incentive to allocate resources for future generations will not do so. Find the spaces that mean a lot to community. Ensure they're designed by community and for community, e.g. library, pools etc. "This is a powerful room, what are you going to do with that power?".

Transporting our communities into the future panel:

Important to have the conversation in what we can actually achieve. Need to decide what is on the priority list, you won't be able to do everything. Talk with your community and then have a list of 1-5 of immediate priorities, cannot achieve everything we want to with the funding we have. We need to lean into conversations with community on things they can solve themselves. Certainty of funding is more important than certainty of projects. More consents are for townhouses than greenfields. When we decide where we want to grow transport is an enabling infrastructure (so is water and social infrastructure). Communities know and understand trade offs and that we can't do everything. How are Councils respecting communities and letting go of power to them. Need to have the tough discussions on where is best place to invest and trade off. We need to speak the truth and be honest with where we're at, challenge to Councils to be courageous on what we can actually afford. Don't set expectations that are unachievable. "Tell government either give me the funding, or front the community yourself to tell them why."