



caring about you & your environment

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Report to Wellington Regional Council
from Stuart Macaskill, Chairman

Chairman's Report

1. State Highway One

As Councillors will be well aware, there has been considerable attention to improved safety on State Highway One following the recent tragic accidents.

I welcome the interim measures being taken by Transit. However, I remain very concerned about published suggestions that the Wellington Regional Council has been opposed to safety improvements. Our views are very clear from our own Regional Land Transport Strategy and, of course, the Land Transport Safety Authority and Transit NZ, who are responsible for these matters, are represented on our Regional Land Transport Committee. The need for safety improvements is strongly endorsed by us.

I will comment further at the meeting.

2. Members' Remuneration

As previously advised, the Minister of Local Government has announced a 2.5% increase in members' remuneration, with retrospective effect. I understand the Ministerial Determination formally approving the increase has just been notified. I will be submitting recommendation for consideration by Council on the Special Meeting to be held on 25 August.

Also, the rates for mileage allowances need to be reviewed, particularly in light of recent fuel cost increases. Any increases apply to the whole of local government and require approval by the Minister of State Services. *Local Government New Zealand* has initiated a request for such a review.

It is expected that legislation to change the overall approach to Members' Remuneration, will be introduced into Parliament later this year.

3. Totara Grove Tree Planting

I have had several very favourable responses to our Millennium tree planting, including some from past councillors who were unable to be present but have already visited, or will be visiting, their totara.

Another addition to the Grove was a very informal planting of another totara by the internationally renowned botanist, David Bellamy, in Upper Hutt recently.

4. Regional Outlook

Councillors have been provided with a copy of the 'just issued' Regional Outlook Update.

From the responses I have been receiving and media reports, it is very clear this publication is fulfilling a very useful role.

Also, importantly, it provides a useful counterbalance to the negativism being expressed by some in the community.

5. My Absence

Mr Maguire and I will be leaving New Zealand on our overseas Study Tour on Sunday, 26 August and returning at Labour Weekend. Councillor Shields will act as Chairman while I am away – I propose that she have the use of the Chairman's car in my absence.

Also, as I will be on Council business much of the time I am away, I should formally be granted leave of absence.

Also I suggest that at any time Cr Shields is not available, that Cr McQueen deputise for her.

During Ted's absence, John Allard will be acting as Council Secretary.

Recommendation

That:

(1) *I be granted leave of absence for the period 26 August to 23 October 2000.*

(2) *While Cr Shields is Acting Chairperson, Cr McQueen act as deputy in her absence.*

6. "He Minenga Wakatu Hua o Te Ao – Sustaining the fruits of the World" - Hui about Bicultural approaches to Environment Management and Science – 25-27 August 2000

Information about the above Hui was circulated at the last Ara Tahī meeting (**Attachment 1**). It will be noted the Hui is being held in Invercargill from 25-29 August and is principally for Maori to attend.

Some Councillors have expressed interest in attending.

A decision about possible Wellington Regional Council political representation should be made at this meeting.

7. Leave of Absence

- (1) Councillor Allen has requested leave of absence from 11-28 August. He advises that he will be attending a communication conference and annual meeting in Boston representing New Zealand and Australia on the executive council of APCO (Association of Public Safety Communications Officials)
- (2) Councillor Bonner has requested leave of absence from 16 August – 21 September as she will be travelling overseas.

Recommendation

That Councillors Allen and Bonner be granted leave of absence as requested

8. Recommendation

That the report be received and recommendations adopted.



STUART MACASKILL
Chairman