

The New Zealand Post Management Excellence Awards

1999

Executive Summaries

Table of Contents

| Pg | Title |
|-----------|---|
| | Technology Advance |
| 6 | <i>Auckland Regional Council</i> – Bionics |
| 6 | <i>Clutha District Council</i> – Open for Business – Our Information Technology Solution |
| 7 | <i>Selwyn District Council</i> – Lake Coleridge Waste Management Project |
| 7 | <i>Waitakere City Council</i> – Customer Services Intranet |
| | Customer Relationships |
| 9 | <i>Auckland City Council</i> – Beyond the Millennium |
| 10 | <i>Waitakere City Council</i> – Operation ForestSave – Community Involvement to Save the Waitakeres |
| 11 | <i>Central Hawkes Bay District Council</i> – Waipawa Library – International Year of Older Persons 1999 - Computer Coaching |
| 11 | <i>Grey District Council</i> – GROW – Grey Region Opportunities Workshop |
| 13 | <i>Hutt City Council</i> – Possum Busters |
| 14 | <i>Manukau City Council</i> – Manukau Economic Development Strategy |
| 14 | <i>Manukau City Council</i> – The Changing Face of Manukau |

- 15 *Manukau City Council –*
Manukau State of the Environment Report 1999
- 16 *Otorohanga District Council –*
Otorohanga District Plan – The People’s Plan
- 17 *Rotorua District Council –*
Rotorua City Redevelopment Project
- 17 *Selwyn District Council –*
Council Call
- 18 *Waikato District Council –*
The Tamahere Study
- 18 *Waitakere City Council –*
Partnership Development
- 19 *Waitakere City Council –*
Issue Resolution Process
- 20 *Waitakere City Council Library and Information Services –*
Reaching Out – Meeting the Needs of our Multicultural Community

Management of People

- 22 *Manukau City Council –*
Balanced Success Scorecard
- 22 *Waikato District Council –*
The Waikato Way
- 23 *Wanganui District Council –*
The Service Management Plan
- 23 *Wellington City Council Libraries –*
Steps to Safety at Wellington City Libraries
- 24 *Wellington City Council Libraries –*
Wellington City Libraries and PSA Protocol

Process Management

- 26 *Auckland Regional Council –*
ASAP

- 27 *Clutha District Council* –
Matching Service to Demand
- 27 *Environment Waikato* –
One in One Hundred Year Flood
- 28 *Hamilton City Council* –
Improvement in the Subdivision Consent Process
- 29 *Hastings District Council* –
Time is Money
- 30 *North Shore City Council* –
Annual Plan Submission Process Management
- 31 *Palmerston North City Council* –
Customer Service Centre
- 32 *Venture Taranaki* –
Establishment of an Economic Development Agency

Technology Advance

Auckland Regional Council

Bionics

In late 1997 the ARC undertook a review of its plant and animal pest responsibilities. The major driver was a desire to standardise biosecurity operations across the region and to deliver an efficient and accessible service for all customers.

Combining the cultures and processes of staff from seven organisations presented the ARC with a number of challenges in designing and building a system to provide a single integrated Biosecurity operation.

As many of the field staff initially had limited computer knowledge, simplicity and ease of use were essential factors in the customisation of these applications and the technology chosen.

Clear and quantifiable productivity gains have been experienced throughout the project including reduction in data costs, reduction in travel times, increased inspections and a higher quality product. All of these have had benefits in terms of the Council's customer services for this function. This paper explores how the technology enabled us to blend the diverse cultures and focus on outcomes.

Clutha District Council

Open for Business

By using Virtual Private Networking and Internet technologies we are able to deliver all our corporate systems to any location in New Zealand at low cost.

For the first time in New Zealand the potential for true cross boundary co-operation between councils is available by sharing administrative functions and centralised computer systems.

Selwyn District Council

Lake Coleridge Waste Management Project

This entry is submitted for the Technology Advance award. It consists of three environmentally-friendly composting toilets that the Council has built in an ecologically sensitive high country location. The toilets were constructed as a joint project between the Council, ECNZ, and local land owners and have resulted in less pollution and fouling of the shoreline and water and a more concentrated pattern of recreational use around the lake.

Waitakere City Council

Customer Services Intranet

Waitakere City Council's Customer Services intranet was developed as a tool to facilitate responses to the wide range and large number of requests received by Customer Services staff.

Although the concept of an intranet for this purpose is not novel, the way in which the information is presented and organised, and the use of custom built features, has resulted in a superior and possibly unique information system to others seen in use in local government.

Custom built features include:

- **The uniform use of three templates** regardless of the subject matter.
- **Interactive "message board" and emergency listings.**
- **A refined search engine.**
- **User friendly feedback mechanisms.**
- **Internal and external phone listings** interlinked with documentation
- **A glossary** of Council terms and jargon.

Development and use of these features has resulted in a fast and focussed system which allows consistent, accurate and speedy replies to requests, and contributes to Customer Services providing a "one stop shop" to customers.

Customer Relationships

Auckland City Council

Beyond the Millennium

Strategic Plan Review

The process developed for the 1999 Strategic Review is based on:

- Using foresight to think about the future of the City of Auckland.
- Involving people in the process to develop a shared vision and work together for the future.
- Ongoing communication throughout the process building awareness of objectives and identifying opportunities for input.

The Foresight Stage

- The Foresight stage brought Council and community representatives together to scope an initial framework for a shared vision for the City's future.

The Results

- Additional workshops as a direct consequence of the initial workshop results which strongly indicated the City did not reflect adequately its multi-cultural nature.
- A series of workshop reports outlining the significant issues facing Auckland.
- A set of "Mind Maps" that explain simply how the community see the major issues facing Auckland.
- Improved relationships between the Council and key groups in the Auckland community.
- Actions being taken to remedy deficiencies identified in relationships.

Waitakere City Council

Operation ForestSave

Operation ForestSave was implemented by the Auckland Regional Council to save the Waitakere Forest, by culling possums there.

A key feature of the project was to develop a comprehensive communications programme to support operations.

An Advisory Group was set up to provide information flow and ideas between the community and the Council.

A freephone hotline allowed direct access to information on the project.

Television celebrity and local resident Annie Whittle became project spokesperson, while many community groups were directly encouraged to participate.

The ARC budgeted \$1,392,500 for Operation ForestSave.

400 residents participated in the self-help programmes.

The project received much positive publicity.

The community is now actively working to control possums within the area.

Possum numbers have been reduced without public opposition and the bush is regenerating.

Around 70,000 possums have been removed, reducing foliage consumption by 6,300 tonnes annually.

Operation ForestSave achieved its goal.

Central Hawkes Bay District Council

Waipawa Library – International Year of the Older Persons 1999 – Computer Coaching

After the Waipawa Library moved its catalogue system onto a computer database, the Librarians identified the need for increased computer literacy among older persons to enable them to use the system. The Computer Coaching project aimed to provide basic computer training, empowering individuals and freeing up library staff from catalogue enquires. The Librarian managed the project in its entirety, from sourcing funding, solving the logistical problems related to providing training in a small rural town (population 1,900) with no permanent information systems training facilities, and managing budgets, staff, and publicity. The courses were provided free of charge over three weeks for people over 55. The available places were quickly oversubscribed even with limits on the number of sessions per attendee. Evaluation sheets were very positive, and other results for the library include: new library borrowers, increased use of the library computer system, and increased issues of computer books.

Grey District Council

GROW (Grey Region Opportunities Workshop)

The specific and very demanding problems facing the West Coast as a development region prompted the Grey District Council to find innovative solutions to secure the long term financial future of the Grey District. Council at first endeavoured to make it a West Coast initiative but had to settled for a “local” initiative. It is hoped that the local effort will generate so much momentum that the rest of the West Coast will, in time, come on board.

GROW is the result of the application of traditional “community development” principles in order to direct the future development of our district and to facilitate joint endeavours to reach such goals. For this reason:

- Council as the ultimate decision-making body for our district, accepted the principle of being led by GROW in its planning for the future. Council sees itself as a partner in GROW.
- Decision-making must be bottom up which of course allows for “public ownership” for decision made.

- GROW must be inclusive in that it must cover our entire district and must provide the opportunity for everyone to participate. This allows for the needs and aspirations of all our residents to be addressed and, at the same time, effectively negates the ingrained view that public decision-making is the privilege of a selected few.
- To be successful as a collective bottom up initiative it must be community driven. For this reason and to avoid people having the chance to sit back in the knowledge that “Council is handling things” the involvement of the Mayor, Councillors and senior municipal officials has been curtailed to advisory positions.

This initiative was launched on 13 May 1998. Since then GROW has progressed positively achieving all the short-term goals set for itself. The biggest indicator of success is however, the fact that local associations are continually restructuring themselves in order to “fit into” the GROW concept.

Two remaining problems at this stage are:

- (i) The participation by the Maori groups is still lacking. Recent discussions with both the local tribes however, have been positive.
- (ii) Due to the size of our district, participation by our outlying areas has not been entirely successful.

Recent successes include:

- (i) Full participation by the Youth Council. Apart from it being a necessary ingredient for success, it makes for fresh approaches to development.
- (ii) A strategic planning exercise is being undertaken by each of the committees. The setting of short, medium and long-term goals is progressing well. These goals will be incorporated into Council’s Strategic Plan for our district, which will also be a community effort.
- (iii) A Mainstreet initiative is being launched which promises to be most exciting.
- (iv) Suddenly everybody is thinking outside the circle which is good for this district.

I have no doubt in my mind that this partnership effort between Council and our community lays a solid, positive foundation for the future of our district. After all – our people are our biggest asset.

Hutt City Council

Possum Busters

Possums: Pest. Carrier of bovine tuberculosis. Destroyer of native forest and wildlife. A threat and a nuisance.

This nasty Australian immigrant spurred Hutt City Council and the Eastbourne community into action in 1997. One of Hutt City's major attractions is its bush walks and park areas. The Eastern Bays and Eastern Hills bush areas are one of the Hutt's prime assets.

The Hutt City Council Leisure Services Division project managed the Possum Busters project in conjunction with the community – the Council would give ratepayers the means to trap possums, thus saving the southern rata trees ON THE Eastern hills.

Possum Busters receive training from Hutt City Council, they set a trap on or near their property, they empty the trap, and put the bodies out for collection at their letter box each day.

This HAS sparked further programmes, and given Council the opportunity to develop lasting and beneficial community relations with residents.

Manukau City Council

Manukau Economic Development Strategy

The Manukau Economic Development Strategy (EDS) achieved new heights in collaboration, innovation and project management, allowing the City to realise its aspirations and its vision - Vibrant, Diverse and Unique.

The process of Strategy development was thoroughly planned using schematic diagrams and flow charts to identify key processes, showing milestones and timeframes. A high level of communication kept the project sponsor and the stakeholders fully informed about the progress.

EDS was a result of extensive research into customer needs, and benefits, including a competitor analysis.

The process of the development of EDS was highly inclusive involving different communities of interest. Feedback and input were actively obtained to keep stakeholders engaged in the process and thus assume greater ownership.

EDS has led to innovation in processes and services supplied by Council that has enhanced Council's effectiveness e.g. a reduction in turnaround times for consents, a more welcoming business environment has been engendered, leading to more investment and jobs. The process of strategy development and its goals have been widely acknowledged and have been reported in the media regionally and nationally.

Manukau City Council

The Changing Face of Manukau

The Changing Face of Manukau raises awareness about the social, environmental and economic conditions in Manukau. By identifying goals for the City and establishing indicators and targets for each goal area, it also provides a basis for action. The report's integrated approach enables us to better understand the linkages among different areas, and to acknowledge trade-offs in decision making, encouraging a more holistic approach to finding solutions to City development.

The report aims to produce action in all areas of the community, not just by Council, so that over time Manukau moves to a basis of sustainable development and community wellbeing. The report sets benchmarks, allowing us to measure the pressures on the City and to assess progress towards the City's strategic vision.

Developed by an interdepartmental project team, the report is based on research and extensive community consultation, ensuring that the approach taken and the indicators adopted are robust.

Manukau City Council

Manukau State of the Environment Report 1999

Manukau's first State of the Environment Report provides an overview of the major issues impacting Manukau's environment, summarises key environmental drivers and discusses actions that need to be taken.

The people of Manukau are now better able to participate in making decisions that will benefit their environment. The report was designed with the community in mind, from the empowering cover logo and theme 'the environment is in all our hands!' to the ease of reading and novel summary messages.

A unique participatory approach with iwi/hapu groups involved resourcing them into the drafting process and their issues being interwoven throughout the document. A comprehensive roadshow and feedback process will enable ongoing community participation.

Community eagerness to access the report, debate issues and request further information along with Council incorporation of information into other reports are sure signs of it's success.

Otorohanga District Council

Otorohanga District Plan - The People's Plan

Aim:

To create a District Plan with our community in a cost effective, partnership oriented process.

Methods:

1. Innovative community consultation mechanisms.
2. Use of independent facilitator.
3. Plan created from community's agreed environmental outcomes.
4. Trials, feedback and local submitters.
5. Free and frank informal draft plan process
6. Proposed plan process involving extensive pre-hearings.

Product:

A5, 100 page, one stop shop document.

Effects based.

Easy to read and determine all parts which will apply to a proposal.

Land use and subdivision separated.

Quick checklist system.

Success:

Total Council hearing days 4.

Negotiated outcomes at hearing stage – One appeal – withdrawn with no Plan changes.

Total cost less than \$500,000.

Time from notification to operative – 21 months.

Reduced level of consent required.

Reduction in consent processing times.

More complete applications - Fewer requests for further information.

Streamlined internal processes.

High level of public acceptance.

Reduced liability potential.

Rotorua District Council

Rotorua City Redevelopment Project

Early in 1990, plans were laid for Rotorua's City Redevelopment Project.

The visible Rotorua had become drab and tired, requiring a new image. A package covering the three prime areas of the central city was unveiled. This was designed to integrate the Lakefront, the Government Gardens and the Central Business District in a way that would retain key features and values that were uniquely and intrinsically Rotorua.

The prime focus of the Project was that landscape concepts were to be predominant. Technical/engineering solutions would be required to meet that objective. The resultant landscape has provided a unique visual environment and technical aspects are functioning admirably.

An extensive consultation programme on the project was carried out with key interest groups and the public generally.

Community satisfaction levels with Rotorua's beautification and landscaping rose significantly as a result of the project.

The total cost of the project was \$30 million.

Selwyn District Council

Council Call

This entry is submitted for the Community Relationships award. It consists of the Council's weekly noticeboard, "Council Call". Since April 1998, this has appeared every week on page 2 or 3 of our local newspaper, replacing our previous classified public notices. It attempts to improve public communication through plain language, colourful and sometimes humorous stories. According to a recent Resident's Survey (N=1,023) 74% of the community read Council Call sometimes (31%), often (16%), or always (27%). This confirms anecdotal feedback that the noticeboard is widely read and well-received.

Waikato District Council

The Tamahere Study

A community-based initiative, The Tamahere Study was designed to develop community-owned solutions to present problems and develop options for the future development of Tamahere.

Developing a team environment was the key management technique behind Stage Two of the Tamahere Study. Council's philosophy was that it was in partnership with the Tamahere community.

Open and constant communication through public meetings, regular newsletters and a survey of every adult in the area, combined with the 'one team – same goal' outlook, secured community buy-in to the project.

Council's innovative approach saw it steer clear of burdening the community Working Party (established to drive the project) with pre-determined solutions, rather it let the community work together whilst providing the technical support needed.

Through the development of the study report and recommendations for the future development of the Tamahere area, the Tamahere community owns the outcome and Council has clear direction as to the community's future requirements.

Waitakere City Council

Partnership Development

This entry describes the development of the partnership relationship between the Pacific Island Advisory Board of Waitakere City and Waitakere City Council.

The Board has represented the Pasifika Communities of Waitakere since its inception in 1990, however both parties felt the relationship was not delivering on its potential. In 1998, a review was undertaken.

A number of issues needed to be addressed so the Board would be better able to meet the needs and aspirations of Pasifika communities.

This entry exemplifies the benefit of working with the community to identify and solve issues. Not only did improving and facilitating an improved Board provide for better community relations, but the process itself contributed also.

The Pacific Islands Advisory Board and Waitakere City Council are proud to submit this entry as an example of the standard of community participation the Board and Council recognise as essential to making local government more accessible to the community.

Waitakere City Council's

Issue Resolution Process

Waitakere City Council has appointed an Issue Resolution Team to deliver high quality service to customers of Executive Suite (serving the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chief Executive), and to address other “difficult” issues. The Manager and four team members each have specialist skills but can also apply themselves across a wider range of “issues”.

The Team handles Council's more complex, sensitive or otherwise difficult issues. Very strong emphasis is placed on “ownership” of the issue by the team member and on close communication with the customer. Council seeks “win-win” outcomes for all parties where appropriate and possible, through discussion, negotiation, mediation and building mutual trust and confidence.

Customers appreciate the more responsive face to Council's approach to issues, the improved communication, “account management” and increased willingness to think laterally about creative “win-win” solutions. Elected members can channel issues through a clearly identified route, and a progress report on any issue may be rapidly obtained.

Waitakere City Council Library and Information Services

Reaching Out Meeting the Needs of Our Multicultural Community

The Multicultural Library & Information Service is a project that was implemented as a result of Waitakere City Council's Library Development Strategy.

Waitakere City Council has a responsibility under the Local Government Act to provide recognition of the existence of different communities and the values and identities of these communities. This is a philosophy that is also embodied in Agenda 21, the internationally recognised charter that Waitakere became a signatory to in 1992 and which sets the City's strategic direction.

The Council is committed through its long-term strategic plan to working with its communities to help them reach their aspirations and to achieve social, economic and environmental sustainability for the city. Ethnic diversity in Waitakere highlighted the need to make significant changes in the provision of library and information services to these communities. Traditional methods of delivery and promotion were simply not reaching this important target audience.

Programmes and activities implemented through the "Reaching Out" project have opened the doors for ethnic communities to a vital service of the Council. By supporting this project the Council has demonstrated that multicultural library service is not just an obligation or responsibility of Councils but a social and economic resource that should be nurtured as a part of every community's social capital. The challenge is to find effective and efficient ways to deliver Council services to the increasing multicultural population. Waitakere is the first Council in New Zealand to establish this type of specialist service.

Management of People

Manukau City Council

Balanced Success Scorecard

Measure, Measure, Measure. Our challenge was to measure our progress towards the goals and expectations of both Council and Customers.

We used strategic planning, team work across the whole of our group of 700 staff, peer review and ultimate accountability to our Chief Executive as some of our tools for making the scorecard real. The results for Manukau City Council have been outstanding and now the Chief Executive is developing the concept across Council. The staff of City Services have, with their enthusiasm, dedication, irritation and frustration, learned about business and management of services to our Community at all levels. There are so many examples where we have achieved empowerment of our staff to better manage their service as well as their organisation performance to achieve the “exceed” for our customers.

Waikato District Council

The Waikato Way

The Waikato Way is a staff-driven initiative designed to help fulfil Waikato District Council’s vision to become the Best Rural Local Authority in the World.

Essentially, The Waikato Way is the way things are done to make Council the best. It recognises that becoming the best starts with customer service excellence and focuses on professionalism, excellence, communication and a positive approach to people.

It was hoped The Waikato Way would generate a more productive work environment and highly motivated staff while also helping the move towards a seamless organisation.

Staff involvement and a staff-driven philosophy are techniques for ongoing success and involvement and participation have been the key to ensuring staff buy-in.

The Waikato Way illustrates how innovative management can produce an initiative that empowers staff and benefits the organisation and its customers.

The Waikato Way is successful, it is changing attitudes within the organisation’s culture and creating a higher awareness of what good customer service is.

Wanganui District Council

Service Management Plan

The development of the Council's **Service Management Plan** was a significant improvement in Council's shift from being an "output-input" focused organisation towards becoming more "outcome-output-input" focused. This plan, which is aligned to and underpins Council's strategic 10-Year Plan and Annual Plan, creates an improved knowledge management framework for the managers and policy advisors of Council's 25 functions. At a glance it focuses them on the outcomes to be achieved for the citizens, the services customers are to receive and the impact this has on ratepayers.

Wellington City Council Libraries

Steps to Safety at Wellington City Libraries

The *Steps to Safety* entry for an "Excellence Project" is a fine example of a practical management tool that works from the bottom up in any management structure. The originality lies in the initiative to package the challenge for collective responsibility and benefit all round.

The results at Wellington City Libraries speak for itself. Commitment by management to put into place support structures like training, capital expenditure provides staff a basis for trust and motivation to be vigilant. All working towards the common goal: increased productivity and staff morale.

This tool is adaptable for industries other than libraries. Wellington City Libraries is pleased to share this innovative, manageable and rewarding safety tool.

Wellington City Council

Wellington City Libraries and PSA Protocol

The Wellington City Libraries (WCL) began its reengineering restructure in 1996/97. The PSA and libraries management partnership was a proactive change decision and underpinned the joint appointment process protocol. This entry for the Award under People Management is a success story on partnerships in an old battle arena.

This is a story of no oppositions, only a willingness to reach and hold hands where possible. This is a story where fears were turned into achievable options or solutions.

The documents provided tell their stories well. It is a showcase for commitment, managing risk and commonsense. It is based on three simple words: honesty, integrity and communication.

Process Management

Auckland Regional Council

ASAP

Throughout the world, local governments face financial constraints, rising service expectations on the part of the public and calls for better government at lower cost. Fuelled by these challenges leaders have begun a process of reinvention. The process is occurring at all levels of local governments.

The goals of all these organisations are the same:

- greater efficiency;
- cost effectiveness and flexibility;
- improved responsiveness to the public; and
- greater focus on service.

This paper explores the Auckland Regional Council's rapid SAP implementation, the process of redesigning, the integration issues and the derived benefits.

Our rapid SAP implementation has:

- Improved responsiveness;
- Enhanced organisational flexibility;
- Improved decision making capabilities; and
- Streamlined business processes.

This is the first SAP implementation for local government in New Zealand and was completed in a 6 month timeframe.

Clutha District Council

Matching Service to Demand

An innovative approach to road asset management by the Clutha District Council with the second biggest roading network in New Zealand, resulted in significant savings and efficiencies in road maintenance while meeting the needs of residents and road users in the District.

The Clutha District Council had recognised that a consistent approach to determining maintenance service levels on its roading network was essential to ensuring equity and consistency across its extensive network of 2950 km of road.

Decision flow charts have been developed that identify the levels of service for a road based on key demands.

Through a systematic system of consultation and review this new approach has enabled Council to better target its roading program investments in the future and to respond to user demands with a clear and transparent decision process.

Environment Waikato

One in One Hundred Year Flood

The Waikato “one in one hundred year” flood event of July 1998 involved the successful implementation of documented processes and procedures established for such an eventuality. It required the management of multiple processes which were highly visible to the public and of immediate and direct impact for several weeks.

Early and comprehensive definition of the problem and planning for its management was ensured because: equipment and technology were in place, processes for acting on alert were in place, staff were appropriately trained and the right skills were available. Budgetary/resource provision was also provided.

Implementation involved analysing and managing the flow of detailed data and information, maintenance of the Flood Operations Centre, co-ordination of field initiatives and liaison and co-ordination with Key Stakeholders.

Management of the event was based on the implementation of clearly documented processes and procedures and the expression of the organisation’s Values and Continuous Improvement Programme.

Hamilton City Council

Improvement in the Subdivision Consent Process

The Planning Guidance unit of Hamilton City Council has achieved dramatic improvements in service delivery and customer satisfaction around the processing of consents.

Working within a framework of statutory requirements, the unit has faced pressure from a growing competitive environment, and increasing customer expectations of timely and cost-effective service.

A comprehensive review has allowed the unit to identify critical issues. A range of improvement techniques, including benchmarking, best practice, quality assurance and performance indicators have been implemented, along with extensive customer and stakeholder consultation. The use of new technology has been maximised to improve the accessibility and efficiency of the consents process. Employee input and training has further ensured the success of new systems.

These strategies have resulted in a substantial re-engineering of consents processes within the unit, and in customer interface, adding value and producing faster outcomes, providing service well in excess of customers' expectations.

Hastings District Council

Time is Money – Whitcoulls Office Products and Hastings District Council Financial Process Re-engineering

The vision of the Corporate Services Division is to be a leader in customer services, achieved through excellence and innovation. Excellence can be attained through faster and more efficient transaction processing.

In conjunction with Whitcoulls Office Products the Hastings District Council has developed a system to speed up the ordering process. Orders are placed through Whitcoulls Office Products by phone, fax, email or WOW (Whitcoulls Office Products Online Wizard).

Without the need to sign off on every individual invoice, each cost centre (department) and the accounts department save a lot of processing time by allocating GL codes up front and then receiving consolidated reports each month from Whitcoulls Office Products.

The benefits of the re-engineered process is as follows:

- A 20% reduction in stationery cost through better supplier relations and better management control.
- Saving of at least 10 man hours per month by cutting down the volume of processing, (50-70 invoices to one invoice) and less handling of paper.
- Savings in postage and other bank charges.
- Better supplier relations.

North Shore City Council

Annual Plan Submissions Process Management

North Shore City Council consistently receives a large number of draft Annual Plan submissions. There were 2,267 submitters this year. They addressed 3,389 subjects.

We have developed and modified an Access database to help us do a better job processing and considering the submissions. With this tool the Council has been able to improve upon its previous efforts in managing the annual plan submissions process. Our stakeholders now regard our service in processing submissions as efficient, effective, transparent and user friendly.

The database capabilities include:

- generating letters of acknowledgment
- generating decision letters setting out how submitters got on with their submissions
- enabling council officers comments and proposed recommendations to be considered for every submission subject raised, alongside the actual submission
- printing reports to answer queries and to check work actually occurred
- generating a hearings schedule
- a GIS tie in enabling information about the location of submitters to be considered.

Palmerston North City Council

Customer Service Centre

The 1990s heralded the second wave of Local Government reforms, coinciding with (and partly driven by) a revolution in customer service standards throughout both the private sector and public service. It was partly fuelled by rising expectations of improved services from newly formed state owned enterprises or those privatised former public services such as Telecom.

By 1995 the Palmerston North City Council realised its customer service standards and delivery methods were falling behind the new norms. The answer to this challenge is encapsulated in the mission statement adopted in 1997 to **Improve Customer Service – Every Year!**. The key strategy employed was to develop a totally integrated Customer Service Centre, capitalising on the latest developments in information technology and communications based on the philosophy of:

Enquiry - once
Response - correct
Follow-up - guaranteed

This report then, is an outline of the project to establish a Customer Service Centre for the Palmerston North City Council and is entered to the New Zealand Post Category Award for Process Management.

Venture Taranaki

Establishment of an Economic Development Agency

Venture Taranaki is an apolitical, independent, world class regional Economic Development Agency. It is the first project of its kind in New Zealand and reflects Taranaki's ability to innovate and create partnerships.

Prior to July 1998, Taranaki's economic development was driven by 3 District Councils through a range of fragmented entities. This led to duplication of resources, customer confusion and lack of an integrated business plan.

Faced with a sluggish economy and shrinking population the Councils realised that a clearer vision and an integrated structure was required to build the regional economy.

Consultation with stakeholders, including industrialists and the Chamber of Commerce led to the creation of Venture Taranaki.

The first of its kind in New Zealand, Venture Taranaki represents a partnership between Local Government, Central Government and the private sector. A one body, one brand, one direction approach to economic development, Venture Taranaki has exceeded all expectations.

Promoted as a potential model by Central Government and private sector stakeholders, Venture Taranaki is a premier example of leadership, innovation and excellence in Local Government.