

S O L G M

NZ SOCIETY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGERS



FMWP News March 2007

The SOLGM Financial Management Working Party (FMWP) met on 2 March. Here are some of the key items of interest.

JIGSAW II - "JIGSAW Returns!"

Many of you will recall the SOLGM/NAMS Jigsaw Guides to Preparing an Integrated LTCCP. FMWP has approved, in principle, the preparation of a revised Jigsaw guide that will:

- extend the coverage of the overall guide into areas such as community outcomes;
- reflect the learning from the 2006 round of LTCCPs; and
- draw on examples of good practice from within the sector.

FMWP members David Ward, David Foster, Glen Williams and Mike Nield will be doing a scoping exercise later on in the month. We will be adding 2-3 strategic planners and a communications specialist into the mix for this meeting. Anyone interested in participating in the scoping, and/or the overall project should contact Raymond Horan (email rhoran@solgm.org.nz).

At this point it appears that Jigsaw seminars will be held early in the last quarter of the year. It is therefore unlikely there will be a dedicated Financial Management Seminar this year. A formal announcement of what can be expected, by when, will be made in April.

In the meantime it would help those doing the scoping exercise if we could receive feedback on the following:

1. Did you use the original Jigsaw Guide? If not, why not?
2. What parts of the Guide did you find most useful?
3. What parts of the Guide did you find least useful? Why?

4. Were there any “gaps” in the guidance that should be filled in the revised Jigsaw?

To help the Scoping Group feedback should be sent to Raymond by March 23rd.

We are likely to be looking for examples of good practice for inclusion in the Guide. Those with material they may be willing to share are also encouraged to contact Raymond at an early point.

Local Government Reviews

Our thanks to those who commented on *Strengthening Local Democracy* (SLD). SLD is SOLGM’s background paper to the Local Government Commission to inform its review of the Local Government Act and Local Electoral Act. While we are aware that the Commission will be issuing a discussion document later in the year, it is not clear how widely the document will be circulated.

Very little comment has been received on the joint LGNZ/SOLGM paper *Local Government Funding: A Statement of Issues* that was sent to the Rates Inquiry in February. While it is not too late to comment on the paper, we are about undertake further policy development in some of the areas we indicated were likely to be fruitful areas for further research

LTCCP Amendments Guidance “Signed Off”

The final version of the SOLGM publication *Identifying and Preparing Amendments to the LTCCP* is now available in the “What’s New” section of the Good Practice Toolkits website.

New Members

FMWP chair Wes ten Hove resigned from the Chairmanship at the end of last year. The SOLGM Executive will appoint a new chair at its 30 March meeting.

The FMWP confirmed the appointments of:

- Blair Bowcott, Finance Manager at Hamilton City; and
- Stephen Halliwell, Corporate Services Group Manager at Waitaki District.

An additional person from small-medium sized local authority will be appointed in the near future.

Watch Out For ...

1. Reports from the Office of the Auditor-General regarding the results of the 2005/6 audits and regarding the 2006 LTCCP process. In particular the latter report contains further discussion of the areas for improvement between now and 2009.
2. The Local Government Rates Inquiry is holding meetings around the country in the next 2-3 weeks.
3. Inland Revenue is apparently challenging the validity of deductions for donations that local authorities have made to community groups. We understand at least one local authority has sought a formal ruling from Inland Revenue on this matter.
4. Guidance on accounting for development contributions will be released in the next few weeks.
5. Papers from the Rating Seminar will be posted on www.solgm.co.nz on or around 15 March.

For further information on any of these items please contact Raymond Horan on 04-978-1283 or email rhoran@solgm.org.nz.