



Friday 17 November 2006

## MEDIA STATEMENT

### Region must unite

Ian Buchanan, Chair of the interim Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS) committee, has endorsed comments from economic development minister, Trevor Mallard, calling on the region to apply a “collective effort” to address its economic issues.

Mr Buchanan endorsed the minister’s comments having updated the Regional Leader’s Forum on the Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS) today.

The WRS is a sustainable economic growth strategy that has been developed over the last two years by the region’s local authorities in partnership with central government and the business, education, research and voluntary sectors.

“Greater Wellington’s ‘competition’ is increasingly offshore and if we’re to be successful we need to work cooperatively. The WRS is an excellent example of what we can achieve when we do that,” says Mr Buchanan

The public consultation period for the WRS concluded on November 13 and resulted in 440 submissions.

Close to half the submissions originate from Upper Hutt and virtually all of them reflect the view of the Upper Hutt City Council which is opposed to the WRS governance and funding arrangements.

Mr Buchanan said themes emerging from the submissions were consistent with feedback from the public meetings. “Concerns are expressed about the impact on rates and bureaucracy. Some felt that economic development costs are something business should pay and there are a number of detailed submissions which are supportive overall but have improvements to suggest,” he says

Mr Buchanan said he would have liked more submissions from the rest of the region. “However that’s not necessarily a bad thing. In my experience people don’t submit if they’re generally happy with what’s being proposed, but studying the content of the submissions and the survey we have undertaken, will help clarify this. A number of the submissions are detailed, so these people have done their homework,” he says.

A survey of 1200 residents and 300 businesses from throughout the region was undertaken during the consultation period.

“The combination of the submissions and research is a good one. Submissions help us improve the strategy while the research gives us a statistically reliable understanding of what people think,” says Mr Buchanan.

The results of the research survey and an analysis of the submissions will be available in early December.

A hearings committee will hear verbal submissions on 4, 5 and 6 December. This information will be combined with the written submissions and the hearings committee will make a recommendation to the full WRS committee on 19 December 2006.

The hearings committee comprises Ian Buchanan, Sir John Anderson, Bob Francis (Mayor of Masterton), Wayne Guppy (Mayor of Upper Hutt) and Alan Milne (Mayor of Kapiti).

Ian Buchanan  
Chairman  
Interim Wellington Regional Strategy committee  
P 04 802 0346  
M 027 282 2833

Jock Mackintosh  
Communications advisor  
021 808 303