



Thursday 22 February 2007

## MEDIA STATEMENT

### Regional Strategy gets green light.

The Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS) passed its final hurdle at a meeting of the Greater Wellington Regional Council today.

The WRS is a sustainable economic growth strategy that has been developed over the last two years by the region's political and private sector leaders. In a 10-2 vote (Councillors Kirton and Greig against), the Regional Council adopted the strategy with immediate effect.

Chairman of the Strategy committee, Ian Buchanan said the result placed greater Wellington at the forefront of economic planning and cooperation.

“Much of the debate has focussed differences between the region's leaders as the strategy has evolved. Of course we're going to have differences... it would be surprising if we didn't. The important thing is that we have taken action.”

Meanwhile Upper Hutt City Council has signalled it will submit the matter to mediation under 'section 16' of the Local Government Act. Upper Hutt City Council has previously expressed concern about funding for the strategy.

Residential ratepayers will contribute \$12.50 (excl GST) in the first year of the Strategy's operation.

Mr Buchanan said it was time to get in behind the strategy. “The fact is the strategy received a strong endorsement from Councillors today and this is backed up by public surveys. The time for debate is past. We now need to get on with it and that’s what’s going to happen.”

Councillor Wilde spoke strongly in support of the strategy. “We need to acknowledge that we’re barely blip on the radar in global terms and there’s no way we’ll compete internationally unless we take a region-wide approach. We can debate things like governance till the cows come home. This structure, which effectively has the regional council hosting the strategy, is a good mix of political accountability and private sector expertise,” she says.

An economic development agency will be established to implement the WRS. It is anticipated the agency will be operational by June.

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Chairman  
Interim Wellington Regional Strategy Committee

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