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**REPORT 5**  
*(1215/13/IM)*

**NEW ZEALAND COMMUNITY BOARDS' CONFERENCE,  
DUNEDIN, 3 – 6 MARCH 2005, REPORT BACK**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

To report back to the Board on my attendance at the New Zealand Community Boards' Conference held in Dunedin on 3 – 6 March 2005.

**2. Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Makara/Ohariu Community Board:

1. *Receive the information.*

**3. Report of Conference**

The aim of the Community Boards' Conference (Executive) Committee was to assist members of Community Boards in the area's of:

*Training  
Networking  
Information sharing; and  
Capacity building.*

I attended for the Friday and Saturday sessions and found much information that was valuable to me as 'new' Chair of the Makara/Ohariu Community Board.

Of particular interest was a Civil Defence session that included a presentation by Bob Buchanan, Mayor of Rangitikei, and Adrian Webster the Chair of Paekakariki Community Board.

Both presentations were in relation to extreme flooding which occurred in these areas the previous year, and the manner in which they were reacted to by the local authorities.

Paekakariki Community Board illustrated well how 'caught unawares' they were at the landslide that blocked SH1 and cut them off from all emergency services for some hours. Although well intended, the Chair acknowledged their complete lack of organisation and made it clear to the conference that we all need to know of the variety of emergency/medical/organisational skills held by members of our communities. He also stressed how important 'leadership' was in a time of chaos.

The Makara Ohariu Community Board has since had a Civil Defence update and the Board has included an outline of the Board's role plus other relevant Civil Defence matters in our latest newsletter (April 2004).

Bob Buchanan made one interesting point (among others) which was that the Mayor is NOT the one who runs the crisis room during a Civil Defence emergency, but rather it is the Chief Executive's role to make all the decisions. The Mayor, however, is the one who has to call a 'State of Emergency', and the reason he eventually did this was to give the relevant authorities the power to forcibly remove people from their homes.

The other workshop I found of great interest was 'Community Board's and the RMA' run by Mike Cohen of the Devonport Community Board. I was surprised by the great variance with which territorial authorities allocate responsibility to their Community Boards, and the different ways Community Boards carry out their functions.

Having recently discussed and been advised as to the possible ways the Makara Ohariu Community Board could be involved in the resource consent process, this session was most enlightening and has led to Wellington City Council's Democratic Services seeking a legal opinion (at the request of the Board) to assist the Board decide on how to best to contribute to the process.

I attended the Zone 4 LGNZ meeting and met representatives from other local Community Board's in the Wellington region.

I also met and discussed local matters with a number of attendees and was amazed at the divergence of issues facing each Board, but also affirmed by the sight of all those people caring about their areas, and taking a part in the democratic process.

There were only two drawbacks to the conference:

- i) my hotel room was above the casino and what with outdoor smoking rules, all I can say is I was desperate to get back to the rural area and two small children for some sleep, and
- ii) at the final session, I won the ultimate prize of a luxury weekend away for two, only to lose it again as I was in the loo at the time. Thanks to our Committee Adviser who did try to save the prize for me.

Apart from that, well worthwhile. Perhaps Wellington should offer to host an upcoming Conference in the next few years.

Ruth Paul  
**Chair**  
**Makara/Ohariu Community Board**