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**REPORT 8**  
*(1215/52/IM)*

## **TOWARDS REGIONAL ECONOMIC PROSPERITY CONFERENCE, 22 – 23 MARCH 2007, WELLINGTON**

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### **1. Purpose of Report**

To provide information on and to seek approval for up to two elected members to attend the 'Towards Regional Economic Prosperity' conference to be held in Wellington, Thursday 22 – Friday 23 March 2007.

### **2. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Approve the attendance of up to two elected members at the 'Towards Regional Economic Prosperity' to be held in Wellington Thursday 22 – Friday 23 March and agree that the costs associated with attending the meeting are met from the Elected Members Budget (GVEM01).*
- 3. Note that there is a Positively Wellington Tourism Board meeting and a Wellington Zoo Trust Board meeting on Friday 23 March 2007.*
- 4. Note that a report back on the meeting will be presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee in accordance with Council policy.*

### **3. Discussion**

Towards Regional Economic Prosperity aims to address several important questions, including; 'can the economic development landscape be restructured and amalgamated?', 'how effective are incubators to a region's growth?' and 'what impact will the Government's refocusing of its approach to regional economic development have on regions?'. The conference will also discuss policy direction relating to regional growth.

Attendees will be able to share their experiences of economic development in their local regions. There will also be an opportunity to discuss the impact of the development of each region on the economic, social and environmental scene of New Zealand.

The programme includes local, national and international case studies. The local case studies will focus on the role of Positively Wellington Business on the development of the Regional Strategy, and the developing creative industry in Wellington. There will be a national case study focused on Hawke's Bay Incorporated's incorporation of the region's Economic Development Agency. The international case study will look at Invest Brisbane which has helped give Brisbane the highest economic growth in Australia in several varied industries.

There will be an address by the Ministry of Economic Development to discuss 'Refocusing the direction of regional economic development to increase the quality of the business in each region'. The session will consider the possible change in approach to regional economic development policy. There will be an opportunity to examine this refreshed approach.

Aside from the address from the Ministry of Economic Development and case studies there will also be a panel discussion on 'restructuring the EDA landscape to strengthen ties with the Government.' The panel discussion will debate the current regional economic development landscape and implications of a restructure.

The conference will consider a wide range of other topics including:

*The Metro Project: creating a globally competitive Auckland*

This will consider the Metro Project and the attempt to co-ordinate between both local and central governments as well as non-profit, education and the business sector of the Auckland region to plan on a regional scale.

*Regional GDP data and the implications on measuring economic prosperity*

This session will look at Statistics New Zealand's two year feasibility project to discover if annual regional GDP statistics is feasible.

*The digital strategy: creating our digital future*

This will look at the digital strategy, the role in regional economic development and the push for broadband.

*Strengthening education employment linkages in regions to remedy skills shortages*

Internationally governments are looking at how to address skill shortages and this session will look at recent initiatives and policy in New Zealand to address this issue here.

It is the intention of management to have officer representation at the forum.

The programme for the forum is attached at appendix one.

### **3.1 Considerations**

When deciding whether elected members should attend this forum, consideration should be given to:

- the cost; and
- the impact of attendance on the budget; and
- the other conferences elected members may wish to attend later in the financial year.

The total cost if two elected members are appointed is expected to be \$4,390.00 and will be met from the conference budget.

The cost of attendance per person is broken down as follows:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Registration	\$2,195
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,195.00</b>

The impact on the budget of two elected members attending this conference is outlined below:

	2006/2007 Budget	Year to Date Expenditure	Unexpended Funds
Total budget for conference fees	<b>\$34,000.00</b>	\$18,809.75 <sup>1</sup>	\$15,190.25
Impact of sending <b>two</b> elected members to the conference	\$4,390.00	\$23,199.00	\$10,801.00

#### 4. Conclusion

A decision is required as to whether the Committee should approve the attendance of two elected members at the 'Towards Regional Economic Prosperity' conference to be held in Wellington, Thursday 22 – Friday 23 March 2007.

Contact Officer: *Nicola Hay, Committee Advisor*

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<sup>1</sup> The attendance of 5 Elected Members at the LGNZ Conference at a cost of \$5000.00.  
 The attendance of 1 Elected Member at the TRAFINZ Conference at a cost of \$2310.00  
 The attendance of 2 Elected Members at the Safer Communities Conference at a cost of \$400  
 The attendance of 1 Elected Member at the Digital Earth 06 Conference at a cost of \$1800  
 The attendance of 1 Elected Member at the Youth and Local Government Conference in New Plymouth at a cost of \$776  
 The attendance of 1 Elected Member at the LIANZA Conference in Wellington at a cost of \$500  
 The attendance of 1 Elected Member at the NZ Walking Conference 2006 in Christchurch at a cost of \$865  
 The attendance of 2 Elected Members at Climate Change: The Policy Challenges Symposium in Wellington at a cost of \$350  
 The attendance of 1 Elected Member at the New Zealand Recreation Association Conference in Auckland at a cost of \$748.75  
 The attendance of the Mayor and 1 Elected Member at the Commonwealth Local Government Conference in Auckland at a cost of \$2,450.00  
 The attendance of 2 Elected Members at the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment 20 Forum – The New Context Forum in Wellington at a cost of \$900.  
 The attendance of 2 Elected Members at the New Zealand Planning Institute: The Politics of Planning conference in Palmerston North at a cost of \$2,710.

## Supporting Information

**1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome**

*This project supports Outcome 7.2.B – More actively engaged: Wellington will operate an open and honest decision making process that generates confidence and trust in the Democratic system*

**2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact**

*Relates to C534: Elections, Governance and Democratic Process*

**3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations**

*There are no Treaty of Waitangi implications*

**4) Decision-Making**

*This is not a significant decision*

**5) Consultation**

**a) General Consultation**

*Not required*

**b) Consultation with Maori**

*Not required*

**6) Legal Implications**

*Nil*

**7) Consistency with existing policy**

*This report is consistent with existing Wellington City Council policy*