

Report 07.277  
Date 2 May 2007  
File WRS 09/03/01

Committee Wellington Regional Strategy Committee  
Author Graham Spargo, Project Director, WRS

## WRS Committee Approach to Stakeholder Engagement

### 1. Purpose

To provide a framework for fostering sustained engagement and involvement of stakeholders in the Wellington Regional Strategy (WRS).

Set out in this report are:

- A recap on general considerations around ‘engagement’ and WRS engagement mechanisms used to date;
- The proposed WRS Committee engagement framework;
- Timetabling proposals for engaging with stakeholders.

### 2. Background

A foundation for engagement was laid over the course of developing the WRS, through mechanisms such as the ‘Strategic Partners Forum’ and other means.

Given the scale, complexity and breadth of the regional communities involved (more than 460,000 residents and 40,000 businesses) the engagement model adopted under the WRS development process has been to use a multi-layer approach.

At the broadest level and as a precursor to actual ‘engagement’, there has been an emphasis on communicating what the WRS is about, and encouraging involvement. Conventional communications mechanisms used have included:

- Media releases and articles carried in local newspapers (including material carried via partners pre-existing communication channels);
- Newspaper style broadsheets on the WRS distributed widely around the region;

- Briefing meetings for interest groups (ranging from Ethnic Councils, to Institutes for Economic Development, Resource Management Law and Planning, to membership organisations such as the Property Council and Chambers of Commerce) and the public;
- Briefings of central government politicians and all political parties;
- Briefings to Ara Tahi, the iwi liaison committee for the region;
- Distribution of a e-newsletter to a database of stakeholders who have registered interest;
- Direct mail of WRS documentation and invitations to participate to a database of over 1500 entities identified as having potential interest in WRS matters;
- Web based resources enabling downloading of material and as a means of eliciting feedback;
- Dissemination of information and updates on the WRS at forums such as the WRS Strategic Partners Forum and Wellington Regional Labour Market Forum;
- Briefings at governance and officer level within councils and government.

In essence this layer of the WRS process has sought to provide an accessible high level overview of the WRS across the entire Wellington regional community (raising awareness and to inform). It has also sought to encourage ongoing dialogue, interest and involvement of these parties.

The next layer and actual engagement activity has targeted specific networks and groups on a topic specific basis. This has generally involved workshops, meetings and formal feedback processes.

Examples are:

- work on tourism where a series of interviews and workshops highlighted issues and possible approaches;
- workshops with Ara Tahi to explore how the WRS should appropriately address aspects of the economy of interest to Maori;
- exporting in relation to freight forwarding where the Regional Chamber of Commerce facilitated a workshop with industry participants, and,
- the Wellington Regional Labour Market Strategy where a series of major workshops were used to identify, agree and mandate elements for a strategy and implementation action plan.

The primary economic development focus of the WRS has meant that the bulk of the engagement efforts have been and continue with groups and organisations active in this space.

There has also been indirect engagement in WRS to the extent that local government stakeholders (via LTCCP and Annual Plan processes), and entities such as District Health Boards are considering output of the WRS process in reviewing their own strategic plans and budgets.

Finally, the Strategic Partners Forum has been an important engagement vehicle for the WRS through its development. Its membership has over 50 of the major business, education, research, infrastructure and government entities within the Wellington Region represented.

The membership of the Strategic Partners Forum includes representatives bringing a commercial, environmental, social and cultural perspective to WRS discussions.

The Strategic Partners Forum met on six occasions with a mixture of briefings and workshops. Feedback from this process helped inform the WRS.

### **3. WRS Committee's Proposed Engagement Framework**

#### **3.1 Engagement Overview**

The successful implementation of the WRS requires broadly based, shared understanding of issues and opportunities facing the Wellington region. It also needs a set of arrangements for discussing and agreeing agendas for action with stakeholders.

As committee members will be aware, engagement requires more than just informing people or sharing information. Successful engagement mechanisms provide for meaningful, ongoing interaction between the parties and offer scope for shaping, and / or contributing to the outcomes being sought on a long term basis.

In developing the framework for engagement the following engagement principles contained in the Local Government Act 2002 have been applied:

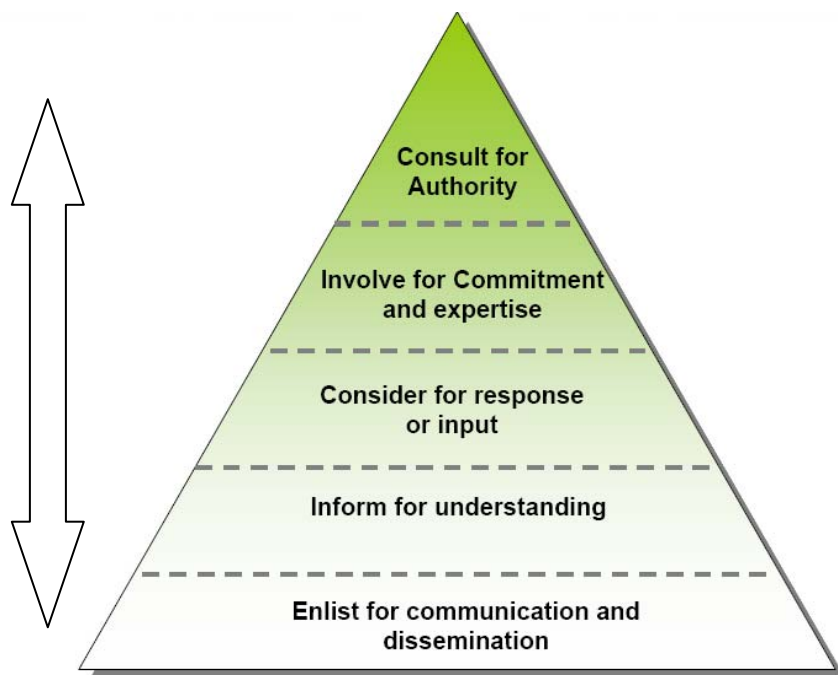
- Commitment
- Transparency
- Continuity
- Balance
- Effectiveness
- Flexibility

- Participation
- Communication

The broad scope and range of matters impacted by the WRS result in a variety of stakeholder engagement approaches being needed. Some matters are issue specific, with a limited timeframe for attention and action, whereas others require enduring relationships and protocols to be established and maintained.

The diagram below illustrates a range of engagement dynamics around the nature of the engagement based on purpose, likely level of ownership of the issues, and circumstances. These range from strong engagement aspects where to weaker levels where the connection through to inform.

### Potential Engagement with Stakeholders



### 3.2 Linkage between WRS Committee & EDA engagement activities

A distinction also needs to be drawn around the respective roles of WRS Committee vis-à-vis the regional EDA Board.

Both the WRS Committee and EDA Board need to undertake significant engagement activity.

The differences are that the EDA Board will target WRS project specific engagement, whereas the WRS Committee's focus is on the high level overview all aspects of the WRS, including elements such as 'regional form' which do not fall with the EDA's mandate.

It is proposed that co-ordination and alignment of this engagement activity with the WRS Committee be included as a part of the EDA Business Plan.

### **3.3 Engagement with existing networks**

The WRS Committee has a clear role in providing a regional overview of economic development activity and 'regional good form' matters.

For some aspects of interest to the WRS there is overlap with existing initiatives. There are pre-existing networks or entities drawing together relevant stakeholders. Examples are WELCOSS the (Wellington Council of Social Services) and Ethnic Councils set up in Porirua and Wellington.

Tapping into these existing arrangements will be more effective and efficient for WRS purposes than seeking to establish specific new arrangements. Examples are the WRS interest in 'human capital' and 'social capital' which link to community and voluntary sector networks.

With a specific WRS Committee mandate now in place work will proceed to map the specific opportunities to connect with existing stakeholder frameworks.

### **3.4 Strategic Partners Forum**

It is proposed that the Strategic Partners Forum be retained. The Forum is an important mechanism to discuss prosperity and quality of life issues in the Wellington region. It is a broadly based influential group bringing a wide perspective and set of mandates to consideration of issues, direction setting and with potential to commit to action.

Agreement in principle to retaining the Strategic Partners Forum will lead to a review of membership being carried out (including looking at the record of past attendance) with a view to tackling gaps or under representation.

In particular this is likely to highlight a need for encouraging greater involvement of the voluntary / NGO sector and the extent of business interests. This task will be aided by the WRS being seen to have a confirmed mandate and moving into the implementation phase with a focus on specific projects.

### **3.5 Regional EDA Ltd**

The new Board for Regional Economic Development Agency Limited (the marketing name is yet to be decided) is a key engagement relationship for the WRS Committee.

Significant parts of the WRS are to be progressed via the EDA and the nature of the engagement with the Board will be crucial to the progress to be made.

Details of the Committee's engagement with the Board will need to be determined once the Board is fully established. At the very minimum the Board will report quarterly to the Committee on progress towards the WRS objectives.

### **3.6 Private Sector Champions**

Private sector champions are those organisations and individuals who currently, or have potential to, provide leadership, expertise and resources to contribute to WRS outcomes. This includes influential membership organisations such as the Employers and Manufacturers Association (Central) and regional and local Chambers of Commerce. Providing regular opportunities for dialogue and exchange of ideas, plus the opportunity to enlist and align resources and energies of the respective parties to common ends will be fundamental to WRS progress.

Within the Wellington Region several private sector organisations are already considering options for how they might best connect to the WRS process.

This includes the Employers and Manufacturers Assn Central taking a leading role in the labour market strategy work, and the Wellington Regional Chamber of Commerce setting up a new vice president structure to progress a 'knowledge economy' strand and 'Economic infrastructure' strand.

These are positive developments and appear to present excellent opportunities for strengthening the private sector champion concept.

### **3.7 Wellington Regional Labour Market Strategy Group**

The Labour Market Strategy Group has already successfully enlisted and engaged with over 80 organisations (private and public sector) around the Wellington region with the resources and expertise to make significant progress. Enabling a regular opportunity to be informed by, and in turn set a regional context for the work of this group is an essential part of a successful WRS engagement framework.

It is anticipated that the WRS Committee will become an important conduit for co-ordinating local government initiatives supporting regional labour market development. It can also provide an important 'rallying point' for engaging with more than 80 entities and agencies (central government, NGO and private sector) having an interest in this topic.

Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and Department of Labour continue to play a central role in the WRLMS and have worked closely with WRS officer team.

Draft terms of reference for the Wellington Regional Labour Market Strategy (WRLMS) were drawn up in June 2005 and an Advisory Group first met in December 2005 to finalise and confirm them. Consultant assistance was engaged to develop the strategy which was completed in April 2006. Two major workshops involving over 100 people were used to shape and confirm the WRLMS. The strategy was followed by an implementation framework, completed in June 2006. The Advisory Group with coverage of over 80 stakeholder organisations and sub-groups have met several times during this period to work on specific aspects.

The stakeholder group most recently met on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2007. At that meeting it was agreed that Paul Winter, CEO of Employers and Manufacturers' Association Central, and Felicity Bollen, Manager, Ministry of Social Development would co-chair activities around the Wellington Regional Labour Market Strategy.

This is considered a very good engagement model and a positive and practical step to strengthen alignment and effort between private and public sector initiatives on labour market matters

### **3.8 Central Government Agencies**

Identifying a specific engagement approach to Central Government agencies reflects their major role in contributing to the prosperity and quality of life goals of the WRS. The flip side of this is the context that central government policy will dictate in relation to the 'economic transformation' agenda, and other macro policy setting affecting the Wellington regional economy.

### **3.9 Genuine Progress Indicators Group**

The Genuine Progress Indicator Group is a specialist technical group which merits a specific engagement approach. The Group includes Statistics NZ, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry for the Environment, Tertiary Education providers, and private sector interests. A strong degree of 'in principle' support exists for the WRS GPI initiatives and good potential exists to progress this quickly.

Connecting to and aligning with a nationally consistent approach is both desirable and will be more efficient for the WRS process. Being able to credibly measure and benchmark WRS high level outcomes necessitates building strong working relationships with parties such as Statistics New Zealand and others with responsibilities for national measurement metrics.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment's office is championing progress on use of genuine progress indicators (GPI). Central government funding has been granted to Massey University who are examining means of applying GPI concepts in practice. Several central government agencies including Statistics New Zealand, Ministry of Economic Development, and Ministry for the Environment are also involved in indicator and measurement work relevant to GPI.

WRS officer work is focused on integrating the WRS agreement to use the GPI with the national level initiatives underway. The offer has been made to use the Wellington region as a pilot project region on the basis that GPI measures will have national relevance in due course.

The nature of this engagement is largely an operation / technical process currently, and it is intended that regular progress reporting to the WRS Committee occur.

### **3.10 Good Regional Form Issues**

Engagement on good regional form issues over the course of the WRS development process has tended to be issue specific (other than matters canvassed through the Strategic Partners Forum sessions).

The WRS provides for a more structured approach at an officer / operational level for assessing land use and transport management issues, and project co-ordination. The connection with the WRS Committee is proposed to be via the Strategic Partners Forum channel, with any other update matters addressed via the WRS support officers.

Confirmation of the WRS mandate, governance and funding arrangements now gives the certainty sought by infrastructure providers (private and public sector), property interests, and central government agencies with regards to them committing resources to engage at both an operational and governance level.

### **3.11 Issue Specific Interactions**

Through the process to date a range of 'one on one' meetings and briefings on issue-specific matters have occurred with businesses, institutions and membership organisations.

At both a governance and operation level it will be necessary to actively encourage interaction and ensure the WRS Committee is fully informed about of relevant issues. In the development of the WRS briefings have been received from time to time on issues of relevance to WRS development.

It is suggested that opportunity for briefings on matters germane to the WRS be included as a 'standing item' on the Committee agenda paper. Some initial suggestions for topics are shown in **Attachment 1** to this report (namely; exporting and centres of excellence, tourism, labour market strategy, education and voluntary sector / NGO areas of activity).

### **3.12 Relationship to Other Regional Processes**

Other major institutions and entities within the region will seek input or action from the WRS Committee in relation to their particular interests and responsibilities.

The District Health Boards and tertiary education providers are examples. Initiatives such as the Mayoral Task Force for Jobs and the like will also be relevant to the WRS Committee at various times.

Dates for the various known processes that may merit the attention of the WRS Committee are currently being assembled. These matters are to be reported to the WRS Committee as part of the regular meeting timetable being proposed.



## 4. Annual Congress

A mechanism that has successfully been used in other settings to update key stakeholders on progress on WRS projects and to establish ‘who is best placed to do what’ and willing and able to do so, is via an annual congress.

Congresses are generally a day in duration and consist of a mixture of briefing and updating, plus breakout workshops on specific items for action.

From the congress confirmation can be gained as to the ongoing relevance of focus of the overall strategy, and participants enlisted to help drive or contribute to aspects of it. Doing so annually ensures actions remain ‘live and relevant’.

A proposal for an annual congress of stakeholders is set out in **Attachment 1**. To tie to planning and budgeting cycles it appears that an October date would be useful for many (although not all) of the contributing organisations.

## 5. Considerations Around Engagement Timing

Set out in **Attachment 1** to this report is a suggested approach to overall timetabling various engagement interactions with stakeholder groups. The table identifies six main engagement ‘strands’. These are considered to be elements that require long term working relationships to be in place, and protocols around the regularity and nature of the interactions.

Most stakeholders to the WRS process have their own strategic and operational planning timetables and budget cycles which affect their potential contribution to the WRS objectives.

Opportunity to align these activities in terms of planning timetables is desirable, albeit often significantly constrained.

Engagement identified in **Attachment 1** will require a longer term and sustained interaction. Other issue specific engagement processes will be required in addition to those identified; however these appear to generally be of shorter duration (less than 12 months).

The intent behind the timeline is to enable feedback from the engagements to be woven into considerations of the WRS Committee. This includes resource provision and budgeting priorities and other needs for the WRS.

The timing should also enable third party stakeholders to inform their own processes.

## 6. Communication

Communications on the WRS project is ongoing. There will be some direct communications with stakeholders following this meeting to inform them of the engagement process.

## 7. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

1. ***Receives*** the report.
2. ***Notes*** the content of the report.
3. ***Agrees*** in principle to the engagement framework outlined in this paper and contained in Attachment 1.
4. ***Instructs*** officers to initiate engagement on behalf of the Committee.

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

**Graham Spargo**  
Project Director, Wellington  
Regional Strategy Project

**Jane Davis**  
Divisional Manager

**Attachment 1: Proposed approach to overall timetabling various engagement interactions with stakeholder groups**