

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM PLEASED WITH NEW MINISTER

The Local Government Forum welcomes Rodney Hide's appointments as Minister of Local Government and Minister for Regulatory Reform, said Don Nicolson, Chairman of the Local Government Forum.

"Local government is a vitally important institution," said Mr Nicolson, "It provides for democratic decision-making within local communities and touches most aspects of people's lives. It produces a diverse range of goods and services and undertakes extensive regulatory functions. In terms of revenue, spending and assets, many councils rank with New Zealand's largest enterprises.

"Rodney Hide's appointment sends a very clear message to the local government sector that its performance will be key for any effective growth strategy to close the income gap with Australia. Local government can best contribute to such a strategy by refocusing its activities on the efficient provision of public goods at a local level (including core infrastructure).

"Ratepayers are also keen for a reduction in the rampant rate of growth in rates with rates revenue having increased by 46% over the past five years. The Forum expects Rodney Hide to provide much-needed impetus for a robust government response to last year's Rates Inquiry.

"The members of the Local Government Forum look forward to working constructively with Rodney Hide," said Mr Nicolson.

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Background

The Local Government Forum comprises organisations that have a vital interest in the activities of local government. Its members include Business New Zealand, the Electricity Networks Association, Federated Farmers of New Zealand, New Zealand Business Roundtable, New Zealand Chambers of Commerce, and New Zealand Retailers' Association. The Forum was established in 1994 to promote greater efficiency in local government and to contribute to debate on policy issues affecting it.

Members of the Local Government Forum are each significant representatives of ratepayers in their own right but the Forum's perspective is to advance community welfare through the advocacy of sound public policy. Its members believe that local government can best serve the interests of the community and ratepayers by focusing on the efficient provision of public goods at a local level.