

# Wellington Regional Labour Market Strategy Process

Sourced and abridged from material by Mr Colin Drew

The context and process utilised to develop the Wellington Regional Labour Market Strategy is outlined below.

## Context for Institutional Collaboration

- MSD and DoL Regional Labour Market teams have agreed to work together collaboratively to address labour market issues in the Wellington region.
- The collaboration includes a terms of reference to establish a broad regional labour market advisory group in order to pull-together in a common forum the large number of smaller sectoral, sub-regional and issue-focused labour market groups in the region.
- After drafting the terms of reference for what became the Wellington Regional Labour Market Advisory Group (WRLMAG), key decision-makers were identified within organizations with a role in regional labour market strategy, policy and implementation.
- In 2006 the first meeting of the WRLMAG was held to discuss and ratify the terms of reference, and to discuss how regional and local organisations could work together to exchange information, avoid duplication of effort, maximise the effective use of resources and to collaboratively develop programmes.
- Simultaneously, MSD and DoL jointly drafted the terms of reference for a Wellington Regional Labour Market Funders' Forum (WRLMFF), set-up to serve as a central regional coordination point for collaborative funding of labour market initiatives.
- MSD and DoL had the appropriate Cabinet mandate and available resources to take the lead to establish the WRLMAG and the WRLMFF, after determining that a large number of organisations in the region were interested in working together on labour market issues because they were convinced that this coordination and collaboration would be more effective than their individual efforts; however, none of them were resourced to or felt they had a mandate to organise the others.

## Alignment with the Wellington Regional Strategy

- Parallel to the beginning of broad regional institutional labour market collaboration and the establishment of the WRLMAG and the WRLMFF, the Wellington Regional Strategy – through the WRS Labour Market Steering Group (LMSG) - had commissioned a Wellington regional labour market stock-take. The intent of the stock-take was to identify regional labour market constraints and opportunities, and to describe organisational initiatives.
- The stock-take provided a baseline orientation as the first phase in the elaboration of a Wellington regional labour market strategy, but was not envisioned as an inclusive, collaborative, inter-organisational, consultative activity.

- Both MSD and DoL sit on the LMSG, with the representatives of several local Councils and the regional economic development agency. The LMSG discussed the stock-take in draft and when the final report was submitted.
- A consensus emerged within the LMSG that, useful as it may have been in certain areas, the stock-take did not provide a clear indication of a process to develop a labour market strategy for the Wellington region.
- Based on their labour market information coordination and implementation roles, the DoL and MSD Labour Market team members who also sit as LMSG members proposed that their agencies take the lead in coordinating the development of the Wellington Regional Labour Market Strategy. Their proposal was initially endorsed by the Wellington Regional Strategy Project Director (also a member of the LMSG) and the other LMSG members who represent local government and the regional economic development agency. Subsequently this approach has been confirmed via the Wellington Regional Strategy Forum which in 2006 was the governance body for the Wellington Regional Strategy Project.
- DoL, MSD and WRS agreed to jointly fund the development of the Wellington Regional Labour Market Strategy, with DoL and MSD fulfilling the secretariat function.

### **Process Used to Develop the Strategy**

Two workshops, resulting in three iterations of draft strategies, coupled with an early technical review of the strategy and substantial horizontal consultation during the entire process, were used to develop a consensus which led to issuance of the Wellington Regional Labour Market Strategy.

### **First Workshop**

- The first workshop, over a full day, was designed, as follows:
  - (a) a general orientation as to the workshop process and agenda from the labour market consultant/workshop facilitator;
  - (b) a Power Point presentation from a DoL statistician/analyst providing general Wellington regional labour market information and trends to establish a common starting point for workshop participants;
  - (c) a morning sub-group break-out session providing an information “dump” of labour market problems and constraints, and their prioritisation;
  - (d) a report-back of this information to the plenary session;
  - (e) the identification by the labour market consultant/workshop facilitator and the DoL and MSD Labour Market Managers of overarching problems and constraints common to each sub-group;
  - (f) an afternoon sub-group break-out session providing solutions to the key problems and constraints identified in the morning session; and,
  - (g) a report-back of the prioritized solutions by each sub-group to the plenary session.

- The Workshop secretariat (comprised of the regional DoL and MSD labour market teams) listed key Wellington organisations involved in labour market policy development, strategy or implementation that represent sectoral, sub-regional and population groups.
- These three main groupings were further broken-down into six sub-groups:
  - (a) Central Government;
  - (b) Local Government (including Territorial Local Authorities and Economic Development Agencies);
  - (c) Employers (including for profit and not-for-profit organizations, industry associations and District Health Boards);
  - (d) Education and Training (including tertiaries, ITOs, TEC and apprenticeship programmes);
  - (e) Community Sectors (Pacific Islanders, migrants, refugees, youth, elderly, disabled and single parents); and,
  - (f) Iwi (due to the special nature of the labour market challenges and opportunities faced by Māori as a result of the Treaty claims settlement process).
- Appropriate regional representatives of the organisations in the six sub-groups were identified and invited to attend the 1st workshop. If the first representative was not available, they were asked to nominate a suitable replacement.
- A facilitator, scribe and rapporteur were identified within each of the six sub-groups and guidelines were written and circulated to orient them as to their roles. Additionally, several orientation meetings prior to the workshop were held with all facilitators, scribes and rapporteurs to reinforce their understanding of what was expected of them.
- Facilitators were particularly requested to keep the sub-group discussions focused, not allow strong personalities to seize control and dominate other participants and to distinguish between regional and national issues, “parking” national issues, without spending time discussing them.
- The labour market consultant/workshop facilitator and DoL and MSD Labour Market Managers rotated from sub-group to sub-group, listening to the discussion and intervening to assist the facilitators, when necessary.
- During the morning session the six sub-groups provided an “information dump” of labour market problems and constraints, prioritizing the 2-3 most important common problems within their sector.
- These problems and constraints were reported back to the plenary session by the rapporteurs, with further discussion from the larger group.
- During lunch the labour market consultant/workshop facilitator and the DoL and MSD Labour Market Managers extracted the six most important overarching regional labour market problems and constraints from the plenary report-back session.

- In the afternoon break-out session workshop participants were assigned to one of 6 sub-groups on a random basis – but ensuring a good sectoral mix in each of them – and asked to discuss solutions to one of the six overarching common problems or constraints drawn from the morning session.
- Of the many solutions discussed by each of the sub-groups 2-3 were selected as the most important and highlighted in the report-back to the plenary session by the rapporteurs, stimulating further discussion by the larger group.

### First Draft and Feedback

- Using the notes taken by the scribes and rapporteurs in the first workshop morning and afternoon sub-group sessions, the labour market consultant/workshop facilitator wrote a first draft of the Wellington Regional Labour Market Strategy. The draft was discussed and modified with the DoL and MSD Labour Market Teams before being circulated for feedback from the workshop participants and other interested parties who were not able to attend.
- The Strategy report was written in the following format:
  - Title Sheet; Table of Contents;
  - Terms and Acronyms;
  - Introduction;
  - The Region; Linkages;
  - Vision; Objectives & Outcome;
  - Strategic Responses (Promotion and Leadership, Productivity, Participation, Skills Development, Business & Regional Capability, Sector Diversification); and,
  - Monitoring & Evaluation.
- The Strategic Responses section of the report was formatted for each of the key regional labour market issues, as follows:

Constraint or Issues	Solutions (Priority)	Indicator/Measure <i>(what solutions will achieve)</i>	Key Agencies	Time Frame
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- Written suggestions, comments and changes to the first draft were received from a number of first workshop participants and other interested parties who were not able to attend.

### Technical Review

- A technical review of the first draft of the strategy was conducted by a DoL statistician/analyst to check that no important regional labour market issues or solutions were minimized, overly emphasized or were missed entirely in the “information dump” that occurred in the first workshop.

### Horizontal Consultations

- A number of horizontal consultations were conducted with relevant regional partners by the labour market consultant/workshop facilitator and DoL and MSD Labour Market Managers after the first draft of the strategy was released.
- Organisations that were consulted with included the Employers and Manufacturers Association, the Wellington Regional Chamber of Commerce, the four workstreams of the Wellington Regional Strategy, the Wellington Educational Cluster, the Congress of Trade Unions and the Victoria University Centre for Applied Cross-Cultural Research.

### **Second Draft and Feedback**

- After receiving feedback from the first workshop participants and other interested parties who were not able to attend, as well as from the horizontal consultations, a second draft of the strategy was written and circulated by the labour market consultant/workshop facilitator.
- A few organizations provided written feedback on the second draft.

### **Second Workshop**

- The second workshop was conceived of as a governance level exercise that would review the 2nd draft of the labour market strategy and make minor adjustments to it, as well as discuss, in general terms, the process to develop the follow-on Wellington Regional Labour Market Implementation Plan.
- As expected, given the prior level of input and changes to the strategy, second workshop participants endorsed the second draft of the strategy with one notable suggestion: to write and attach a contextual paper to the strategy to fully explain the background to its development.

### **Third Draft and Feedback**

- Following-on from the second workshop, a third draft of the strategy and the contextual paper, written by the labour market consultant/workshop to explain the background to its development, were circulated to all original workshop participants and other interested parties.
- No further feedback was received, which was taken as a sign that consensus had been reached on both documents.

### **Submission of the Strategy and Contextual Paper**

The final Wellington Regional Labour Market Strategy and Contextual Paper were submitted to the Wellington Regional Strategy LMSG for their endorsement and subsequent submission to the Wellington Regional Strategy Forum and its formal acceptance of both. This occurred in July 2006.