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**Committee** Policy, Finance and Strategy Committee  
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## **Sponsorship of Climate Change and Governance Conference**

### **1. Purpose**

To recommend that Greater Wellington sponsor the Climate Change and Governance conference at a cost of \$10,000.

### **2. Significance of the decision**

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

### **3. Background**

Greater Wellington, through Councillors Buchanan and Laidlaw, has been approached by Professor Jonathan Boston, Chairperson of the Organising Committee for the Climate Change and Governance Conference, with a request for sponsorship for the conference. The conference is taking place on 28 / 29<sup>th</sup> March at Te Papa and a sponsorship of \$10,000 has been proposed.

The conference is a high-profile event, with many senior scientists and policymakers from New Zealand and overseas attending. High profile speakers include Lord Oxburgh, former chairman of Shell Oil, the Hon Simon Upton, and Professor Peter Barrett, Director of the Antarctic Research Centre.

#### **3.1 Aims of the conference**

The aims of the conference are:

- To highlight the importance and urgency of the issues raised by climate change and provide the opportunity for informed discussion and debate

- To provide an update on the current state of scientific knowledge concerning these issues
- To explore the risks and uncertainties surrounding climate change
- To identify and highlight the possible and likely impacts of climate change, especially in New Zealand and the Pacific
- To consider, and critically assess, the policy implications, issues and options, both for New Zealand and for neighbouring countries
- To discuss the implementation of global measures under the Kyoto Protocol and explore post-2012 policy options
- To consider the regional and global governance challenges posed by climate change.

A number of central government agencies, businesses and non-government organisations are sponsors of the conference.

### **3.2 Benefits of sponsorship to Greater Wellington**

The benefits to Greater Wellington of sponsoring the conference include:

- Complimentary conference registrations.
- The opportunity for a councillor to chair one of the conference sessions.
- The opportunity for councillors to meet and discuss the issues with scientists and policy makers from New Zealand and overseas.
- The opportunity to display the Council and *Be the Difference* brands at the venue and include other information about Greater Wellington the conference pack.
- The opportunity to link the upcoming *Be the Difference* programme on vehicle emissions with the conference.
- The association of Greater Wellington with a high profile international conference, and the opportunity for recognition of our role by central government, business and non-governmental participants.

### **3.3 Greater Wellington's approach to climate change issues**

Greater Wellington is addressing the issue of climate change in several ways.

#### **Managing effects**

Greater Wellington has a particular responsibility for managing the effects of human, climatic and other natural events on the environment. A report to the Environment Committee in July 2002 (Report 02.427) identified potential effects of climate change on the region as including:

- An increased threat to lifelines and services from more frequent and heavy rainfall events and associated floods;
- Increased drought risk, particularly in the east coast of the Region, affecting some crop suitability;
- Vulnerability of ground waters aquifers to saltwater intrusion as a result of sea level rise;
- Problems for plant and animal pest eradication programmes because of changes in temperature and rainfall regimes; and
- Positive impacts, such as favourable climate for sub-tropical and frost sensitive species, extended growing seasons and higher yields due to higher levels of carbon dioxide.

### Managing emissions

Reducing the emission of greenhouse gases is a key focus of the Kyoto Protocol. In this regard Greater Wellington has focused on improving our energy management in buildings and services, and promoting the development of low-carbon emission sources of electricity generation through wind farming. The *Be the Difference* programme has addressed the issue of vehicle emissions on two occasions.

## 4. Comment

Climate change is a major political and policy issue at the national and international level. The holding of this conference at this time is particularly pertinent as the New Zealand Government is currently reviewing its approach to managing climate change, and is also reviewing its strategies for promoting energy efficiency and increasing energy supply from renewable sources. Having an involvement in the conference would enable councillors to engage with policy makers and scientists at a particularly important time in the development of this issue.

## 5. Communication

No communication is proposed at this time.

## 6. Recommendations

*That the Committee:*

1. **Receives** the report.
2. **Approves** sponsorship of the Climate Change and Governance conference to the level of \$10,000.

Report prepared by:

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