

Press Release

17 April 2015

Council receives Highly Commended at prestigious Awards

The Kaipara District Council received a Highly Commended for its entry “Retaining Building Consent Authority Accreditation” at the prestigious SOLGM (Society of Local Government Managers) Awards in Wellington Thursday evening. The category entered was “Transforming Service Delivery”. This was the only category where such a citation has been made.

In giving this citation the Judges spoke about a Council that “used an exciting technological development to move from being close to losing BCA accreditation to a recognised sector leader inside three months.”

The Council also had an entry in the category “Council-Community Relationships” which was based on the community planning work that has been undertaken with a number of communities across the District.

Acting Chief Executive Jill McPherson, who attended the Awards with Fran Mikulicic, General Manager Regulatory, said “I think this really shows how far we have come as an organisation. Two years ago we would not have had anything to enter. This year we were proud to be able to put up entries for two categories. This shows that Council is becoming the high performing organisation that the Commissioners want us to be.”

John Robertson, Chair of Commissioners, on hearing of Council’s success said “The Commissioners are delighted to see the hard work of the staff being acknowledged in this way”.

The Council, motivated by what it called a “burning platform” - the potential loss of Building Consent Authority Accreditation, chose a bold transformational solution to change from a paper-based consenting process to a cloud-based software process as the solution.

With the help of Selwyn District Council who had already shown excellence in this area, the Kaipara District Council has been the first to implement the totally cloud-based comprehensive software solution AlphaOne. It did this in just three months.

Dr McPherson said the choice had been a bold one and was not without its risks.

“If the project had been unsuccessful we would have lost IANZ accreditation and been forced to close down as a Building Control Authority. We were not prepared to let that happen. The team led by Fran Mikulicic, General Manager Regulatory who was supported by Dave Waetford, Ken Swanepoel and Duncan McAulay did an absolutely phenomenal job with the support of Selwyn District Council. It was wonderful to have this recognised by the local government sector through the SOLGM Awards.”

As part of the project, Council briefed and trained regular customers. Dr McPherson said that she would like to congratulate the team and thank everyone who had also gotten involved and supported the transformation.

“We could not have done it on our own. I would like to thank the team at Mangawhai, our customers and Selwyn District Council for helping to make this the successful transformation it has been.”

When IANZ reassessed Council late last year it noted what it called a “phenomenal turnaround”. No corrective actions were required. IANZ stated that due to the “excellent result of the audit” the next assessment would revert to the normal two-year cycle of assessment.

“We cannot afford to relax.” said Dr McPherson, “This is an ongoing process and we will continue to strive for excellence to stay at the top of our game”.

The winner of the Transforming Service Delivery category was Selwyn District Council for *Project Helix*. This project also won the Supreme Award.

The SOLGM Awards are held annually. This year there were four categories: Joined-up Local Government; Building Organisational Capability, Transforming Service Delivery and Council-Community Relationships.

The end

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