

Do councils have big debts problems or not?

By LGNZ editor, Graham Hawkes

At the same time that Parliament is busy passing a special amendment bill to curb local government borrowing and to bring down debt levels, Finance Minister Bill English has apparently conceded this country's 78 local authorities are carrying "a relatively low level of debt".

How do we explain that? Why is one Minister (David Carter) setting up a special Task Force because local government is out of whack with the Government's goals for our councils, and another (Bill English) apparently told the finance and expenditure select committee: "Local councils do have relatively low levels of debt and that's rising quickly."

Unless TVNZ has got the story wrong, it's all very confusing.

Either way, the Government is ploughing ahead with its programme of change. We have posted the Minister's various speeches and news releases on our website and of course you can use other links to catch up with what's happening in Local Government, outside the Beehive and Parliament.



[Minister's task force announced](#)

Local Government Minister David Carter has announced an independent taskforce to help build greater efficiency within the local government framework. [Read More...](#)

[Bill goes through first reading](#)

A Bill to cement in place the first steps towards more change to local government has passed its first reading in Parliament. [Read More...](#)

[Minister launches LG reorganisation](#)

Local Government Minister David Carter has told Parliament the Bill to amend the Local Government Act 2002, will focus local authorities on operating more efficiently and effectively. [Read More...](#)



[Beehive umbrella for Auckland ratepayers](#)

The Government has accepted an Auckland Council proposal to reduce the impact on ratepayers of the introduction of a single rates system across the isthmus. [Read More...](#)

[Local businessman to drive Rotorua's economy](#)

The chair of Rotorua DC's newest CCO says council has given the board the freedom to apply a commercially focused approach to making things happen for Rotorua.



BE SURE OF YOUR WATER QUALITY

[Tax law: a dragon or slayer?](#)

There's new uncertainty over the topic of tax avoidance. A recent series of court decisions that have gone against the taxpayer are recasting the legal and accounting professions understanding of what constitutes tax avoidance.



[Road funding under spotlight](#)

At the time this article was written, the Ministerial Task Force on Road Maintenance Funding was beginning to wind up its work and preparations are underway to share its findings as widely as possible.

[Changes to the LGA need care](#)

Kobus Mentz, director of Urbanismplus and Susannah Goble, urban planner, give their thoughts on proposed changes to the Local Government Act and the ways that community aspirations can be delivered through local councils.

Case Study

[Shared spaces prove popular in Auckland](#)

For years, Aucklanders have yearned for people-spaces in their city. Instead, cars held total sway and pedestrians scrambled to avoid them as they went to work or to shop. This story charts a gradual inner-city transformation.

[Better flood control in 2015](#)

A major renewal works programme to boost flood protection of Thames and surrounding land will be underway in 2014, says Waikato Regional Council.



[Councils can save on housing](#)

Not many homeowners spend a lot of time thinking about the sustainability of their houses,

but now - good news - someone else is doing it for them. Adding 'Lifemark' features to homes at the design stage can save money long-term.

[What's On in Local Government](#)

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