



Media Release

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Wellington, NZ

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Residents' Groups Conference a Wellington First for New Zealand

Wellington will play host New Zealand's first ever conference for residents' and ratepayers' associations, in the Grand Hall at parliament in April this year.

The event is being organised by the Federation of Wellington Progressive and Residents Associations (FWPRA) to provide a forum for people involved in local democracy and community activism to meet, network, and discuss critical issues mostly involving local government.

The one-day conference is being hosted by Ohariu M.P. the Hon. Peter Dunne. It will consist of six workshops focusing on internal and external issues relevant to residents of the Wellington Region.

Conference spokesperson Tom Law says the conference will help promote residents and ratepayers associations as important actors in the local democracy sphere. "These groups, and the people who belong to them, play a critical role in society. We have had residents associations in this country since the mid 1800s yet there has been very little public recognition.

"This (conference) will be a first for New Zealand and we see it as a starting point to greater cooperation between local residents' groups across the country.

"We see this as beginning of the end of apathy in our Kiwi communities.

"This year's conference is aimed primarily at those organisations in the Wellington Region, though it is open to all residents' groups from across New Zealand. We plan on running similar regional forums in other parts of the country from 2011 onwards."

The forum will not attract a charge for members of residents' groups. Mr Law says some government and local government officials may attend but it will be "strictly by invitation only".

Potential delegates can register their interest at www.residents.org.nz/residents2010.

ENDS

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