

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM

8 October 2013

## **VOTE AND VOTE WISELY**

With only four days to go until the polls close, the Local Government Forum is urging people to make informed choices in the elections for their local councils.

“Local government is hugely important but its importance is neither well understood nor widely appreciated,” said Michael Barnett, Chair of the Local Government Forum, a group of business organisations interested in local government policy.

“As at June 2012 the local government sector owned assets worth \$124 billion, and had \$9 billion of debt. The sector’s operating spending is more than \$8 billion per year and it raises more than \$4.5 billion per year in property rates.

“But it is more than just the numbers. The next time you drive your car, ride the bus, turn on the tap, flush the toilet, take out the rubbish, play sport, or go to the library or the art gallery then most likely you are using a council service. And if you own a dog, if you ever have to build a house, if you run a business, or if you own a farm then you will be subject to council rules and regulations.

“Voting is also about making an informed choice. The people we elect on Saturday will set the direction for their councils for the next three years. It’s important that we all make the effort to understand what the candidates stand for and what they’ll do if elected.

“This isn’t always easy to decipher but when you think about the council services you use and the rates you pay, making an informed vote has to be a good investment in your future and that of your community”, said Mr. Barnett.

Contact: Michael Barnett, phone 027 563 1150

## **ABOUT THE FORUM**

The Local Government Forum comprises organisations that have a vital interest in the activities of local government. Its members include BusinessNZ, the Electricity Networks Association, Federated Farmers of NZ, NZ Initiative, NZ Chambers of Commerce, and NZ Retailers’ Association. The Forum was established in 1994 to promote greater efficiency in local government and to contribute to the debate on policy issues affecting it.

For more information on the Forum, see [www.localgovtforum.org.nz](http://www.localgovtforum.org.nz)