

MEETING AND GOVERNANCE SOLUTIONS



Governance Professionals Symposium Wednesday 28 and Thursday 29 January 2026

**The aftermath of the 2025 elections and other
interesting things!**



Symposium purpose

An opportunity to share experiences, reflect and refresh on good practice that impacts your role as a Governance Professional who has the prime responsibility for interaction with the governance arm of Council.

The symposium will address a wide range of issues including:

- Debrief and review of pre- and post-election governance related activities. What worked well/not so well/key learnings? Planning elected member development and training for 2026
- Standing Orders and Code of Conduct – the latest information on the development and implementation of a standardised set of standing orders and a code of conduct for the sector
- Local government and 2026 – what is coming up
- Best practice and information sharing - getting your burning questions on any topic that you want answers to!

Who should attend?

- Governance Advisors, Committee Administrators and Executive Assistants
- Governance Managers / Team Leaders
- Managers responsible for Council, Committee and Community Board meetings
- Chief Executives and senior leadership team members

Dates

Wednesday 28 January 2026, 915 am - 430pm; and

Thursday 29 January 2026, 830am – 200pm

Note – networking drinks will be available at the close of the programme on day one

Symposium Venue

West Plaza Hotel, Wakefield Street, Wellington – meeting room one

Accommodation

If you want to book accommodation at the West Plaza, please quote “2026 Meeting and Governance Solutions Limited Governance Professionals Symposium” to receive a special rate for the nights of Tuesday 27 and Wednesday 28 January 2026 as follows:

Standard Queen room (one queen bed)

Room only rate \$155.00 NZD per room per night;

Or

Room & Breakfast \$180.00 NZD per room per night

Accommodation bookings can be made through the West Plaza reservations team at:

- Email: reservations@westplaza.co.nz
- Phone: 04 473 1440 Ext 249

Delegates must quote Hotel reference: **MAGS29**

This special rate does not apply to any reservations made online or through any third party travel agency like Booking.com etc.

Please note that rooms are subject to availability.

To register and registration fee

Complete the attached form and return to info@meetinggovernance.co.nz

The registration fee is \$1,150.00 plus GST \$172.50 = \$1,322.50

REGISTRATIONS CLOSE WEDNESDAY 21 JANUARY 2026

Day One – Wednesday 28 January 2026

9.15am **Registration and refreshments**

9.30am **Welcome and introductions, symposium overview**

10.00am **Looking back – the 2026 elections, pre and post actions elections**

What worked well/not so well/key learnings? Planning elected member development and training for 2026

11.15am **Tea**

11.45am **The aftermath continued**

12.15pm **Lunch**

1.00pm **Carol Buckley - Unconscious Bias**

Carol Buckley will be leading a session on unconscious bias. Carol is a wife, mum and nana, brought up and still based in Rotorua. She is also an experienced leader, facilitator, celebrant and manager with 38 years of public service under her belt. This is where she honed her skills and expertise in a wide range of areas, including service delivery and finance. Her whakapapa links are Te Arawa (Ngāti Rangiwhewehi; Ngāti Kearoa Ngāti Tuarā) and Tainui (Ngāti Huri).

1.45pm **Burning questions**

Short, sharp sessions on topics that you want to talk about – especially the things that keep you awake at night about your job!

2.30pm **Tea**

2.45pm **Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, and Effective Meetings**

Review of changes to requirements for Standing Orders, Code of Conduct, and what the Governance Advisor can do to support effective meetings

4.15pm **Summary**

4.30pm **Close**

4.45pm **Networking drinks**

Have a drink on us and then decide if you want to gather together with other delegates either in house or out on the town for dinner.

Day Two – Thursday 29 January 2026

8.30am Welcome and overview

8.45am Jason Marris, Chief Executive, Kaipara District Council

Jason has a wealth of democratic services experience, having worked in local government for over 20 years and has experience working at 5 councils; North Shore City Council, Auckland City Council, Auckland Council, Whangarei District Council and Kaipara District Council.

Jason will touch on what did we learn / confirm from the processes and systems in the lead up to and post the 2025 elections from a Democracy Support perspective, plus other insights from a CE perspective working with a newly elected Council.

10.00am Tea

10.20am Standing Orders and Effective Meetings

Continued

12.15pm Lunch

1.00pm Open forum

Anything goes – the floor is yours

1.45pm Summary

2.00pm Close

ABOUT MEETING AND GOVERNANCE SOLUTIONS LIMITED

Steve McDowell and Vern Walsh are Meeting and Governance Solutions Limited.

We specialise in training, development and mentoring for local government elected representatives and staff. We offer a mix of experience and knowledge having held elected positions in local government, commercial boards, Boards of Trustees, and sporting organisations, along with senior management roles in the private sector.

We have developed and successfully delivered workshops to the local government sector throughout New Zealand.



Here is what people have said about this course:

Steve and Vern are knowledgeable and friendly. They facilitate an open dialogue and provide up to date information and excellent resources. Renee Coffey, Greater Wellington Regional Council

You guys are excellent facilitators and very personable. Chirese Viljoen, Whakatane District Council

Steve and Vern are excellent at bringing their real-life governance experiences as brilliant illustrations to educate governance professionals. Well worthwhile. Grayson Rowse, Horowhenua District Council

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