



**Media Release
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The Wellington Chamber and EMA Central to combine resources

The President of the Wellington Regional Chamber of Commerce Jo Bransgrove, and the President of EMA Central Peter McKee today announced that the governance of their organisations are circulating resolutions to their members seeking agreement for the Chamber to collaborate more closely with EMA Central, and potentially other organisations in the region.

"This will expand the range of services offered to Chamber members in Wellington and the wider region and to grow the Chamber's membership base. At the most basic level we see efficiency gains flowing from sharing back office services with the EMA. But this process is being driven by other factors. We are constantly seeking to enhance the range and quality of services provided to our members. We see the EMA as ideal partners in this respect as the Chamber and the EMA have shared values and distinct but complementary service offerings," said Chamber President Ms Bransgrove.

"It will be very helpful for a business to have one place to go that clearly describes the respective contributions the NZ Chambers and Business NZ families can make to the success of their business. While maintaining member choice, the economies of working cooperatively will lower the subscription cost of accessing the offerings of both a Chamber and EMA. It is a principle that other business support organisations should also consider," said Mr McKee.

There will be no increase to the cost of subscriptions for members who only want the services currently offered by the Chamber or EMA Central.

However, from 1 July, Chamber members who want to take advantage of the employment law, HR, OSH and other services offered by the EMA will be able to access them through a discounted joint membership. Likewise EMA Central members wanting to join the Wellington Chamber will have access to the same offering.

"By combining forces we will also be able to expand our events, networking and lobbying activity in Wellington City and the wider region," said Ms Bransgrove.

"The strength of the Chamber movement is its ability to deliver at the local level. Combining forces with the EMA will allow us to enhance support to the Chamber

network throughout the region. At present there are Chambers in Hutt, Upper Hutt, Porirua, Kapiti, Wairarapa, Hawkes Bay, Manawatu, Wanganui and New Plymouth.

"How these Chambers wish to involve themselves in this process is work in progress. Strengthening these Chambers and allowing them to offer world class service to their members, and to lobby more effectively on their behalf is a key driver of this process.

"As more chambers in the Central region decide to be part of the cooperative framework, it will expand the opportunities available for more joint EMA memberships," said Mr McKee.

"The Wellington Regional Chamber of Commerce has been a key part of the regional economy for the past 154 years. By expanding the range of services offered and by increasing the size of our membership through the proposed project, we can be confident that the Wellington Chamber will have an even brighter future," stated Ms Bransgrove.

"We are determined that this process also strengthen the New Zealand Chamber movement. We are working closely with the Board of the New Zealand Chambers of Commerce Inc to ensure this outcome. In due course we hope that other chambers outside our region might be able to collaborate on the combined back office that we are proposing. Likewise other business support organisations and economic development agencies would be very welcome to participate in this collaboration.

"Reaction to date to what we are proposing from those consulted in the membership and throughout the region has been largely positive. It builds nicely on the excellent collaboration with EMA Central that we have begun in the export space," Ms Bransgrove concluded.

Full details of what is being proposed will soon be available on the Chamber and EMA Central websites. If approved by Chamber members at the forthcoming AGM, it is envisaged that the collaboration between the Chamber and EMA Central will be up and running in Wellington city from 1 July 2010.

For further information please contact Jo Bransgrove on 027 475 7750 or Peter McKee on 021 740 072.