

The Best Kept Secret: Local-level Government in the Nation's Capital

By Dr James MacPherson

Public Knowledge of NCD Local-level Governments

The National Capital District has Local-level Governments.

The existence of these Local-level Governments is a very well kept secret.

Queries with well-informed community leaders and professionals – persons who could be assumed to know about public affairs – showed that:

- almost all had no knowledge of the existence of these Local-level Governments;
- none could name the Chairman of any Local-level Government or a Local-level Government Councillor or ward representatives;
- none could state what the functions of the Local-level Governments are; and
- none could state how persons become Councillors – they knew they had never voted for them.

Contrast with Other Settings

The same informants were broadly aware of the role of Local-level Governments outside the National Capital District and of the Motu-Koitabu Council within the NCD.

The informants knew that the customary areas of the National Capital District have a Council which broadly represents the interests of each community of the Motu-Koitabu peoples. They also knew that the Motu-Koitabu Council is automatically represented in the NCD Commission.

The informants know the role of Local-level Governments – and some of their potential and their weakness – under the *Organic Law on Provincial and Local-level Governments*. They are generally aware of recent court decisions which have restored the Heads of Local-level Government to membership of Provincial Assemblies and ensure the Deputy Governor is a Head of Local-level Government.

Informants' Concerns in the Governance and Administration of the NCD

Systematic research conducted by Dr Ray Anere of the National Research Institute and a Task Force has demonstrated that residents of the NCD have widespread concerns with issues that affect their community and neighbourhood.