



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION**  
**MANA KĀWANATANGA Ā ROHE**

**Media Statement**

**6 August 2013**

**Deadline approaching for alternative ideas for local government in  
Wairarapa and Wellington**

The Local Government Commission has issued a reminder of the 16 August deadline for alternative ideas about the shape of local authorities in the Wairarapa and Wellington.

In July the Commission issued a public notice calling for alternatives to existing local government arrangements after it received separate reorganisation applications from four councils.

The three district councils in the Wairarapa and the Greater Wellington Regional Council applied to the Commission to change existing governance structures.

Wairarapa councils want a unitary authority to cover Masterton, Carterton and South Wairarapa districts. The council would include a mayor and twelve councillors elected from seven wards. There would also be five community boards.

The proposed new council would assume the responsibilities and functions of the three existing district councils and of the Greater Wellington Regional Council in relation to the Wairarapa area. It would also result in a small boundary change to part of Tararua District currently within Wellington region, which would be transferred to Manawatu-Wanganui Region.

Greater Wellington Regional Council wants a unitary authority covering the entire Wellington Region, including Wairarapa, but excluding a small part of Tararua District. The council would have a mayor and 21 councillors elected from eight wards. There would also be a second tier of eight local boards.

The proposed new council would assume the responsibilities and functions of all district and city councils in Kapiti, Porirua, Wellington, the Hutt Valley, Wairarapa and of the regional council.

Interested parties were given twenty working days to make alternative applications. That deadline expires on 16 August 2013. So far, three alternatives have been received.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Commission Donald Riezebos said alternative applications will be considered alongside those from the councils.

Mr Riezebos stressed that an alternative application is not the same as a submission that merely expresses a view or takes a position on the councils' applications. Public submissions occur at a later stage of the process.

“Under the Local Government Act 2002 an alternative application must meet certain criteria. An alternative application is expected to propose changes, to explain what the changes are designed to achieve and to describe improvements that would result.”

“For example, changes can include the union of district or regional councils; the creation of a new district or regional council; the abolition of a district or regional council; the alteration of boundaries; or the transfer of statutory obligations between councils.”

“The improvements which flow from reorganisation are expected to promote good local government. They may include efficiencies and cost savings; productivity improvements for councils, businesses and households; and simplified planning processes,” Mr Riezebos said.

Alternative applications should be sent to:

Donald Riezebos  
Chief Executive Officer  
Local Government Commission  
PO Box 5362  
Wellington 6145  
NEW ZEALAND

Or **email:** [info@lgc.govt.nz](mailto:info@lgc.govt.nz) or **fax:** +64 4 4940501

(please send large files by post rather than by email or fax)

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### ***Background information: the process***

The next stages of the process are as follows:

- The Local Government Commission will receive **alternative applications** postmarked by 16 August.
- The Commission will consider alternative applications alongside the original applications and the **existing arrangements** (the status quo).
- The Commission will identify **reasonably practicable options** for local government in the affected area. One of these options must be the status quo.
- The Commission will determine its **preferred option**. The preferred option must have regard to a local authority's resources and communities of interest.
- If it does not select the status quo as its preferred option, the Commission will prepare a **draft proposal**. It will publicly notify the draft proposal and call for public submissions.
- It must also **seek the views** of affected local authorities, iwi and a range of statutory agencies, including the Auditor General; the Ministry for the Environment; the

Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment; Te Puni Kokiri, and Inland Revenue.

- The Commission **must consider** each submission and **may hold hearings** and undertake further **consultations** before deciding whether to proceed.
- If it does decide to proceed, the Commission will prepare a **final proposal** and will publicly notify it. A period of 60 working days will be allowed for responses, for example a **petition to require a poll**.
- A petition of **10% or more of affected electors** in any one of the affected districts is able to trigger a poll.
- If **more than 50%** of valid votes support the proposal, or if no poll is called for, the final proposal will be implemented and the proposed changes will take place. If the proposal attracts support from 50% or fewer of those voting, the reorganisation proposal will lapse.

In any event, no change will be made before the local authority elections in October 2013.

The legislation governing reorganisation of local authorities, Schedule 3 of the Local Government Act 2002, can be accessed [here](#). Guidelines on the reorganisation process are also available at [www.lgc.govt.nz](http://www.lgc.govt.nz)

There are five unitary authorities in New Zealand: Auckland, Gisborne, Marlborough, Nelson and Tasman. Auckland is the most recent council to combine the two levels of local authority functions. Gisborne became a unitary authority in 1989; and Marlborough, Nelson and Tasman became unitary authorities in 1992. The Chatham Islands Council also effectively operates as a unitary authority, as it is not within a region.

All other local authorities in the country work under a two tier framework of regional and district councils which have separate regulatory and planning responsibilities.

#### **Note for editors**

*The Local Government Commission is an independent body which makes decisions on local authority electoral matters and applications to change boundaries, functions and areas of local authorities. The Commissioners are Basil Morrison, Grant Kirby and Anne Carter. They are appointed by the Minister of Local Government.*

#### **Media enquiries**

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