



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION  
MANA KĀWANATANGA Ā ROHE**

**Media Statement**

**8 July 2013**

**Local government reorganisation in Wairarapa and Wellington**

Alternative ideas for local government arrangements in the Wairarapa and Wellington are being called for from the wider community.

The Local Government Commission has decided to assess an application from the Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC) and to combine the process with an earlier application from three Wairarapa district councils.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Commission, Donald Riezebos, said the applications from the Wairarapa councils and the GWRC will be considered as part of the same process because they affect the same region.

“There is now an opportunity for alternative applications to be considered alongside those from the councils,” Mr Riezebos said.

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.

The decision to formally assess the GWRC application means the Local Government Commission is considering reorganisation applications affecting the wider Northland, Hawkes Bay and Wellington regions. The affected areas involve 22 local authorities and an estimated population of more than 786,000 people.

The deadline for alternative applications is 16 August 2013. 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 legislative process***

The next stages of the process are as follows:

- The Local Government Commission will receive **alternative applications** sent 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 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**

Gavin Beattie  
Senior Policy Analyst  
Local Government Commission  
Phone +64 4 460 2228

or

Kathryn Street  
Senior Communications Advisor  
Local Government Commission  
Phone +64 4 460 2235  
[Kathryn.Street@dia.govt.nz](mailto:Kathryn.Street@dia.govt.nz)