



LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION MANA KĀWANATANGA Ā ROHE

Media Release

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Public meetings in Wellington region on future of local government

Residents and ratepayers are being invited to public meetings in the Wellington region to share their views on the future shape of local government.

The Local Government Commission is considering applications to change the structure of local authorities in Wellington. The proposals affect the number of councils as well as their responsibilities and powers.

Nine councils are most affected: Kapiti Coast; Porirua; Wellington City; Hutt City; Upper Hutt; South Wairarapa; Carterton; Masterton; and the Greater Wellington Regional Council.

The Chief Executive Officer of the Commission, Donald Riezebos, said the Commissioners have already met a number of affected groups to discuss the proposals. The discussions have involved all councils as well as iwi, Members of Parliament, representatives of business and commerce, major employers, unions, public sector agencies and organised groups.

“The Commission now wants to hear from individual members of the public. Fourteen public meetings will be held in nine centres during October and November. The Commission has chosen venues covering a wide geographical area and included daytime and evening meetings to make it as easy as possible for people to attend. We are keen to hear a range of views,” Mr Riezebos said.

At the meetings, Commissioners Basil Morrison, Grant Kirby and Anne Carter will outline the process to date and be available for questions from the public.

“Discussions at the public meetings will assist the Commission as it narrows its list of reasonably practicable options for local government in the Wellington region. It will then decide early next year whether to release a draft proposal for reorganising local government. At that stage, a more formal period of public submissions would occur,” Mr Riezebos said.

Schedule of public meetings

Thurs 24 October: **Wellington** St Patricks College Hall, Kilbirnie 7.00-8.30pm

Wed 13 November: **Lower Hutt** Dowse Art Museum 12.00-1.30pm; **Lower Hutt** Dowse Art Museum, Laings Rd 7.00-8.30pm

Thurs 14 November: **Porirua** Pataka Museum, Parumoana St 12.00-1.30pm; **Porirua** Porirua Club, Lodge Pl., 7.00-8.30pm

Fri 15 November: **Wellington CBD** Spectrum Theatre, Johnston St/Customhouse Quay 12.00-1.30pm

Mon 18 November: **Otaki** Rotary Lounge, Aotaki St 12.00-1.30pm; **Paraparaumu Coast** Community Church, Hinemoa St 7.00-8.30pm

Tues 19 November: **Masterton** Town Hall, 11.00am-12.30pm, **Masterton** Town Hall, 7.00-8.30pm

Wed 20 November: **Martinborough** Town Hall, 11.00am-12.30pm; **Carterton** Events Centre, 7.00-8.30pm

Thurs 21 November: **Upper Hutt** Expressions Arts and Entertainment Centre 12.00-1.30pm, **Upper Hutt** Cosmopolitan Club, Logan St, 7.00-8.30pm.

Background

The Commission received an application from three Wairarapa District Councils on 22 May 2013. It proposed changes to the councils' structures and powers with the formation of a unitary authority. The new authority would assume the responsibilities of the district councils and of Greater Wellington Regional Council in the Wairarapa area.

On 21 June 2013 the Commission received an application from Greater Wellington Regional Council for the establishment of a single unitary authority, with a second tier of Local Boards, for the whole of the Wellington region.

The Commission then advertised for alternative applications. Nineteen responses were received. In summary, they propose a variety of changes in governance structures as well as some retention of status quo arrangements:

- Support for the Wairarapa application along with the establishment of a single unitary council with a single governance tier for the rest of the region. [Wellington City Council response – see [link](#)]
- Support for the Wairarapa application along with the abolition of the Regional Council and the establishment of three further unitary authorities:
 - Wellington Council (the present Wellington and Porirua Cities);
 - Kapiti Coast Council (the current Kapiti Coast District); and
 - Hutt Valley Council (the present Hutt and Upper Hutt Cities)[Hutt City Council response – see [link](#)]
- Support for the Wairarapa application and an enhanced status quo arrangement for the remainder of the region involving restructuring of council-controlled organisations and regional forums. [Upper Hutt City Council response – see [link](#)]
- Establishment of an East Coast Regional Council comprising the current Hawkes Bay region plus the three Wairarapa districts. [Hawkes Bay Regional Council response – see [link](#)]
- Retain the current Regional Council and establish three enlarged territorial authorities. These authorities would be formed by: merging Upper Hutt and

Hutt Cities; merging Wellington and Porirua Cities; and merging the Wairarapa districts. Kapiti Coast District to remain as is.

- Inclusion of the Eketahuna Ward of Tararua District within any future Wairarapa or Wellington unitary council.
- Combine the three Wairarapa District Councils into a single territorial authority which would remain within the Wellington Region.
- Establish 6 unitary councils (Wellington, Hutt, Upper Hutt, Porirua, Kapiti Coast and Wairarapa).
- Establish three unitary authorities (one authority representing Porirua, Wellington and Hutt Valley councils combined; a Wairarapa authority; and a Kapiti authority) and abolish the Regional Council.
- The Commission should follow a two stage process, initially merging the existing territorial authorities to create 3 new territorial authorities (Wairarapa, Hutt, and Wellington). Then at a second stage it should consider whether to abolish the Regional Council to make the 3 new territorial authorities into unitary authorities.

Local authorities in Wellington currently work under a two tier framework of one regional council and eight territorial authorities, which have separate regulatory and planning responsibilities. A unitary authority is a combination of the two structures. The new Auckland Council is a unitary authority and there are five other unitaries: Gisborne; Nelson; Tasman; Marlborough and the Chatham Islands.

Guidelines and further background to the reorganisation process can be found at the Local Government Commission website: www.lgc.govt.nz

NOTE: 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. The legislation governing reorganisation of local authorities, Schedule 3 of the Local Government Act 2002, can be accessed [here](#).