



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

### **Media Statement**

11 March 2014

### **Response to reports on Commission process**

The Local Government Commission has rejected reported suggestions about the process it is following in the reorganisation proposals affecting several local authorities.

The Chief Executive Officer Donald Riezebos said the Commission is dealing with the reorganisation applications in good faith and in accordance with the legislation.

“The Commission is listening to the views of a wide range of groups and individuals,” Mr Riezebos said.

“It has held close to 200 meetings in Northland, Hawke's Bay and Wellington regions in the past year. There have been public meetings open to all-comers and further meetings held individually with affected groups. Those groups include councils, iwi, chambers of commerce, local businesses, sector groups, funding agencies and ratepayer associations. “

The Commission must be satisfied there is community support for any proposal. As an example, last month the Commission declined an application for Nelson and Tasman councils to be formed into one local authority, due in part to a lack of information about public support for change.

The public has the opportunity to vote if the Commission decides to issue a final proposal for reorganisation. Any vote on a final proposal must be supported by at least 50 per cent plus-one of those who vote for it to take effect.

ENDS

#### ***BACKGROUND***

The original push for reform did not come from the Commission. In Northland and Wellington, the applications for reorganisation came from the local authorities themselves and in Hawke's Bay it came from a group of local residents and ratepayers.

The opportunity for public input and consultation has occurred at several stages of the process:

1. The call for **alternative applications** from the public once the LGC decided to assess the original applications. This occurred in Northland in the period to April 2013. In Hawke's Bay it occurred up to May 2013. In Wellington it occurred up to August 2013.
2. **Public meetings.** These are not required by legislation but the LGC chose to travel to each region to hear first-hand from local communities. During 2013 it held eleven public meetings in Northland; eight in Hawke's Bay; and fifteen in Wellington and Wairarapa.
3. **Consultation with stakeholders.** Before issuing a draft proposal, the Commission made five visits to Northland and met more than forty affected groups. It made six visits to Hawke's Bay and met more than forty affected groups. This process is ongoing in Wellington, where there have been more than seventy meetings between the Commission and affected groups, in addition to the public meetings.
4. **Public submissions on the draft proposal.** More than 1800 public submissions were received from Northland. More than seven hundred were received from Hawke's Bay. All are read by the Commissioners and analysed by Commission staff.
5. **Public hearings on the draft proposal.** The Commission is travelling to each region to hear from some submitters in person, where they asked to speak to the Commissioners at public hearings.

Guidelines and further background to the reorganisation process can be found at the Local Government Commission website [here](#).

**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.*