



LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION *MANA KĀWANATANGA Ā ROHE*

Media Statement

29 August 2013

Wairarapa and Wellington reorganisation - alternatives

A summary of the alternative ideas raised by individuals and organisations who want to reorganise local authorities in the Wellington region has been released by the Local Government Commission.

The summary is based on nineteen responses received by the Commission after it issued a public notice in July 2013. The notice called for alternative applications in response to proposals from three Wairarapa district councils and from the Greater Wellington Regional Council. Responses were received by the deadline of 16 August 2013.

The Commission will not identify individuals or groups who responded, however it has identified responses made by local authorities where they have already publicly stated their positions. The Commission also does not propose at this stage to comment further on the details, merits or otherwise of any of the alternatives.

The responses propose a variety of changes in governance structures as well as retention of status quo arrangements and can be summarised as follows:

- 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 as follows:
 - Wellington Council (comprising the present Wellington and Porirua Cities);
 - Kapiti Coast Council (comprising the current Kapiti Coast District); and
 - Hutt Valley Council (comprising 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 (Merging Upper Hutt and Hutt Cities, Wellington and Porirua Cities, and the Wairarapa districts. No mention of Kapiti Coast District.)
- 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.

BACKGROUND

The Commission received an application from three Wairarapa District Councils on 22 May. 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 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.

Local authorities in the Wellington region currently work under a two tier framework of one regional and eight territorial authorities which have separate regulatory and planning responsibilities.

The councils are: Greater Wellington Regional Council; Carterton District Council; Masterton District Council; South Wairarapa District Council; Kapiti Coast District Council; Porirua City Council; Wellington City Council; Hutt City Council; Upper Hutt City Council. A small area of the Tararua District Council is also in the Wellington Region.

Alternative applications are required to meet a legislative threshold, as specified in Schedule 3 of the Local Government Act 2002.

They are expected to suggest changes to the status quo; explain what the changes are designed to achieve; and identify improvements that will occur as a result. Changes could

include the union of districts or regions; the creation of a new district or region; the abolition of a district or region; the alteration of boundaries; or the transfer of statutory obligations from one local authority to another.

Reorganisation is designed to promote good local government, which may include efficiencies and cost savings; productivity improvements for local authorities, households and businesses; and simplified planning processes.

The Commission considers alternative applications alongside the existing local government arrangements (the status quo) and alongside the original applications. The Commission is currently using all the information it has received to develop “reasonably practicable options” for local government in the area. One of the reasonably practicable options must include the status quo. It is also gathering further information through ongoing meetings with stakeholders including the applicant, councils and iwi.

In determining reasonably practicable options, the Commission considers factors such as communities of interest; the resources available to the proposed local authorities; whether a proposed local authority’s district or region is appropriate to carry out its role; and whether water catchment issues can be effectively dealt with.

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

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