



**RANGITIKEI**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL  
*Making this place home.*

# ORDER PAPER

## MARTON COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING

**Date:** Wednesday, 21 August 2024  
**Time:** 6.00pm  
**Venue:** 18 Humphrey Street  
Marton

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**Chair:** Ms Carolyn Bates  
**Deputy Chair:** Mr David Christison  
**Membership:** Ms Lyn Duncan  
Mr Peter Farrell  
Ms Jennifer Greener  
Ms Belinda Harvey-Larsen  
Ms Sally Moore  
Mr John Whittaker  
Cr Dave Wilson  
Cr Greg Maughan (Alternate)  
HWTM Andy Watson

## Purpose of the Committee

- To provide a local link and point of contact for Council liaison with the community.
- To provide for the exchange of information, communication, and to assist with the Council's consultative processes.
- To exercise delegated authority for the annual allocation of \$1.00 per rateable property for "defined small local works" in line with the guidelines provided<sup>1</sup>.
- Particularly, to help ensure that any minor remedial or renewal works are brought to Council's attention through the Request for Service procedure, by promoting its use and advising community members on how to use it.
- To be the first point of contact (prior to Council) for community groups. Where this is not possible, the Committee will be informed of the approach by the community group to the Council.
- To engage with wider/small communities of the ward represented.

For any enquiries regarding this agenda, please contact:

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[kezia.spence@rangitikei.govt.nz](mailto:kezia.spence@rangitikei.govt.nz)

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<sup>1</sup> Appended to the Delegations Register

**Notice is hereby given that a Marton Community Committee Meeting of the Rangitikei District Council will be held in the 18 Humphrey Street, Marton on Wednesday, 21 August 2024 at 6.00pm.**

**Order Of Business**

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## **AGENDA**

### **1 Welcome**

### **2 Apologies**

### **3 Public Forum**

### **4 Conflict of Interest Declarations**

Members are reminded of their obligation to declare any conflicts of interest they might have in respect of items on this agenda.

### **5 Confirmation of Order of Business**

That, taking into account the explanation provided why the item is not on the meeting agenda and why the discussion of the item cannot be delayed until a subsequent meeting, [enter item number](#) be dealt as a late item at this meeting.



## 6 Confirmation of Minutes

### 6.1 Confirmation of Minutes

**Author:** Kezia Spence, Governance Advisor

#### 1. Reason for Report

- 1.1 The minutes from **Marton Community Committee Meeting held on 12 June 2024** are attached.

#### Attachments

1. **Marton Community Committee Meeting - 12 June 2024**

#### Recommendation

That the minutes of Marton Community Committee Meeting held on 12 June 2024 [**as amended/without amendment**] be taken as read and verified as an accurate and correct record of the meeting, and that the electronic signature of the Chair of this Committee be added to the official minutes document as a formal record.

# MINUTES

ITEM 6.1

ATTACHMENT 1



## **UNCONFIRMED: MARTON COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Date: Wednesday, 12 June 2024**

**Time: 6.00pm**

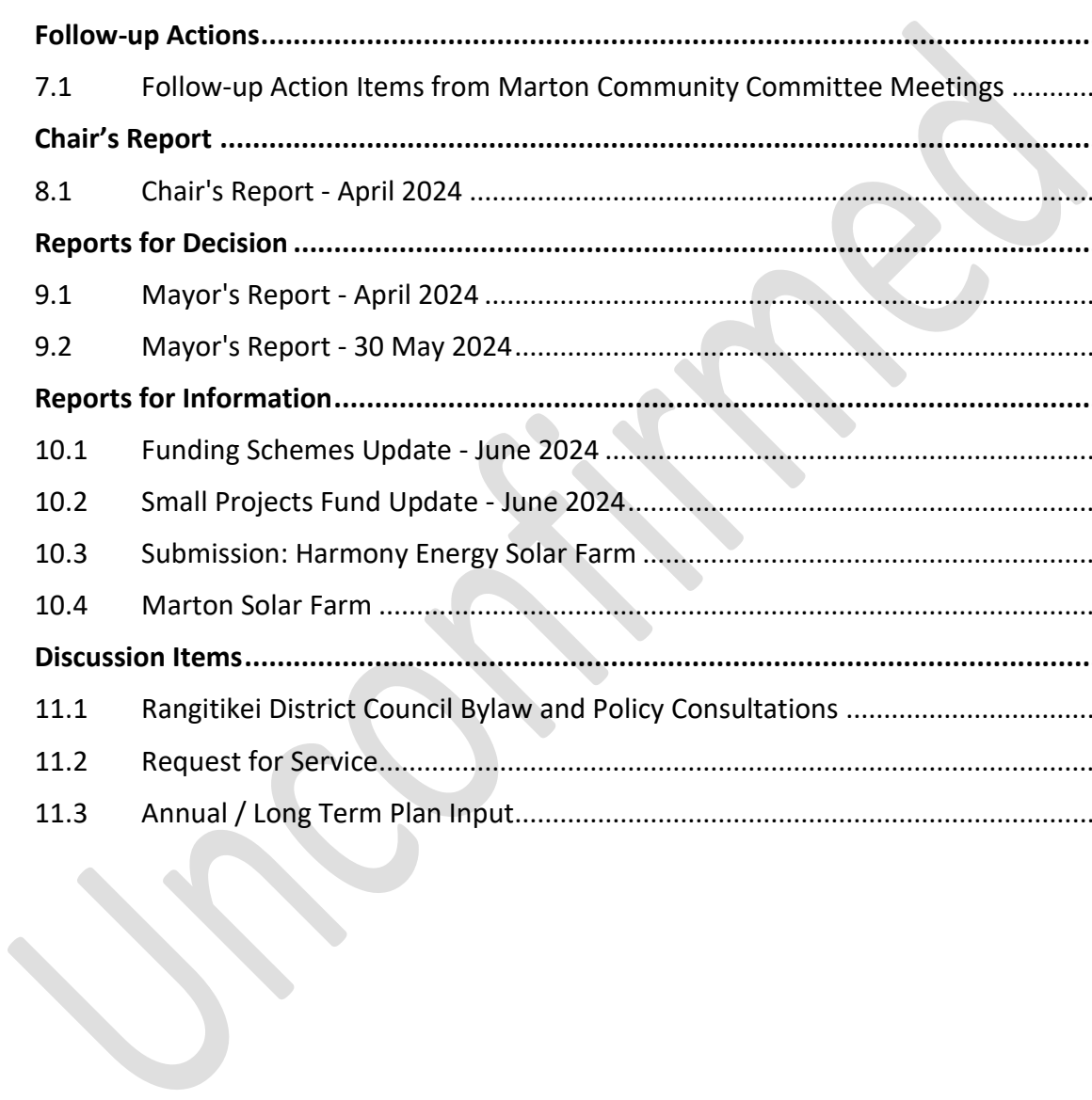
**Venue: 18 Humphrey Street  
Marton**

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Present	Mrs Carolyn Bates Mr David Christison Ms Lyn Duncan Mr Peter Farrell Mrs Jennifer Greener Mrs Belinda Harvey-Larsen Ms Sally Moore Mr John Whittaker Cr Dave Wilson
In attendance	Mrs Jo Manuel, Manager Community Wellbeing Mrs Deb Haworth, Minute Taker Mr Greg Smith, Chair, Bulls Community Committee Mr David Yates, Bulls Community Committee Mrs Sue Wells, Marton Food Pantry Mr Simon Spence

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## 1 Welcome

The meeting started at 6.05pm.

## 2 Apologies

Resolved minute number **24/MCC/023**

Apologies received from HWTM Andy Watson and Cr Greg Maughan.

Mr J Whittaker/Mr P Farrell. Carried

## 3 Public Forum

Mrs Wells from the Marton Food Pantry joined the meeting at 6.10pm and spoke in support of her application of \$2,000 from the Small Projects Fund to provide assistance with their overheads.

Mrs Wells answered questions relating to what the funding would be used for, their process and informed the Committee that there were a lot of operating costs. Their biggest need is funding for food but this is difficult due to it being perishable and intangible.

Mr Smith, Chair, Bulls Community Committee, asked if they were working with the Bulls Food Pantry. Mrs Wells explained that they did start off doing that but have since been working alone as they have differing processes. Mr Smith asked if there was competition for food and Mrs Wells said yes, but they are all able to do that without restrictions.

This funding would be used for the overheads noted in their application in the Order Paper.

## 4 Conflict of Interest Declarations

There were no conflicts of interest

## 5 Confirmation of Order of Business

There was no change to the order of business

## 6 Confirmation of Minutes

Action arising: Mrs Bates stated the Committee's preference to be named in the minutes going forward.

Resolved minute number **24/MCC/024**

That the minutes of Marton Community Committee Meeting held on 10 April 2024 **without amendment** be taken as read and verified as an accurate and correct record of the meeting.

Cr D Wilson/Ms S Moore. Carried

## 7 Follow-up Actions

### 7.1 Follow-up Action Items from Marton Community Committee Meetings

#### Item 3- Calico Line Footpath

Cr Wilson spoke to the Calico Line footpath. A survey of Calico Line had indicated incorrect boundaries which are historic and all around the region. This has added to the complexity of this work being done. There is no time line at present to indicate an end to this project.

**Resolved minute number 24/MCC/025**

That the report 'Follow-up Action Items from Marton Community Committee Meetings' be received.

Mrs C Bates/Mr J Whittaker. Carried

## 8 Chair's Report

### 8.1 Chair's Report - April 2024

There was no Chair's Report.

## 9 Reports for Decision

### 9.1 Mayor's Report - April 2024

The report was taken as read.

**Resolved minute number 24/MCC/026**

That the Mayor's Report – 24 April 2024 be received.

Mrs J Greener/Ms S Moore. Carried

### 9.2 Mayor's Report - 30 May 2024

Mrs Bates raised the question about the NZTA meeting and changing the qualifying figure for emergency events from 1 in 10 to 1 in 20 for emergency funding.

Cr Wilson spoke to the NZTA proposed changes. Submissions are due 13 June 2024 and the Marton Community Committee could submit. The FAR road assistance rate affects Ratepayers.

Minister Bishop announced a “pot hole fund’ where Council gets a portion and this is the same as the FAR Rate. HWTM Andy, Council CEO and Cr Wilson will be attending an Infrastructure meeting in Wellington the next day.

Mr Whittaker noted the Mayor’s Report was very thorough and was appreciative of it.

**Resolved minute number 24/MCC/027**

That the Mayor’s Report – 30 May 2024 be received

That the Committee supports voicing its concern and endorses HWTM Andy’s concerns regarding the proposed roading changes

Mrs J Greener/Ms S Moore. Carried

## 10 Reports for Information

### 10.1 Funding Schemes Update - June 2024

Mr Christison and Ms Harvey-Larsen joined the meeting at 6.25pm during this item.

The report was taken as read.

**Resolved minute number 24/MCC/028**

That the Funding Schemes Update –June 2024 be received.

Mr J Whittaker/Mr D Christison. Carried

### 10.2 Small Projects Fund Update - June 2024

**Resolved minute number 24/MCC/029**

That the application from the Marton Food Pantry be approved for funding of \$2,000 for their overheads as it stands in the Order Paper

Mrs C Bates/Mrs L Duncan. Carried

**Resolved minute number 24/MCC/030**

That the report ‘Small Projects Fund Update – June 2024’ be received.

. Ms L Duncan/Mr P Farrell. Carried

**Resolved minute number 24/MCC/031**

That the Marton Community Committee request the remaining allocation of \$667.19 is carried forward to the following financial year 2024/25.

Ms S Moore/Mrs L Duncan. Carried

ITEM 6.1 ATTACHMENT 1

**10.3 Submission: Harmony Energy Solar Farm**

The Committee discussed this submission.

Mr Christison spoke about his negative experiences with their personal solar installation including our location, recycling and the environmental issue.

Mrs Harvey-Larsen spoke to her positive experiences where it is doing what she expected, reducing power cost and availability for medical equipment and various appliances in the event of a power cut.

Mr Smith, Chair, Bulls Community Committee gave an overview of how the lines work currently, the constrained capacity, extra system plugins never designed for and with more lines, every connection is depleted and the effect on the community by increasing Transpower’s levies. He spoke to the base load, solar, wind, geo thermal and hydro sources of power noting that solar is intermittent generation by the sun so not controllable.

Mr Whittaker spoke to it making no difference, as it is rubber stamped.

Mrs Bates had researched who they were owned by, and they are out of Knaresborough, North Yorkshire, UK.

Mr Wilson noted 20% of the farm would be covered and sheep would graze around the panels with Greg Smith noting that nothing grows under the panels.

Mr Farrell disagreed with the negative comments and spoke to doing everything during the day when the sun is out. He took some time to work out what his power bills would be versus the solar investments then made his decision to go with solar.

**ACTION:** Cr Wilson asked the Committee to thank the staff of making the Committee aware of this as it has created great conversation .

After discussion and recognising the Committee’s diverse range of views, the Committee agreed that the item be received as per the Order Paper and any submissions would be made on a personal level, due by 1 July 2024

**Resolved minute number 24/MCC/032**

That the item ‘Submission: Harmony Energy Solar Farm’ be received.

Cr D Wilson/Mr J Whittaker. Carried

**10.4 Marton Solar Farm**

Mrs Bates noted this was an Australian (Hawthorn, Victoria) based Company and solar farm is located on Wellington Road, Marton.

The Committee agreed that any submissions would be made on a personal level, due by 1 July 2024.

**Resolved minute number 24/MCC/033**

That the 'Submission: Marton Solar Farm' be received.

Mrs C Bates/Mr J Whittaker. Carried

**11 Discussion Items**

**11.1 Rangitikei District Council Bylaw and Policy Consultations**

Cr Wilson noted the Council is one of the few without a Smokefree and Vapefree Policy.

Cr Wilson also noted the Draft Signs and Public Places Bylaw 2024 was about Council tidying up three policies and amalgamating them.

**Resolved minute number 24/MCC/034**

The Committee endorses the both the Draft Smokefree and Vapefree Policy 2024 and Draft Signs and Public Places Bylaw 2024 as recommended by Council

Mr J Whittaker/Mr D Christison. Carried

**11.2 Request for Service**

Mrs Bates and Cr Wilson discussed the rotting fence at the Wellington Road flats. It was on the Council radar, it looked shabby, and has since been removed.

Mr Whittaker informed the Committee there was a notice in the mail saying a new fence is being built.

Cr Wilson suggested the Marton Community Committee lodge any RFS's and this is seen as raised by the Committee which may give them a push.

**11.3 Annual / Long Term Plan Input**

Mrs Bates was mindful when putting together the LTP submission, there had been missed opportunities. With this in mind, this has been included as an Action List in preparation for the next Annual or Long Term Plan where, as a Committee, topics can be added to remain to the Committee's attention, if there are any follow up actions and if closed, why and it can be added again

Mrs Bates talked about things like the Small Projects Fund and whether this should be inflation adjusted, or increased, or carry overs be part of the delegation every year. And staff attending the Committee meetings being added to the Agenda and Order Paper, for example Jo Manuel and Deb Haworth



Cr Wilson noted the carry overs of funds process is a required action for audit purposes and the next Annual Plan is next year, 2025.

**11.4 Rubbish dumped at old Hospital site**

Mrs Duncan raised concerns about the rubbish being dumped at the old Hospital site on Rira Street near Ohura Street

There was discussion about this and Cr Wilson said the question is what, if anything can the Council do. Because it is private property, Council is not in a position to enforce this and is not able to send a letter to them in this circumstance

Mr Spence asked if the Council can change the laws to which Cr Wilson responded, this was a very big question and it can't be done. It would be a very large piece of work. What people do on their private property is their business unless it becomes a public health or safety issue.

**Resolved minute number 24/MCC/035**

**ACTION:** The Committee will raise its concerns with Council about the rubbish being dumped on Rira Street near Ohura Street (to the old Hospital site).

Mr J Whittaker/Ms J Greener. Carried

**11.5 Street sweeping**

Cr Wilson noted the streets have been swept since the last meeting after the question was asked. Taihape was completed, then Marton. There is a schedule for the whole district.

**11.6 The Clock**

Ms Duncan talked about the Clock being repaired and reinstated with the owners approval. It is ready to go.

**11.7 John Hill**

Mrs Bates noted she had been provided with an incorrect email for John Hill. Sally Moore will locate an email.

**ACTION:** Cr Wilson recommended an email be sent to John Hill and thank him for the work that has been done. Mrs Bates will action this.

**11.8 Postal delivery**

The postal delivery by a NZ Post employees (Bunty) stops as of 1 July 2024. NZ Post Contractors will be delivering mail from then on and may affect the flow of Post.

Cr Wilson commented this could be seen an opportunity, rather than being staff, being a contractor.

**The meeting closed at 7.33pm.**

ITEM 6.1

ATTACHMENT 1

The minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the Marton Community Committee held on 14 August 2024.

.....

Chairperson

Unconfirmed

## 7 Follow-up Action Items from Previous Meetings

### 7.1 Follow-up Action Items from Marton Community Committee Meetings

**Author:** Kezia Spence, Governance Advisor

#### 1. Reason for Report

1.1 On the list attached are items raised at previous Marton Community Committee meetings. Items indicate who is responsible for follow up, and a brief status comment.

#### 2. Decision Making Process

2.1 Staff have assessed the requirements of the Local Government Act 2002 in relation to this item and have concluded that, as this report is for information only, the decision-making provisions do not apply.

#### Attachments:

1. **Follow-up Actions Register** [↓](#)

#### Recommendation

That the report 'Follow-up Action Items from Marton Community Committee Meetings' be received.

## Current Follow-up Actions

Item	From Meeting Date	Details	Person Assigned	Status Comments	Status
1	14-Feb-24	Update on Calico Line footpath installation	Arno	Staff are working through this process with landowners. Staff will continue to update this item for the committees information.	In progress

## **8 Chair's Report**

### **8.1 Chair's Report - August 2024**

**Author:** Carolyn Bates, Chair

#### **1. Reason for Report**

- 1.1 A verbal report will be provided during the meeting.

#### **Recommendation**

That the Chair's Report –August 2024 be received.

## 9 Reports for Decision

### 9.1 Mayor's Report - 27 June 2024

**Author:** Andy Watson, His Worship the Mayor

Councillors, I draw your attention to the recent passing of past Councillor Jim Howard QSM. It is appropriate that we recognise his involvement with Council over two terms spread between 1998 and 2004 as well as his wider community involvement. Jim was also a recipient of a QSM for services to conservation and the community.

This Council meeting will see the adoption of the Council Long Term Plan (LTP) for 2024-2034. I expect that the average effective rate increase will be in the region of 10.5% across the district, but I stress that this will be an average as there will be substantial variations. The reason I say that I “expect” is because there could be last minute changes as staff are working long hours to build into the budget changes by Government decisions. One of those Government changes is, for example, a drop in roading allocations. The NZTA funding decision sees a drop of \$5m over 3 years, \$4m of which is for capital works and \$1m is for operational funding. This drop comes at a time when the cost of doing work has increased dramatically, largely due to the “road cone safety standards” put in place. Government has talked about extra money being put into fixing potholes and road maintenance, but the reality is that funding has dropped and our roads will continue to deteriorate.

In my last report I briefly made reference to the changes in Emergency Works Funding for our roads. NZTA provides emergency money to fix roads after significant storms/flooding etc by increasing the FAR rate (Financial Assistance Rate) by 20%. This has been reduced to 10% and the threshold for an emergency event has been raised from a one in 10 year event to a one in 20 year event. I know that this is technical and hard to understand but the effect is likely to be a cost to ratepayers in the millions over the next 3 years, which will be unbudgeted for.

This Government is certainly moving at pace and the chance to submit on legislation at Parliament is limited to often only about one week. This makes it challenging for Councils to meet, consider and respond to legislative change. Another example of this is in the Three Waters Bill. This Bill is “Water Services Preliminary Arrangements” Bill which has several key provisions -

1. All Councils must submit a Water Services Plan within 12 months.
2. The Plan should contain joint arrangements between Councils
3. The Plan must contain detailed budgets and delivery options to achieve compliance by 30 June 2028.
4. The Bill provides for “Crown facilitators” if Councils struggle to submit plans or they are not acceptable.
5. Importantly, the Bill also says that Council does not have to consult to make these plans.

This legislation effectively says that you must form clusters with other Councils, to provide for water and wastewater without consultation, within a year, to have a plan to bring all plants to compliance and if you don't Government will step in. The principles of Te Mana o Te Wai are gone, which had stated who has priority over water use in New Zealand and that there may not be a discussion with iwi or our communities in formulating the plan. The Bill does not give direction in terms of enforcement or pricing however there is a third Bill to come which “establishes enduring settings and transition” and this will undoubtedly be the mechanism or power that will underpin the intent.

I applaud the work that the Horizons region’s chief executives are doing in understanding and evaluating options for Councils to consider. In my opinion we must consult - an opinion I will voice in submissions to Parliament.

Deputy Mayor Dave Wilson and I travelled to Wellington last week to attend the Infrastructure Symposium on effectively how we fund and deal with roading, three waters infrastructure and other build costs around the country. The meeting was attended by many Councils and industry, chaired by Sanchia Jacobs of BECA who is a past Chief Executive of Central Otago District Council. Standout presentations and speaker take-home comments from my perspective are:

**Peter Nunns – Economics NZ**

- The size of the problem. Various estimates of the money to bring infrastructure up to what is needed range up to \$1 trillion to repair the under investment.
- That money cannot be funded by rates and we must consider user charges such as tolls, long term crown debt, public/private partnerships.
- That Councils are tending to fund for capital works and not funding the costs of depreciation, For example, if we as a Council fund heavily the cost of new water plants etc that should be matched by funding to replace the ageing distribution network. This is a very valid point and Peter in his presentation highlights that most Councils are in this position.
- To illustrate the need for depreciation funding he highlighted that 90% of New Zealand’s infrastructure has been built since 1950 and half of that spend is over the last 30 years.
- Future population trends internationally and nationally will trend downwards but we will plan our infrastructure on increased need.

**Nicole Rosie – NZTA Chief Executive - Fireside Chat**

- Replying to the question of “do we understand the state of our roading infrastructure?”, her answer is no, but we are reforming how we get that data and it is improving.
- This new Government is different - they are explicit around what they want which is –
  - an increased maintenance budget,
  - the cost of safety decreasing by way of different safety management standards,
  - tolling and congestion charges will be in place.
- NZTA encourages Councils to these forums saying essentially you need to be the squeaky wheel for us to listen to you.

**Hon Kieran McAnulty – The Opposition View**

- We support many of the Government’s programmes but we will make suggestions to improve, for example we support the need for a 30 year view on such things as roading and we would broadly support the need for tolls.
- Priority projects to grow our GDP we would support.
- We want to see a genuine relationship between Local and Central Government.
- “When Government is on the right track we will respond not necessarily oppose”.
- The proposal to drop FAR rates fails to recognise that Cyclone Gabrielle is not a one-off.
- Resilience and response is a very different animal.
- A very good session and extremely well received by Councils.

**Panel Discussion on how we fund infrastructure**

Interesting panel - Andrew McGavin/GM Corporate Crown Finance, Sarah Lindsay NZTA and Leigh Kissick, Partner Chapman Tripp.

- Interesting discussion from Andrew re the funding models (IMF and LGFA) and how the IMF funding allows strengthening of balance sheets for Councils. This parallels a later discussion from Paul Davidson from Tauranga Council around how they used off balance sheet financing via private/public partnerships.

**Denise Beazley Wellington City Council**

- Interesting presentation on how they use technology to better record what infrastructure/pipes are under the ground.
- Quite a technical presentation also designed to give better confidence and use of reporting through cellphones for contractors when they find unknown infrastructure.

**Fulton Hogan on Building Back Infrastructure post Cyclone Gabrielle**

- Largely a promotional presentation for Fulton Hogan.
- Stressing their ability to have stockpiles of equipment, people and stone etc ahead of an event.

**Sir Bill English**

- Fantastic last presentation based on practical suggestions for authorities on engaging with Government -
  - A) Risk – the cost of pre-preparation for every eventuality is too high. Be prepared to accept risk. *N.B. this is against Fulton Hogan's position.*
  - B) Safety – take some Council risks – get Councils to re-write (for example) the Road Cone Standards and take it to Government for adoption.
  - C) Pay for skill!! Skill is inexpensive – the expense is in getting it wrong.
  - D) Have a positive proposition /solution when engaging with Government. The trick is finding the ultimate decision-maker who on many occasions may be hidden but is often a very senior Government Minister.
  - E) Particularly relevant to us, is the advice to be transparent with your community about risks – identify them and own them with your community. Transparency is by far the biggest way to mitigate risk.

Councillor Wong has asked if he could be part of the Policy / Planning Committee. He has shown interest within this area and as such I have used my powers to appoint him as a member of the Policy / Planning Committee as of the date of the last Policy / Planning Meeting.



## Mayors Engagement

June 2024

ITEM 9.1

4	<p>Attended Emergency Management Joint Standing Committee Meeting</p> <p>Attended Regional Transport Committee Meeting</p> <p>Attended Oral Submission to Maori Wards Bill</p> <p>Attended Weekly Meeting with Deputy Mayor</p> <p>Attended Marton Historical Meeting</p>
5	<p>Attended meeting with Chief Executive</p> <p>Attended monthly Governance Q&amp;A meeting with ELT</p> <p>Attended Taihape REAP meeting</p>
6	<p>Attended LGNZ Zoom – Measuring Councils’ Collective Scale &amp; Impact</p> <p>Attended meeting with Scotts Ferry Community</p> <p>Attended Turakina Community Committee</p>
7	<p>Attended Mayors Taskforce for Jobs Core Group meeting in Wellington</p>
9	<p>Attended Ratana Church Service</p>
10	<p>Attended meeting with Chief Executive</p> <p>Attended Climate Actin Joint Committee Meeting</p> <p>Attended Mayoral Forum Meeting</p> <p>Attended Marton Arts &amp; Crafts AGM</p>
11	<p>Attended Regional Leadership Group Online Hui</p> <p>Attended Te Roopu Ahi Kaa Komiti Meeting</p> <p>Attended Meet &amp; Greet with new Sport Whanganui Chief Executive</p> <p>Attended Erewhon Rural Water Scheme Meeting</p>
12	<p>Attended Civil Defence Exercise Ru Whenua</p> <p>Attended AWA FM Interview on Rangitikei name change to include macron</p> <p>Attended fortnightly Economic Development Meeting with staff</p> <p>Attended Marton Community Committee Meeting</p>
13	<p>Attended Zone 3 Catchup Zoom Meeting</p> <p>Attended Assets/Infrastructure Workshop</p> <p>Attended Policy/Planning Committee Meeting</p> <p>Attended LGNZ Infrastructure Symposium in Wellington</p>
14	<p>Attended LGNZ Infrastructure Symposium in Wellington</p> <p>Attended weekly meeting with Deputy Mayor</p>
16	<p>Attended Hunterville Community Market Day</p> <p>Attended New Residents Tour</p>
17	<p>Attended breakfast meeting with Mayor Helen Worboys</p>

**ITEM 9.1**

	Attended meeting with Chief Executive Attended RDC/Police monthly meeting Attended weekly LTP meeting with staff
18	Attended NZ Tiny House Association Zoom meeting Attended weekly meeting with Deputy Mayor
19	Attended meeting with local constituent Attended Santoft Domain Management Committee Meeting
20	Attended Risk & Assurance Committee Meeting Attended Risk & Assurance Workshop
21	Attend meeting with Chief Executive Attended Matariki Stars & Councils Awards Evening
22	Attended Taihape Volunteer Fire Brigade Gold Star Honours Evening
23	Attended Centrepont 50 Years Celebration BBQ in Feilding
24	To attend meeting with Chief Executive To attend Local Government Water Services Preliminary Arrangements Bill submission via Zoom
25	To attend Citizenship Ceremony To attend Defence Hub Meeting (Rangitīkei Hosting) at Te Matapihi
27	To attend Finance/Performance Committee Meeting To attend Council Meeting

**Attachments:**

1. **LGNZ Four Monthly Report June 2024** [↓](#)
2. **Elected Member Attendance** [↓](#)

**Recommendation**

That the Mayor’s Report – 27 June 2024 be accepted.

// SUBMISSION



ITEM 9.1 ATTACHMENT 1

# LGNZ four-monthly report for member councils

// March-June 2024





## Ko Tātou LGNZ.

This report summarises LGNZ’s work on behalf of member councils and is produced three times a year. It’s structured around LGNZ’s purpose: to serve local government by **championing, connecting** and **supporting** members.

Many councils have found it useful to put this report on the agenda for their next council meeting so that all councillors have the opportunity to review it and provide feedback. Sam and Susan are also happy to join council meetings online to discuss the report or any aspect of it, on request.

This report complements our regular communication channels, including *Keeping it Local* (our fortnightly e-newsletter), providing a more in-depth look at what we do.

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## Introduction

National Council reset LGNZ’s strategy at our 1 March 2024 meeting. LGNZ’s purpose is now to serve members by championing, connecting and supporting local government.

**Champion** means we advocate for local government on critical issues, build relationships with ministers and officials, and use media to amplify member voices and stories.

**Connect** means we bring members together at zone, sector and conference events or via networks like Te Maruata, Young Elected Members and our community boards network, and that we create strong feedback loops between members and LGNZ’s work.

**Support** means we provide professional development uniquely tailored to local government, support councils and elected members when they are stuck, and support elected members to deal with pressure and harassment.

Everything LGNZ does comes under these pillars – and that’s why they form the structure of this report. I hope reading this report stresses the breadth and depth of LGNZ’s work. Our small team is dedicated to delivering for members and this period has been both intense and rewarding.

This four-monthly period has also included LGNZ’s annual membership invoicing. We never take members for granted, and during this time there’s been really constructive conversations with councils considering their membership. Grey and Westland have chosen not to stay members, and we’re sorry to see them go.

As always, we welcome your feedback. The purpose of sharing this detailed report is to give you an opportunity to share your views, and we look forward to hearing them, whether that’s in person, via email or a phone conversation. We’re always keen to hear from you.

Ngā mihi  
Sam and Susan



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## Champion

### Advocacy work programme

In March we shared [a document outlining our next steps on our Future by Local Government work](#) with members. It sets out the things we'll advocate for now, the work that local government can collectively start doing to shift towards a new future, and the things that will be longer-term advocacy priorities. This has been the foundation for National Council's work to confirm LGNZ's broad and targeted advocated priorities.

At the Combined Sector meeting in April, we asked members to rank our five broad advocacy areas in terms of priority. These were the resulting rankings:

1. Funding and financing
2. Water (including freshwater)
3. Resource Management Reform
4. Transport
5. Climate change

We also asked members to rank targeted advocacy priorities, with the results as follows:

1. Toolbox approach to funding and financing
2. Four-year term for local government
3. Development of a framework around city/regional deals
4. Changes to Regulatory Impact Statements to consider the impact of decisions on local government
5. Opposing changes to Māori ward/constituency referendum requirements.

Off the back of this ranking exercise, we have finalised our advocacy work programme. This has been shared with members and added as a third page to our 2024 [LGNZ A3](#).

We are now in the process of developing more detailed work plans for each of the five broad advocacy areas, setting out what we're trying to achieve under each area and the work we'll do. We plan to share these work plans with members soon.

### Rates rise conversation

LGNZ has generated hundreds of stories and op-eds via all major media outlets this year on rates rises, the cost pressures facing councils and what's driving them. We generated 52 media items alone on the Infometrics report we launched in mid-March, which analysed increases in local government infrastructure costs that are driving rates rises.

Our March rates rise toolkit included:

- [Key messages](#)
- [Powerpoint](#)

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- [Infometrics report](#)

We had overwhelmingly positive feedback on this toolkit and how useful members found it. Councils have been using the data we've provided on increasing cost pressures in their own engagement with media and in their LTP consultation documents. Regional journalists have made good use of the research LGNZ commissioned in their pieces, giving a national perspective on local rates rises.

We launched our second rates rise toolkit at the Combined Sector meeting on 11 April. This covered tax vs rates, how rates compare to other bills, and how we fund infrastructure:

- [Key messages](#)
- [Powerpoint](#)
- [Social assets](#)

Again we have had a very positive response to this work and it was well used by members. For example, our social media posts and assets are being repurposed in councils' own accounts, and attracting some positive engagement from the public, and the information we've shared has been used in some councils' LTP consultation documents.

Our third toolkit will launch in late June and feature research we've commissioned by NZIER on the costs of central government reforms on local government. It looks at a basket of primary and secondary legislation (introduced by different governments) to quantify the cost impact of unfunded mandates on councils and communities. The specific areas (National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management, National Policy Statement on Urban Development and Medium Density Residential Standards, Local Alcohol Policies, improving recycling and food scrap collections) have been chosen to be representative of reforms with a range of impacts on councils.

Our social media rates rise series highlighting the difference between central government income and local government income has had strong engagement. This campaign aims to explain why rates rises occur, especially in the face of rising living costs, and to highlight that this is a widespread systemic issue. Through this series, we've explored how councils are financed, the services they offer, and the benefits residents receive from their investment in rates. The series overall has received over 60,000 impressions across platforms.

### City and regional deals

The Government has strongly signalled interest in long-term city and regional deals as a way to partner with local government to create pipelines of regional projects.

We have released a proposal that sets out the key things councils need to see reflected in city and regional deals, and how these will support better alignment between central and local government. This proposal has supported our ongoing engagement with DIA and Ministers on the development of the Government's city and regional deals framework, which we expect to be released around August.





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We shared [the proposal](#), as well as a [factsheet](#) and [range of international examples](#), with members in late May.

Our Policy Team is meeting with DIA officials to discuss our proposals in more detail, and we have been approached by the New Zealand Initiative to speak about our work on their podcast. The Initiative's view is that our proposals are worth promoting as a way forward.

### Local government funding and financing

We are in the process of developing a local government funding and financing policy and advocacy work plan to be shared with members. This will be a high-level plan setting out key policy, media and government relations actions and objectives. We have also begun work on a 'long list' of funding and financing tools that could form part of a funding and financing toolbox, which will include policy analysis of options. We plan to engage members on that as our work progresses.

Mayor Campbell Barry and Policy Manager Simon Randall recently met with the Local Government Business Forum (which contains representatives from organisations like Federated Farmers, the New Zealand Initiative, Hospitality New Zealand and Business New Zealand) to talk about local government's funding and financing challenges. We are pleased to be having ongoing engagement with the Forum.

### Māori wards

In May we released a toolkit to support media engagement on this topic – based on our position that councils should make these decisions as they do on other wards and constituencies.

On 24 May, the Government introduced legislation to the House on reforms to Māori wards and constituencies. Submissions on this legislation were due by 29 May. Our submission was developed with input from Te Maruata Rōpū Whakahaere and was consistent with LGNZ's position that decisions on whether a community has Māori wards or constituencies should be made in the same way as other ward/constituency decisions – by councils with community and iwi consultation.

Thanks to a suggestion from Mayor Grant Smith, we developed a letter that Mayors and Chairs could choose to sign, opposing the Government's changes for the reason set out above. The letter reflected LGNZ's consistent position on this issue since 2018. Fifty-three Mayors/Chairs have now signed the letter, plus our Te Maruata Co-Chairs, and many spoke up in the media.

### Budget 24

We were inside the Budget lockup on 30 May and produced [analysis for members](#) that was shared that evening, as well as media engagement that highlighted the Budget's impact on local government.



### Government relations

We are continuing our work to develop a strong partnership with the Government and other politicians building on our regular formal meetings with the Prime Minister, Ministers and key officials with additional informal meetings. We have made changes to our approach to political engagement which has seen us:

- Be part of political events such as Waitangi Commemorations, where it's possible to speak to a broader range of Ministers in formal and informal settings;
- Host a localism briefing with National Party MPs and provide follow up support to showcase examples of localism in action in their rohe; and
- Host a pizza and drinks night for Members of Parliament who were previously local government elected members or staff.

These types of engagements help build a broader cohort of central government politicians who understand and can advocate for local government from within.

On 3 April we had one of our regular quarterly meetings with Local Government Minister Simeon Brown. We discussed our desire to see changes to the rates rebate scheme, our work to support councils with the rates rises conversation, and the need for a broader range of funding and financing tools.

Mayor Neil Holdom (in his capacity as Chair of the LGNZ Transport Forum) and Mayor Campbell Barry were invited to meet with Transport Minister Simeon Brown in late March and provided feedback on the draft GPS, including signalling ways in which they thought it could be adjusted to provide councils with greater flexibility.

We have also secured quarterly meetings with Infrastructure Minister Chris Bishop. We had our first regular meeting with Minister Bishop on 16 April, and covered a wide range of topics including infrastructure, housing, local government funding and financing, resource management reform and how the Minister engages with local government.

The Minister agreed with our request for local government representation on his expert ministerial advisory group that is being set up to support phase 3 of the resource management reform programme, and we have put forward names for consideration.

Toby Adams, Mike Theelen and Nigel Corry (supported by Grace) have also recently met with Minister Bishop to discuss how he might engage with the Local Government Steering Group (LGSG) and/or a variation of this going forward. There are positive indications that the Minister is prepared to engage with a smaller, nimble group, so the larger LGSG has been put on hold and a smaller local government reference group formed for this purpose. Thanks to everyone who's contributed energy and expertise to this group over the past three years.

During May we met with Minister Shane Jones to discuss regional economic development and city/regional deals; Max Baxter, MTFJ Chair and the MTFJ team has met with Social Development Minister Louise Upston; and Susan attended a pre-Budget lunch event with the Prime Minister in Auckland.

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In late May, we were invited to present to the Governance and Administration Select Committee on LGNZ's work, with Sam and Susan spending a productive hour explaining what LGNZ does on behalf of members and fielding questions.

In June we have regular meetings with Infrastructure and RMA Reform Minister Chris Bishop (our focus will be on housing and the discussion will involve Mayor Sandra Hazlehurst and Nigel Bickle, CE Hastings District Council), Local Government Minister Simeon Brown, and Regional Development Minister Shane Jones.

### Media

Our most visible media work during this period has been the rates rise conversation discussed above, and we have overall had a significant lift in engagement and profile.

To support the toolkit work discussed above, in early May, Infometrics crunched the numbers on GST from rates being returned to councils and we arranged a joint press conference. Sam and Infometrics CE Brad Olsen spoke to media on Parliament's steps, and Mayors across the motu have used the figures in their own discussions. This was covered extensively, and Sam also spoke about the research and rates rises on [Nine to Noon](#). NBR also ran a feature piece on key issues facing local government, including funding and financing and the expected city/regional deals.

Another major piece of advocacy through media is four-year-terms for local government. Sam has used every opportunity to talk about the efficiencies we'd gain by implementing longer electoral terms. This has led to stories in local papers as well as in-depth coverage by RNZ's political reporter, Russell Palmer. We have kept this conversation alive, having publicly launched the LGNZ Electoral Reform Group on 4 June and supported Chair Nick Smith with media engagement, including [1News](#) and breakfast media.

Leveraging the discussions at the Combined Sector meeting in April, we put the spotlight on city/regional deals, featuring in [pieces by Newsroom](#) and [The Spinoff](#). We had coverage by NBR on the link between tourism and local government in Minister Doocey's session. This media furthers our advocacy priority for new funding and financing tools.

We've been working in with some local papers on stories – including in Ashburton Guardian about how [constant Government reforms cause headaches for councils](#), and in ODT on the power of localism – featuring some of our members highlighting why localism matters.

Earlier this year, LGNZ ran a session for Mayors Taskforce for Jobs supporting individual council programmes to better tell their story of localism and council delivery. Since March, this has spurred an uptick in local media coverage positively highlighting the programme. A highlight was a [Seven Sharp](#) piece brokered by LGNZ on the only Windmill in the Southern Hemisphere, which aired in March.

Our city/regional deals proposal was [reviewed by Newsroom](#), with Sam also appearing on the AM Show and [Mike Hosking's Breakfast](#).

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The Māori wards/constituencies letter received strong coverage on [OneNews](#) and in [Stuff](#). The day before the Budget, we had an [op ed by Sam](#) published in Stuff's The Post and The Press, and our Budget comments gained good traction.

### Water services reform

The repeal of the previous government's water services legislation gave councils an additional three months to adopt their LTPs, an ability to forgo the audit of the consultation document, and to reduce consultation requirements on subsequent amendments. Alternatively, councils have been able to defer development of their LTP for 12 months if they produce an enhanced Annual Plan. We advocated for this relief and were pleased to see the Government make it available.

The replacement approach for water services will be rolled out in two parts. A first bill, the Local Government (Water Services Preliminary Arrangements) Bill, was introduced to the House in late May and LGNZ will be submitting on it to highlight councils' commonly held concerns with the bill and suggestions for improvement. This bill will be passed by the middle of the year and will require the development of service delivery plans (which will be the vehicle to self-determine future service delivery arrangements). This bill also puts in place transitional economic regulation and provides a streamlined process for establishing joint water services CCOs.

A second bill will be introduced at the end of the year and will set out provisions relating to long-term requirements for financial sustainability, provide for a complete economic regulation regime, and introduce a new range of structural and financing tools, including a new type of financially independent council-controlled organisation.

A technical advisory group has been formed to support the development of the legislation and related policy. We recommended two names for this technical group – one of them was selected (Mark Reese, Chapman Tripp).

LGNZ has been advocating for updates to the mandatory performance measures for water so that councils don't have to report against both the Taumata Arowai Drinking Water Standards and the now-replaced Ministry of Health Drinking Water Standards. We've been successful in securing this change, which has gone to councils for your feedback. Final changes should be in place by mid-June.

Taumata Arowai is starting to develop regulations for storm water and wastewater, and attended recent sector meetings. We are also engaging with Taumata Arowai on new wastewater and stormwater standards.

### Resource management reform

The Government repealed the Natural and Built Environments and Spatial Planning Acts prior to Christmas. It then worked at pace to develop a new fast-track consenting regime. We made a joint submission on the new legislation with Taituarā and on 4 June we will appear before the

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Environment Committee with Taituarā in support of our submission. Our submission acknowledged the need for a fast-track process but identified a number of improvements that our members want to see including better alignment with councils' planning documents and processes, more time for engagement with councils and more of a focus on sustainable development. Our submission was informed by workshops that we held at each of our April sector meetings.

The new Government is working quickly to make a number of changes to national direction, including the NPS-Freshwater Management. We're monitoring these changes closely along with Taituarā and Te Uru Kahika.

Grace and Susan meet regularly with the MfE leadership team. These meetings are constructive and positive.

As noted above, we've worked closely with Mayor Toby Adams, in his role as Co-Chair of the Resource Management Reform Local Government Steering Group, to support him to engage with Minister Bishop on options for engaging with local government on changes to the resource management system. And we've recommended local government representatives to sit on an expert ministerial working group that Minister Bishop is planning to establish to support his reform programme.

### Transport

The LGNZ Transport Forum, chaired by Mayor Neil Holdom, worked closely with our policy team to pull together our submission on the draft Land Transport GPS. We had good engagement with our draft submission, with 18 councils providing constructive feedback.

The Transport Forum had its second meeting of the year on 23 May, which covered off a range of key issues including the NZTA emergency works review, the Road Efficiency Group's (REG) ongoing efforts to improve the collection and presentation of transport data, and progress on the Government Policy Statement on Transport and National Land Transport Programme.

Our Transport Forum is continuing to progress its work programme and engage with members. Immediate priorities for LGNZ in the transport space include considering the impacts of the upcoming Budget, completing our submission on the emergency works review, and reviewing the finalised GPS when it is completed (the draft of which we submitted on earlier this year).

### Climate change

We welcomed the Government's announcement that the Finance and Expenditure Committee will be continuing the inquiry into climate change adaptation that was started by the previous government. We're pleased that the Government's announcement has received cross-party support and in our press release emphasised the importance of engagement with local government given its role in adaptation, the urgent need to address adaptation funding arrangements and the need for thought to be given to the framework for managed retreat.



The submission that we made to the earlier inquiry will be considered by the Finance and Expenditure Committee and we're planning to provide the Committee with some additional comments.

We were pleased to be able to suggest Aileen Lawrie, CE of Thames-Coromandel District Council, as local government representative on the expert reference group that the Ministry for the Environment has established to support its climate adaptation work.

**Support for Cyclone-affected councils**

The Policy Team has met with the secretariat of the Cyclone Gabrielle Recovery Taskforce to support development of their insights framework, which seeks to capture the lessons learned from their work. We have also started engagement with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet on their next steps on their critical infrastructure framework and minimum standards.

The report on the Government Inquiry into the Response to the North Island Severe Weather Events was released in April. We understand that consideration of the Emergency Management Bill (which we submitted on in October 2023) is on hold until the release of this report, so the Select Committee can consider it and any changes needed to the Bill. This may involve further submissions or engagement.

We worked with Mayor Rehette Stoltz, CE Nedine Thatcher-Swann and the team at Gisborne District Council to write a letter to Ministers and officials raising concerns with the process that was adopted for the Ministerial Inquiry into Land Use that Gisborne District Council was subject to last year. The purpose of the letter was to highlight that we don't want similar process issues repeated in any future inquiries that local government may be subject to.

**Localism**

We are developing our Choose Localism toolkit, which will be released at our SuperLocal Conference. The toolkit sets out a wide range of tools and approaches councils can use to make a localist future a reality and apply a localism lens across their day-to-day work. The toolkit has four broad headings: collaboration and input; place-based empowerment and devolution; planning, budgeting and resource allocation; and growing and developing local economic and social success.

We have also worked with Curia to poll members of the public on local government issues. The data will look at perceptions around the effectiveness of councils, how councils could improve their effectiveness and who is best placed to make certain decisions/deliver certain services out of central and local government or a combination of both. We are planning to release the findings and supporting work and recommendations at SuperLocal.



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### Electoral Reform Working Group

As part of our broader work on Choose Localism, we are looking at ways to tackle the issue of mandate for local government. There have been several reviews and numerous calls for local government electoral reform over the years, with no progress being made. Only four out of ten eligible voters have their say in local elections, compared with eight out of ten for central government.

Mayor Hon Dr Nick Smith, who has been part of a number of Justice Select Committees looking into this, will be leading an LGNZ working group to get some traction on the issue. The working group will have a very clear purpose: to drive LGNZ's advocacy work to strengthen the democratic mandate for local government to advocate for and meet the needs of communities, with a particular focus on increasing participation.

As well as Mayor Nick, other members of the group are Mayors Rehette Stoltz, Susan O'Regan and Campbell Barry, and Toni Boynton (Te Maruata Co-Chair). The group is meeting shortly to finalise its Terms of Reference and confirm its work programme. We'll keep members informed as this work progresses.

### Measuring councils' collective scale and impact

We are holding a zoom on 6 June to support this data-gathering project, initiated by National Council member Mayor Neil Holdom, which aims to consolidate key local government expenditure into a collective national database. The purpose of this is to enable easy comparison between councils and to have data to support key conversations with central government on infrastructure and investment.

### Freedom camping

The Policy Team have released updated guidance and a model bylaw that reflect recent amendments to legislation and case law, to support councils to develop, review, and administer bylaws relating to the Freedom Camping Act 2011 (FCA). Amendments to the FCA came into force on 7 June 2023, but there is a transitional period before the new certification for self-contained motor vehicles and related provisions come into force.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and the New Zealand Motor Caravan Association part funded this work, and we worked with them and Taituarā to develop it.

### Rates rebates

The Minister for Local Government announced an increase to the rates rebate scheme, shortly after we met Ministers Brown and Costello in early April and talked about the need for these changes to



support low-income households. We’ve advocated strongly on this issue for several years off the back of remits put forward by Whanganui District Council (2020 AGM) and Horowhenua District Council (2023 AGM). However, the increases are only in line with inflation, not the Local Government Cost Index, which is the core ask of the remit put forward by Horowhenua District Council in 2020. We’ll continue to advocate for increases to be in line with the LGCI.

**Remits**

We’re continuing to make progress on remits where we can – though as is always the case following a General Election, progress slowed while the new government bedded in and we developed an understanding of how our remits relate to its priorities.

Remit	Progress update
<b>Allocation of risk and liability in the building sector</b>	We’re yet to start substantive work to progress this remit. However, we did raise the issues that this remit addresses through our involvement in a working group that was reviewing the building consent system in 2023.
<b>Rates rebates</b>	As noted above, the Minister for Local Government announced an increase to the rates rebate scheme, shortly after we met Ministers Brown and Costello in early April and talked about the need for these changes to support low-income households.
<b>Roading/transport maintenance funding</b>	Our Transport Forum is leading work on this remit. Our submission to the draft Government Policy Statement advocated for increased investment in road maintenance.
<b>Local election accessibility</b>	We’re yet to start substantive work to progress this remit.
<b>Ability for co-chairs at formal meetings</b>	Guidance on how to introduce co-chairs, which has been informed by legal advice, has been incorporated into our revised Guide to the LGNZ Standing Orders Template, which was published in early February 2024.
<b>Parking infringement penalties</b>	We’re yet to start substantive work to progress this remit.
<b>Rural and regional public transport</b>	This remit is being progressed through the work that our Transport Forum is leading. Our submission to the draft GPS Land Transport advocated for increased investment in rural and regional public transport.
<b>Establishing resolution service</b>	We have built work on developing a resolution service into the refreshed LGNZ strategy.
<b>Earthquake prone buildings</b>	As championed by Manawatū District Council (the mover of this remit), a review of the current earthquake strengthening requirements has been announced. Our Policy Team has been working with Manawatū District Council and officials at MBIE to ensure the review meets the needs of local government, and that





	there is strong local government input into it. There has been good media coverage of this review, and the role Manawātū District Council has played in pushing for it.
<b>KiwiSaver contributions for elected members</b>	We have engaged with Minister Brown on this issue, and he expressed some interest in it. We have engaged Simpson Grierson to provide detailed advice on options for providing KiwiSaver contributions for elected members – including drafting of relevant legislative clauses, so that we’re able to present a package of options for reform to the Government.
<b>Scope of audits and audit fees</b>	Part of the approach to reduce fees is to ensure that the legislative requirements and scope (and resulting repetition and complexity) of Long-term Plans and Annual Plans and reports are reduced to be better aligned with needs and cost less to audit. A workshop with Audit NZ, Taituarā and the Office of the Auditor General has been organised for July to review the current requirements of long-term planning and associated reporting.

Remit applications for the 2024 AGM close on Tuesday 18 June. Currently no remits have been received, although we know of at least three in development. The remit committee (President, Vice-President, CEO, and Director Policy & Advocacy) will consider these on 1 July, with the approved remits being circulated to members on 3 July.



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## Connect

### Member visits

Rates rises are top of mind for all councils so our work on this issue has been front and centre in our discussions with councils over the past four months.

As well as Sam, Campbell and representatives from LGNZ's leadership team being at zones 2, 1, 3 and 5-6, Sam and Susan visited councils in Otago and Southland, the wider Wellington region and Northland in March/April. We then visited the West Coast councils on 17-18 April and attended a WCRC meeting on 9 April after conversations about the value they derived from regional sector meetings. Since the start of May, we've visited councils in Manawatū, Whanganui, Upper Hutt, Horowhenua and Canterbury (including Christchurch). All these visits are incredibly valuable in terms of connecting councils with our work and receiving feedback. We are now planning visits over the next few months and post-conference towards the goal of visiting or scheduling visits with all members in Sam's first year as President.

### Combined Sector meeting

Our Combined Sector meeting on Thursday 11 April featured a strong range of speakers, with a focus on rates rises, the cost of infrastructure and the fast-track consenting legislation. Speakers included Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham, Brad Olsen (Infometrics), Dr Eric Crampton (NZ Initiative), Philippa Fourie (Fonterra), Jade Wikaira (Wikaira Consulting Ltd), Richard Capie (Forest & Bird), Geoff Cooper (New Zealand Infrastructure Commission, Te Waihangā) and the team from Simpson Grierson who talked about fast-track consenting.

We've had very positive feedback on the day, with an average rating overall by survey respondents of 4.5/5, with the programme getting 4.6/5 and the overall organisation 4.8/5. Comments included:

- *Really happy with the new direction of LGNZ and the consultative approach - enjoy the interactive sessions (using SLIDO)*
- *Very worthwhile day. Stakeholder event was excellent*
- *In my opinion, this was one of the best LGNZ events I have ever attended. Topics were spot on, plenty of time to network (which is a huge benefit that comes from these events), great speakers, kicking off with the Manchester Mayor really set the scene. Well done to the organisers!*

Sector meetings the following day also ran well.



### Te Uru Kahika and Regional Sector

The Regional Sector and Te Uru Kahika's priorities – climate resilience, resource management system, Te Ao Māori, the Government's reform agenda in freshwater, water services regulation, and transport – align closely with LGNZ's advocacy priorities, providing a wide range of opportunities for collaboration. This includes our recent participation in Te Uru Kahika's Climate Workshop.

Our team is meeting regularly with Te Uru Kahika to ensure we are joined up in our support for the Regional Sector. We continue to work together closely on submissions and engagement on central government reforms.

### Infrastructure Symposium

We're looking forward to this Combined Sector event on 13/14 June and have secured another strong line-up of speakers, with the [finalised programme available here](#). Infrastructure Minister Chris Bishop will speak at the networking event on the Thursday night, and Sir Bill English is one of our keynote speakers on 14 June. Other speakers include Opposition Local Government spokesperson Hon Kieran McAnulty, Peter Nunns (Director Economics, Te Waihanga Infrastructure Commission), Simon Dyne (COO, Fulton Hogan), Councillor Linda Scott (via zoom, President, Australian Local Government Association), Malcolm Smith (Australasian Cities Leader, Arup) plus expert panels and more. Registrations are tracking well.

### Conference and Awards update

Planning is well advanced for both SuperLocal 2024 and the Community Boards conference, along with additional events for Te Maruata and Young Elected Members, LGNZ's Annual General Meeting, the Mayors for Taskforce breakfast and numerous networking events across the three days.

In early April we launched SuperLocal24 to members and opened registrations. This followed the earlier launch of the SuperLocal 24 Awards.

We will exceed our sponsorship target for SuperLocal, which is a real achievement in the current climate.

We have finalised the programme, which has a dynamic line up of speakers, and registrations are on track.

### Women in local government

Following on from our 13 February zoom for women in local government, we are planning a lunch immediately before the SuperLocal conference, which will feature Finance Minister Nicola Willis as the opening speaker.



### Te Maruata update

Te Maruata held its first whānui hui online on 14 March to reset priorities for the remainder of the triennium. The hui included a kōrero with MP Marama Davidson, the election of new members for the Roopu Whakahaere as well as opportunity to meet with Mereana Taungapeau, LGNZ's recently appointed Kaitohutohu Matua Māori. Aubrey Ria was elected as the Rural & Provincial representative, and Keri Brown was elected as the at-large representative.

Te Maruata held its monthly online wānanga on 24 April. Te Whatu Ora provided updates on the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Amendment Act – specifically around the incorporation of Tikanga Māori into licensing hearings. There was also broad discussion about Māori wards and the Fast-Track Amendment Bill.

A key issue for Te Maruata is strong advocacy on retaining current arrangements for the establishment of Māori wards and constituencies.

At the Te Maruata Rōpū Whakahaere hui on 9-10 May, kaupapa included Māori wards, Te Maruata membership, the programme for the Te Maruata Hui at conference and the Hutia te Rito strategy – the LGNZ Te Ao Māori approach. The in-person hui included the member now representing Community Boards, Jock Martin (who represents the Lawrence/Tuapeka ward for Clutha District Council).

The Rōpū Whakahaere have been conscious of ensuring Te Maruata members are supported during the debates around Māori wards, which has been a difficult time for many. Regular comms, information sharing and opportunities for kōrerō have been activated so that Te Maruata members feel supported and connected. Equally it's important that the voices of Māori ward councillors and Māori elected members are uplifted. Te Maruata Rōpū Whakahaere made a submission on the Bill in support of LGNZ's submission that also spoke to personal experiences and the critical role Māori councillors play at decision-making tables across Aotearoa.

### Hutia te Rito: LGNZ Māori Strategy

Our Kaitohutohu Matua Māori Mereana Taungapeau led the organisation of a staff wānanga at Raukawa Marae in Ōtaki on 1-2 May. Its purpose was to introduce staff to Hutia te Rito and the Te Ao Māori work programme for LGNZ which is currently in development.

### Young Elected Members

The YEM Committee are keen to continue holding annual YEM Hui, and are well underway with planning for this year's event. The Committee has confirmed dates for this year's Hui (16-18 October) and will be holding it in Christchurch. In response to member feedback, we've brought the Hui forward and shared the dates early so people can get it in their diaries.

The YEM Committee met online in March and in person at the end of May. As well as discussing the next Hui and their pre-SuperLocal gathering, the Committee has refined the YEM Strategy and Kaupapa based on feedback received from the network at the end of last year.



Petone Community Board member Kaz Yung has been elected to the YEM Committee as the community boards representative, and the Committee has also welcomed new member Councillor Deon Swiggs (Environment Canterbury), who has replaced Deputy Mayor of Westland Ash Cassin, following Westland’s decision to withdraw from LGNZ membership.

**Community Boards Executive Committee**

Over the last few months CBEC has been actively involved in a number of initiatives:

- **Satisfaction survey of community boards and mayors:** CBEC commissioned FrankAdvice to undertake a survey of community boards and mayors to better understand the mood of community boards, and relationships between councils and community boards, as well as identify areas for improvement, with particular emphasis on roles, remuneration and relationships with councils. The final report, with recommendations, was released in late February. The findings will be used for ongoing advocacy by CBEC and to inform updates to the Governance Guide for Community Boards.
- **Community Boards Conference:** CBEC is well underway with planning for the 2024 Community Boards Conference, which is being held as part of SuperLocal. CBEC members have been working hard with the LGNZ team to pull together a programme, and seek speakers and sponsorship.
- **Declarations:** the Committee has discovered that some councils do not require appointed board members to make a community board declaration – creating a potential risk to councils should a board decision be challenged on the basis that some members were ineligible to vote. CBEC sought legal advice, which confirmed that all appointed members should make a community board declaration as well as their council declaration. That advice has been sent to all councils with community boards.
- **Remuneration:** CBEC is working with the Remuneration Authority to improve the basis on which community board remuneration is set. The Authority has not been able to resolve how to remunerate boards with additional responsibilities (member pay is based on population without any consideration of the level of responsibility). The Committee has been engaging regularly with the Remuneration Authority on options. It’s meeting in June to develop a work programme to deliver on recommendations resulting from its survey of community board members and Mayors.

Kaz Yung (who was elected to the Young Elected Members Committee) has joined our Community Boards Executive Committee. Jock Martin has also been elected to CBEC and Te Maruata, as noted above.

CBEC held a zoom for all community board members in late March, where they discussed the results of the survey of community board members and mayors, and options for remunerating community board members. The zoom was attended by around 40 members.



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## Support

### Ākona

On 3 April, we gave all elected members access to Ākona, following National Council's decision that subscription should be rolled into the member fee.

The number of logins continues to grow, with 50-60 learners being added each week. Engagement with Ako hours already exceeds expectations, and registrations for next month's Climate Change Adaptation Ako hour are climbing quickly.

Sector engagement with Ākona has also significantly increased. Last week's bi-monthly hui with Council L&D staff (which would previously attract 10 or less participants) had almost 30 participants. There were also multiple requests for the hui to be recorded and sent to those who could not attend. Hui participants expressed their support of the system, including the new skills analysis tool. There was also keen interest in working with LGNZ to build elected member engagement through coaching sessions, to develop learning programmes, and to develop learning policy based on Ākona content.

The Induction 2025 Project has commenced with the development of a triennial calendar of learning linked to key sector milestones. This calendar will be tested by a group of sector representatives over the next few weeks, with a view to complete induction design by the end of October. The purpose and approach to Induction hui is being refined based on member input and feedback from the 2022 events.

Discussions have begun with Taituarā to develop an induction pack that will include pre-elected learning resources, (as per the framework). A pre-candidacy package of learning will also soon be developed to support the promotion of local governance participation in our communities.

There are new courses recently released or nearing release include:

- Climate Change
- Te Reo
- Decision Making
- The CE Relationship
- Leading diverse communities

In addition, the tīma worked with PD Training to contextualise a Critical Thinking workshop which was delivered at Napier District Council in late February. A targeted workshop focused on Chairing Meetings/Standing Orders has also been developed. Both options will become a permanent part of Ākona offerings.



### Guidance and advisory for members

We've updated our [Guide to the LGNZ Standing Orders Templates](#). The updates provide councils with guidance on how to amend their standing orders to incorporate changes to the definition of a quorum (for those joining by audio visual means). They also provide guidance on the Ombudsman's recent report on public access to workshops.

We're working with the Taituarā Democracy and Participation Working Group to fine tune our Standing Orders Template, with a focus on readability. The updated version will be available to councils in early 2025, giving plenty of time to be prepared ahead of the 2025 local body elections. The new template will also reflect legislative changes made since mid-2022 when the current template was drafted.

### Elected member safety and security

We held a zoom on safety and security on 18 April, with 60 people attending. Panel members Mayor Dan Gordon, Deputy Mayor Angela O'Leary and Mayor Len Salt spoke eloquently about the difficult and disturbing experiences they had had, followed by representatives from NZ Police and Netsafe. This was the start of a conversation and there's clearly more LGNZ can do to support members experiencing this harassment, which is also a threat to local democracy.

At the Combined Sector meeting, we asked attendees about their experiences and the results were:

- 74% had face aggressive, abusive or offensive behaviour as an EM in public meetings
- 65% had faced it online
- 39% had faced it at community events
- 33% had faced in doing every day activities like shopping or collecting children from school

In terms of the levels of behaviour:

- 53% thought it was worse than a year ago
- 41% thought it was similar
- 9% thought it was better.

Our second zoom in this series will be in mid-June, to focus on "sovereign citizens" and vexatious requests, and we've secured a range of panellists/speakers. This topic was suggested in the first zoom, and the third zoom will focus on physical security for EMs. All these zooms are recorded and available to elected members in Ākona, along with related resources. [You can log into Ākona here](#).

### Te Korowai

Our continuous improvement programme, previously known as CouncilMARK, has undergone significant evolution over the past year in response to feedback from the sector. These changes aim to increase programme participation and deliver greater value to participating councils.



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Renamed 'Te Korowai', the programme has extended its focus beyond independent assessments to support councils throughout their continuous improvement journey, both before and after assessment.

Te Korowai emphasises a wraparound support for councils, the establishment of development benchmarks and aligning council performance with priorities. The introduction of additional development pathways facilitates the translation of assessment findings into actionable plans, enabling councils to optimise their performance.

We have collaborated closely with Waikato Regional Council, which served as the pilot for the new programme. Following their successful on-site assessment, they have transitioned into the development phase. Initial feedback from Waikato Regional Council has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting how the programme provided valuable insights and confidence to progress along their development journey.

We are currently engaged with several other councils, including as Central Hawkes Bay District Council, Ōtorohanga District Council, and Otago Regional Council, as they prepare to join the revamped programme. Additionally, efforts are underway to align the programme's performance assessment framework with Ākona, fostering continuous improvement through a culture of learning and development.

### Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs

Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs (MTFJ) core group has signed off a refreshed five-year strategic plan. The plan reconfirms the focus of the MTFJ kaupapa firmly on rangatahi, particularly those youth who are NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training).

LGNZ supported Mayor Max Baxter, MTFJ Chair, to secure a meeting with the Social Development Minister Louise Upston, which the MTFJ team of Maree and Tammie attended, along with Scott.

Max also met with Minister Upston while attending a joint visit to Waimate to hear firsthand how the programme has delivered better employment outcomes there. The Minister is joining MTFJ for their annual breakfast meeting at SuperLocal.

The MTFJ Governance Group, which oversees MTFJ's strategy and delivery, met in April and May and the Core Group is meeting on 7 June.

Huge credit to the MTFJ council teams who nationally have exceeded their MSD-contracted CEP outcomes, achieving 1,111 employment outcomes for year one well ahead of the due date. This positions the MTFJ MSD employment contract for continued success as it rolls over into year 2, although with reduced contracted funding from (\$10 million to \$8 million).

LGNZ ran an impactful session for MTFJ in February supporting individual council programmes to better tell their story of localism and council delivery, as discussed in the media section above, and reflected in the uptick of media around MTFJ in recent weeks.

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LGNZ four-monthly report for member councils: March-June 2024 // 22





**Road Efficiency Group (REG)**

LGNZ has been a long-standing partner and supporter of REG and we are pleased to see REG feature in the draft Transport GPS. This includes direction from the Minister that REG, as part of a wider expectation for improved sector performance and efficiency, is to focus on ensuring that all investment in maintaining and improving resilience on the state highway, local and rural road networks is spent in the most efficient manner.

Key focus areas for REG include:

- Finding efficiency in road maintenance spend to deliver more for road users and taxpayers’ investment;
- Standardising maintenance protocols and processes to find efficiency where efficiencies can be found;
- Reducing expenditure on temporary traffic management (TTM), which is adding significant cost to road maintenance and reducing efficiency of spend;
- Reviewing Network Outcomes Contracts (NOC) with a focus on achieving long-term maintenance outcomes of 2 percent rehabilitation and 9 percent resurfacing per year, ensuring a proactive approach to road maintenance.

REG is currently reviewing its term of reference and governance arrangements, which will see two independent appointments by the Minister to the REG governance group.

**Moata Carbon Portal**

Recently we’ve provided a demo of the portal and had conversations on carbon accounting with Central Otago District Council. We have also supported Mott MacDonald to attend zone meetings to provide an overview of the carbon portal as well as some findings from the carbon baseline completed on Queenstown Lakes LTP in 2023.

The findings from this baseline were that water projects accounted for 55% of QLDC’s total capital carbon, with transport accounting for 24% and built environment 21%. Over the course of their LTP, their highest carbon peaks were predicted for 2023 and 2030, with recommendations provided on integrating carbon assessments into their approval and delivery processes.

**Ratepayer Assistance Scheme (RAS)**

With Auckland and Tauranga confirming support to establish the RAS, we have secured \$1.2 million of the estimated \$3 million required to complete the development work to establish the RAS. On establishment, we would need circa \$23 million establishment capital.

As a reminder, the RAS is a special purpose tool that would provide support to ratepayers to finance any local authority charge. With balance sheet separation, and proximity to both local and central



government, it would have a very high credit rating and therefore be able to provide the cheapest possible financing terms to ratepayers.

The Ratepayer Financing Scheme’s flexibility would enable it to support:

- Development contributions to enable housing development.
- Home improvement policy to meet healthy homes, earthquake strengthening, home insulation and solar panel installation, water separation and storage etc.
- Rates postponement to provide relief to ratepayer experiencing affordability pressures.

A detailed business case supporting the RAS’s viability has been completed with the support of Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Wellington, Christchurch councils alongside the LGFA and LGNZ. We have had recent positive engagement the new governments policy advisors. The RAS could provide financing for future water charges which would assist with affordability.

The Steering Group have engaged with the Government’s water Technical Advisory Group to discuss funding and financing more broadly, including the possible role the RAS could play supporting ratepayers and funding infrastructure.

Scott and selected members of the Steering Group met Simon Court (Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister Responsible for RMA Reform) on 3 April and Minister Simeon Brown has expressed interest in learning more about it.

### Libraries partnership

Our Libraries Advisor is continuing to deliver the work programme that has been agreed to with DIA and the New Zealand Libraries Partnership Programme, and will be with LGNZ until the end of June 2024, when the project funding comes to an end. This was a Covid-19 recovery initiative so there isn’t ongoing funding for this role.

At the end of the project, we’ll receive a report that will outline all the key trends identified and findings made across the three years of the project.

Despite local government funding challenges, a large number of councils have supported the removal of fines to improve access to their library resources. Over 60% of councils are fully fines free and 92% are fines free for children and young people.

	A	B	C	D	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
	Date	Meeting	HWTM	Wilson	Carter	Dalgaty	Duncan	Hiroa	Lambert	Loudon	Maughan	Sharland	Raukawa	Wong	Notes
168	24-Apr-24	Council Meeting	PR	PR	AP	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	
169	8-May-24	Bulls CC	PR		AP							PR	PR		
170	9-May-24	AIN Meeting	PR	AP	AP	PR	PR		PR	PR	PR			PR	
171	14-May-24	TRAK Workshop	PR					PR					PR		
172	16-May-24	Council Meeting	PR	PR	AP	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	
173	23-May-24	Council Workshop	PR	PR	AP	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	
174	29-May-24	Creative NZ Committee	PR				PR								
175	30-May-24	Finance/Performance	PR	PR	AP	PR				PR	PR	AP		PR	
176	30-May-24	Council Meeting	PR	PR	AP	PR	PR	PR	AP	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	
177	6-Jun-24	Turakina CC	PR		AP							AT			
178	10-Jun-24	HRWS	PR			PR			PR						
179	10-Jun-24	Hunterville CC	CB			PR			PR						
180	11-Jun-24	TRAK Meeting	PR				PR	PR					PR		
181	11-Jun-24	ERWS	PR											PR	
182	11-Jun-24	Ratana CB	PR					PR							
183	12-Jun-24	Marton CC	CB	PR											
184	12-Jun-24	Taihape CB	PR				PR							PR	
185	13-Jun-24	PPL Meeting	PR	PR				PR	PR		AP			PR	
186	19-Jun-24	Santoft DMC													Minutes not yet received
187	20-Jun-24	RA Meeting	PR	PR		PR		PR		PR					
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Present (and is a member of the committee)	PR
Apology	AP
Absent - no apology received	AB
Not a member of the committee	
Not a member of the committee (but still attended)	AT
Not present as on Council business	CB
Attended via Zoom [this indicator is no longer used]	ZM

**9.2 Mayor's Report**

**Author: Andy Watson, His Worship the Mayor**

**Hautapu River Parks, Taihape**

I am using this report to acknowledge the work done at Papakai in Taihape. For many years people like the late Les Thurston, Joe Byford, Don Tantrum and team have nurtured the bush on the banks of the Papakai and Mt Stewart. They have put in paths, removed Old Man’s Beard and unwanted species like the sycamores. Remember also, that they have been the drivers, along with others, of the planting and maintenance of the lookout at the Mt Stewart Reserve.

Tracks through the Papakai native forests were initially established in 1912 for the community from the Power Station Hydro Outlet, to the Papakai Park, to the Memorial Park. This reserve contains Kahikitea, Totara and Matai and was critically endangered. This forest type is regarded to provide high ecological value to New Zealand and is described as being critically endangered. Friends of Taihape Charitable Society’s committee undertook the project to rejuvenate the reserve’s forest and tracks in partnership with Ngāti Tamakōpiri and Rangitīkei District Council. The project connects Taihape township’s native reserves along the Hautapu River, delivering a multi-use native flora experience. The essential linking component of the reserves are the bridges, which adjoins both sides of the River’s tracks and parks. The upgrade of Papakai Park is in effect the continuation of that vision. Joe and Tash Coogan have done a remarkable job improving the walking tracks and redesigning Papakai Park, levelling and grassing ready for a spring re-opening. They have done all of this by working around the frustrating process of Council building the new pump station.

Matt Thomas and the Friends of Taihape have been the glue that has tied the work at Papakai and the bridges together. This project has been eight years of planning and fundraising to get to this position, Matt has been exceptional in this space.

Moving to the bridges. Frame Group, under the leadership of Geoff Wigley, were contracted to design the bridges to make the access walkways throughout the reserve link together. I have included some of the photos of the bridge team led by our local contractor Matthew Preece and the first bridge near completion. Having named some of the special people involved in these projects it is fitting that I acknowledge several more. Thanks go to Matthew, Sarah and Ben Preece, Jim Haley, Joe Byford, Bennett and Glen Horton, Byford’s Read Mix, the Benson Family and Hautapu Pine and Rural Supplies, the Taihape Engineering team, Michael and the One Step Team, Steven Tweedale, Ōtūpae Station, Rimanui Farms, Don and Conchita Tweeddale, JBS Dudding Trust, Four Regions Trust, Horizons, Daryl O’Hara at Lasercraft and Don Tantrum. Our Iwi Reps Richard, Moira, Robert and Dianne with a special thanks also to Council Staff and Councillors Gill Duncan, Piki Te Ora Hiroa and Jeff Wong. I apologise to the many others I may have missed and to the literally hundreds of people who have planted, financially supported or provided assistance in kind.

The team will complete three bridges and then re-assess the budget regarding the completion of the remaining two bridges, where abutments are already in. Any person or organisation who may consider helping with funding please feel free to reach out under confidence to Matt Thomas.

Our district has been built on the backbone of community support and it is great to have the time to tell this story.







ITEM 9.2





On other matters, the 2024/25 rates have been loaded onto our website. You can now search your current property rates and history under the “Quicklinks” tab for the latest information.

ITEM 9.2

## Mayors Engagements

July 2024

1	<p>Attended meeting with Chief Executive</p> <p>Attended welcome meeting for new RDC staff</p> <p>Attended Mayors Taskforce for Jobs Governance Group Online Meeting</p>
2	<p>Attended meeting with ratepayer in Bulls</p> <p>Attended weekly meeting with Deputy Mayor</p>
3	<p>Attended meeting with ratepayer in Taihape</p> <p>Attended Taihape Network Meeting</p> <p>Attended Wearable Arts Show at Te Matapihi</p>
4	<p>Assisted with clean-up of Te Matapihi following Wearable Arts Show</p> <p>Attended meeting with Recruitment Agency Rep</p>
5	<p>Attended meeting with Chief Executive</p> <p>Attended meeting with Tamariki Rangatahi Youth Engagement Officer</p> <p>Attended Bulls &amp; District Community Trust AGM</p>
5	<p>Attended Working Bee at B&amp;C Dams</p>
8	<p>Attended meeting with ratepayer in Bulls</p>
9	<p>Attended meeting with Acting Chief Execyтуve</p> <p>Attended weekly meeting with Deputy Mayor</p>
10	<p>Attended Triannual meeting with staff and Kainga Ora</p> <p>Attended meeting with ratepayer in Taihape</p>
11	<p>Attended meeting with Acting Chief Executive</p> <p>Attended meeting with Chief Executive</p> <p>Attended Assets &amp; Infrastructure Meeting</p> <p>Attended Council Workshop</p>
12	<p>Attended Fortnightly Economic Development Meeting with staff</p> <p>Attended Urban Growth Plan Change Discussion with staff</p> <p>Attended monthly RDC/Police catchup meeting</p> <p>Attended meeting with ratepayer in Marton</p>
15	<p>Attended breakfast meeting with Mayor Helen Worboys</p> <p>Attended meeting with Marton resident</p> <p>Attended meeting with Acting Chief Executive</p>
16	<p>Attended meeting with Acting Chief Executive</p> <p>Attended Regional Transport Matters/Regional Chief’s Fortnightly Zoom Meeting</p>



	<p>Attended Mayor Tory Whanau’s Lunch for 2024 Festival for the Future in Wellington</p> <p>Attended Youth Council dinner in Wellington</p>
17	<p>Attended Lunch function in Taihape for Hautapu Bridges Project</p> <p>Attended Zone 3 online meeting</p>
18	<p>Attended meeting with Acting Chief Executive</p> <p>Delivered flowers to Carters for Diamond Wedding Anniversary</p> <p>Attended Official Opening of MDC Library Hub Te Ahuru Mowai in Feilding</p>
19	<p>Attended meeting with Acting Chief Executive</p> <p>Attended meeting with Downer</p>
21	<p>Attended Hunterville Senior Citizens Morning Tea &amp; Joan Bull’s 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday</p> <p>Attended Royal Navy Band Concert at Huntley School</p>
22	<p>Attended meeting with Chief Executive</p> <p>Attended LGNZ Transport Forum Online Meeting</p> <p>Attended meeting with Skye Properties</p>
23	<p>Attended NZ Tiny House Association online meeting</p> <p>Attended National Community Boards Online Hui</p> <p>Attended weekly meeting with Deputy Mayor</p>
24	<p>Attended meeting with ratepayer in Bulls</p> <p>Attended Four Regions Trust AGM in Whanganui</p> <p>Attended Infrastructure Fund Meeting with Staff</p>
25	<p>Attended Marton Office &amp; Library Project Governance Team Meeting</p> <p>Attended Council Workshop</p> <p>Attended Smokefree/Vapefree Policy Hearings</p> <p>Attended Council Meeting</p> <p>Attended BECA Client Function at Massey University</p>
26	<p>To attend meeting with Chief Executive</p> <p>To attend fortnightly Economic Development meeting with staff</p> <p>To attend staff mid-winter Christmas lunch</p>
29	<p>To attend meeting with Chief Executive</p> <p>To attend Taihape Waste Water Treatment Plan Hui and Site Visit</p>
30	<p>To attend Regional Transport Matters/Regional Chief’s Fortnightly Zoom Meeting</p> <p>To attend weekly meeting with Deputy Mayor</p>
31	<p>To attend meeting with Chief Executive</p> <p>To attend Taihape Neighbourhood Support Meeting</p> <p>To attend Taihape Town Centre Revitalisation Meeting</p>

**Attachments:**

**ITEM 9.2**

1. **Elected Member Attendance- July 2024** [↓](#)
2. **Remit Papers AGM 2024** [↓](#)

**Recommendation**

That the Mayor's Report – 25 July 2024 be accepted.

	A	B	C	D	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
2	<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>HWTM</b>	<b>Wilson</b>	<b>Carter</b>	<b>Dalgety</b>	<b>Duncan</b>	<b>Hiroa</b>	<b>Lambert</b>	<b>Loudon</b>	<b>Maughan</b>	<b>Sharland</b>	<b>Raukawa</b>	<b>Wong</b>
174	29-May-24	Creative NZ Committee	PR				PR							
175	30-May-24	Finance/Performance	PR	PR	AP	PR				PR	PR	AP		PR
176	30-May-24	Council Meeting	PR	PR	AP	PR	PR	PR	AP	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR
177	6-Jun-24	Turakina CC	PR		AP							AT		
178	10-Jun-24	HRWS	PR			PR			PR					
179	10-Jun-24	Hunterville CC	CB			PR			PR					
180	11-Jun-24	TRAK Meeting	PR				PR	PR					PR	
181	11-Jun-24	ERWS	PR											PR
182	11-Jun-24	Ratana CB	PR					PR						
183	12-Jun-24	Marton CC	CB	PR										
184	12-Jun-24	Taihape CB	PR				PR							PR
185	13-Jun-24	PPL Meeting	PR	PR			PR	PR	PR		AP			PR
186	19-Jun-24	Santoft DMC	PR		PR							AT		
187	20-Jun-24	RA Meeting	PR	PR		PR		PR		PR				
188	27-Jun-24	Finance/Performance	PR	PR	PR	PR	AT			PR	PR	PR		PR
189	27-Jun-24	Council Meeting	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	AP	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR
190	11-Jul-24	AIN Meeting	PR	PR	PR	PR	PR		PR	PR	PR	PR		PR
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200														

Present (and is a member of the committee)	PR
Apology	AP
Absent - no apology received	AB
Not a member of the committee	
Not a member of the committee (but still attended)	AT
Not present as on Council business	CB
Attended via Zoom [this indicator is no longer used]	ZM



# 2024 Annual General Meeting

REMITTS



Please note that this document is not the full set of papers for this year's AGM. It just includes the remits going forward to the AGM so members can decide how they will vote on them. The full set of AGM papers will be shared no later than 10 working days before the AGM.



## Prioritising remits

Every year, LGNZ adopts new remits at the AGM. Each remit requires resourcing to deliver, and there is no limit to the number of remits that can be considered and passed. This means remits can create resourcing challenges, including conflict with agreed policy priorities.

LGNZ's National Council decided at its June meeting to ask the AGM to prioritise remits, to make it clearer where most resource should be directed. This will be a two-step process:

1. At the AGM, delegates will vote on remits as usual. Then, in a separate vote, they will rank successful remits in order of priority. This vote will be carried out electronically and result in a prioritised list of remits.
2. National Council will look at this prioritised list and allocate resource accordingly.
  - This will include determining where on the list the cutoff lies between a 'maximalist' and 'minimalist' approach. Depending on the nature of the remit, a 'maximalist' approach could include commissioning advice or research, or in-depth policy or advocacy work. A 'minimalist' approach could involve less resource, such as writing a letter to the relevant minister or agency.
  - Any support that proposing councils offer to deliver the remit will be considered in this decision making.

National Council will share its decision with councils, along with proposed actions.

Progress made against remits will continue to be reported in the four-monthly update to members.



Proposed Remit		Page
1.	Representation reviews	4
2.	Community Services Card	5
3.	Local government constituencies & wards should not be subject to referendum.	7
4.	Entrenchment of Māori wards seats for local government	20
5.	Graduated driver licensing system	22
6.	Proactive lever to mitigate the deterioration of unoccupied buildings	26
7.	Appropriate funding models for central government initiatives	46
8.	Goods and services tax (GST) revenue sharing with local government	48



## // 01

### Representation reviews

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**Remit:** *That LGNZ advocate for changes that support the provision of timely and accurate regional and sub-regional population data to councils for use in council representation reviews.*

**Proposed by:** Waikato Regional Council

**Supported by:** Zone 2

#### Why is this remit important?

Because local democracy relies on accurate and up to date electoral population data to ensure fair and effective representation.

#### Background and Context

Census and local electoral cycles are not aligned which means that census data used to inform representation reviews can be up to six years old.

This remit is flexible enough to enable advocacy that takes into account a possible move to a four-year term and possible future shifts in the way the census may be conducted in the future, including a possible replacement by the use of administrative data.

#### How does this remit relate to LGNZ’s current work programme?

This is a critical issue for local government as it goes to the very foundation of localism. Seeks advocacy in relation to a significant issue impacting local government.

This is not currently part of the current work programme but could be linked to the Electoral Reform Working Group’s look at how to best implement a four-year term.

#### How will the proposing council help LGNZ to make progress on this remit?

Drafting submissions and attending meetings with Statistics New Zealand amongst other things.





## // 02

### Community Services Card

**Remit:** *That LGNZ advocate to Central Government to amend the Health Entitlement Cards Regulations 1993 so that the cardholder can use the Community Services Card as evidence for the purposes of accessing Council services which would otherwise rely on a form of means testing.*

**Proposed by:** Palmerston North City Council

**Supported by:** Zone 3

#### Why is this remit important?

Councils are restricted from requesting a community services card as evidence of eligibility to access services. Instead Council must instead request a series of other documents from an individual to test eligibility. This creates obstacles for applicants and privacy and consistency concerns for councils.

#### Background and Context

The authorised uses of Community Services Cards are set out in the Health Entitlement Cards Regulations 1993 regulation 12 and restrict the purposes for which it can be used. The Regulations state that no person, other than an employee of the department or the Ministry of Health or a pharmacist or any person (other than the cardholder) mentioned in regulation 12(b) or (ba) shall demand or request a Community Services Card as a form of identification of the cardholder or as evidence that the cardholder is eligible for that Community Services Card.

People in receipt of a main benefit (e.g. Jobseeker Support, Sole Parent Support, Supported Living Payment) or receiving a Student Allowance automatically qualify for a Community Services Card. Otherwise people can apply for a Community Services Card and must meet qualifying criteria including:

- They are over 18 years of age (or over 16 years of age if enrolled in full-time tertiary study)
- They are living legally in New Zealand (or are applying for refugee status)
- They meet an income test.

Palmerston North City Council in seeking to determine a means of establishing eligibility for some council services, including social housing, found that the Community Services Card, based on its eligibility criteria, would appropriately identify eligible people. However, current regulations do not allow councils to ask if a person is a Community Services Card holder in order to establish eligibility for council services.

Cabinet has previously amended the Health Entitlement Cards Regulation 1993 and the Social Security Regulations 2018 to add public transport authorities to those able to request or demand to see a Community Services Card, and the combination SuperGold and Community Services Card, as evidence that the cardholder is eligible for public transport concessions.

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**How does this remit relate to LGNZ’s current work programme?**

This remit could increase accessibility to local government services. It also comfortably sits within the principles of the Local Government Act 2002 in that it would give local government a tool to provide services more efficiently.

**How will the proposing council help LGNZ to make progress on this remit?**

We can provide further legal background knowledge and research to date; and accompany LGNZ in any advocacy meetings with the Ministry or legislators.



## // 03

### Local government constituencies & wards should not be subject to referendum

**Remit:** *That LGNZ lobbies central government to ensure that Māori wards and constituencies are treated the same as all other wards in that they should not be subject to a referendum. We oppose the idea that Māori wards should be singled out and forced to suffer a public referendum.*

**Proposed by:** Palmerston North City Council

**Supported by:** Zone 3, Te Pae Tawhiti (Horizons Region, Māori ward and constituency councillors)

#### Why is this remit important?

It is evident that the introduction of Māori wards and constituencies empowered more Māori to nominate, stand, vote, and participate in local government.

Legislative changes will only apply to Māori wards and constituencies but not all wards and constituencies. This shows a prejudice to Māori, a complete lack of fairness and will result in further disengagement of Māori in local government. It will see the demise of Māori representation and engagement in local government.

#### Background and Context

Māori wards and constituencies councillors serve on district, city and regional Councils in New Zealand and represent local ratepayers and constituents registered on the Māori parliamentary electoral roll. The purpose of Māori wards and constituencies is to ensure Māori are represented in local government decision making.

In February 2021, the Government made legislative changes which would uphold local council decisions to establish Māori wards and abolish the existing law which allowed local referendums to veto decisions by councils to establish Māori wards and Constituencies. The Local Electoral (Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Act 2021, eliminated mechanisms for holding referendums on the establishment of Māori wards and constituencies on local bodies.

Many councils took the opportunity to make decisions about establishing Māori wards and Constituencies after the law change and as a result, the 2022 local elections saw six of the eleven regional councils (54.5%) have Māori constituencies and 29 of the 67 territorial authorities (43.3%) have Māori ward/s. Horizons Regional Council, and all seven District Councils of this region, have Māori wards.

Following the changes in legislation, there was a significant increase in Māori representation. The 2022 Local Government election saw the highest number of Māori elected members in local government, growing from 5% to 22%.

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**How does this remit relate to LGNZ’s current work programme?**

The proposed remit fits within LGNZ’s stance that they too believe that Māori wards and constituencies should be treated the same as other wards in that they should not be subject to a referendum or if so, all wards should be subjected to the referendum.

Councils should be empowered to make decisions about the make-up of their representation through the Representation Review process.

**How will the proposing council help LGNZ to make progress on this remit?**

Palmerston North City Council and Te Pae Tawhiti already made oral and written submissions to the Justice Select Committee in June.

We also encouraged LGNZ to lead out the letter from the mayors to key ministers in May.

We are keen to support ongoing messaging, noting this remit is submitted prior to the Parliamentary decision on the proposed legislation.

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29 May 2024

Members of the Justice Select Committee,  
**Re: Local Electoral Amendment Act 2024**

E ngā mana e ngā reo e ngā karangatanga maha, tēnā koutou katoa.

E te tēpū whakatau o ngā whakakaupapa hou mō 'Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill' Nei rā he mihi nui ki a koutou i āta whakaaro i āta whiriwhiri i ēnei kaupapa whakahirahira e pā ana ki ngā kaunihera o te motu. Ko mātou tēnei o Te Kaunihera o Papaioea e mihi atu nei ki a koutou me te kaupapa e kawea nei e koutou. Kia kaha, kia māia kia manawanui. Anei o mātou ake whakaaro e pā ana. Nō reira tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit to the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill. We challenge the Select Committee to genuinely consider the feedback provided through this process. Councils do not want or need this change to occur. Our communities, and certainly Rangitāne o Manawatū our Treaty partner, are not asking for this.

Palmerston North is home to:

- near on 100,000 people of over 150 ethnicities
- one of the youngest populations with the highest number of PhDs per capita in the country

We proudly display:

- our city crest in our Council Chamber- one of we understand only four in the country which depict both Māori and Pākehā in the heraldry. Three being councils and the Crown you represent being the fourth.
- a statue of Te Peeti Te Awe Awe in the heart of our city- Te Marae o Hine The Square. Erected in 1906 jointly by city and Rangitāne leaders.

Our representation arrangements, most recently reviewed in 2021, are 1 mayor + 15 members: 2 Māori ward seats and 13 General ward seats, at-large across the city.

PNCC is committed to the principles of local government. Namely, as set out in the Local Government Act 2002 sections 4 and 81, which state we must

*"... recognise and respect the Crown's responsibility to take appropriate account of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and to maintain and improve opportunities for Māori to contribute to local*

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*government decision-making processes... to facilitate participation by Māori in local authority decision-making processes.”*

and

*“establish and maintain processes to provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority; and*

*consider ways in which it may foster the development of Māori capacity to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority.”*

There are also other statutory obligations, most notably the Resource Management Act 1991, to account for the culture and traditions of Māori as it relates to the natural environment. Not to mention obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi and the Human Rights Act. These obligations alone do not adequately emphasise the foundational importance of councils’ partnership with Māori and the critical value that relationships with tangata whenua bring to local governance.

Councils have many strategic commitments that support the development of Māori capacity to participate more fully and effectively in the Council’s decision-making processes. We engage directly with tangata whenua as a part of our statutory responsibilities and as a means of giving expression to the Council’s commitment to bicultural development and responsiveness. A Māori ward is another expression of this.

PNCC is committed to its kawenata relationship with tangata whenua Rangitāne o Manawatū, who support a Māori ward for wider Māori voice at Council. In 2021 Rangitāne o Manawatū gifted names for the city-wide wards:

- Te Hirawanui General Ward: reflects the long history of partnership between the Council and Rangitāne in the founding of Palmerston North, most particularly recognising one of our Rangatira chief Te Hirawanui who coordinated and inter alia signed the deed for sale for Te Ahu a Turanga land block, of which Palmerston North became a part.
- Te Pūao Māori Ward: the heralding a new dawn, and the mouth of a river as it leads to the ocean, reminiscent of the words spoken by Rangitāne rangatira Tiweta and Mahuri to the Ngāti Upokoiri people when they invited them to take refuge in the Manawatū-- in other words signalling the opportunities to come from the Māori ward and the relationship between Māori and Local Government in the Manawatū and beyond.

On 1 May 2024, Council resolved to formally endorse this current representative structure.

PNCC wants to increase engagement with parts of the city’s community that have historically been representationally marginalised. A Māori ward ensures Māori voices will be represented at local decision-making tables. It is one tool to support democracy, which a council can use to best represent the communities it serves. Māori can stand in general wards, but the data tells us they haven’t been doing so, even in Palmerston North where STV voting and district-wide wards which should encourage diverse candidacy. Māori wards are one way to remove a structural obstacle to the choices of Māori voters. In our view, having Māori ward seats at councils to represent those on the Māori elector role is the equivalent of Māori seats in Parliament for Parliamentary elections. Participation literature repeatedly points to people being able ‘to see themselves’ in diverse candidates as a motivator for voting. Many councils chose to establish Māori wards for the 2022 elections. We then saw the highest number of Māori elected members in local government, growing from 5% to 22%, much more closely aligned to the population. It is evident the introduction of Māori wards and constituencies enabled through the 2021 legislative change empowered more Māori to nominate, stand, vote, and participate in local government.

In its report to the Māori Affairs Committee in February 2021 on the Local Electoral (Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill of the time, National Party members made their own statement, separate to the Committee report. The members noted (emphasis in bold below) that:

**Rushed legislation is not good legislation.**

We agree.

**The [prior] law requires that when a council proposes general wards it must publicly notify its proposals and call and hear submissions. These provisions do not apply to the creation of a Māori ward under this [previous] bill. If the Government genuinely wished to align the process it would require the same legal process for creating Māori wards as for general wards.**

We agree.

If Government wishes to treat Māori wards in the same way as general wards, it should seek to include Māori wards within the representation review process subject to community submissions and Local Government Commission review NOT reinstate a different process.

Representation issues are complex. They cannot be reduced to simple binary questions of yes or no. Palmerston North knows first-hand what division looks like when lobby groups from outside our community lead a poll demand.

If the Government’s true intentions were to improve the representation arrangements for councils, rather than revert this legislation, they would be looking to improve it. For example, could the rules around population ratios be removed so that councils can be more responsive to the needs of their communities of interest and not limited by percentages and population ratios?

**“Our 78 local councils with their 1,600 elected members, are already obliged under legislation to have improving relationships with Māori and ensure proper engagement and involvement with Māori in decision-making. Local government and iwi/hapū take those responsibilities very seriously and in good faith. How they best meet their Treaty obligations should be up to them to decide. Local government and Māori are quite capable of doing that and achieving the outcome, without the central government deciding the means.”**

We agree.

Local democracy is one of the two purposes of local government set out in section 10 of the Local Government Act,

*“The purpose of local government is—to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities.”*

Aotearoa New Zealand is a representative democracy. We elect leaders to lead. We understand well that as councillors we are democratically elected to make decisions on behalf of all of our communities, not just the majority. Local councils are well placed to make those decisions, because we consult our people and weigh up various viewpoints on an issue.

PNCC voted to establish a Māori ward for the City, in 2017 and again in 2021. Since then, every council in our Horizons region (8 councils) has established Māori wards or constituencies.

Why is the Government telling us we are not capable of making a decision we have already made twice, and must now be bound to the result of a referendum? New Zealand is a representative democracy. Referenda are usually used for consultative purposes on controversial issues. The 1993 electoral system referendum is the rare case of a binding referendum. None of the 5 citizen-initiated referenda held since 1994 have been actioned by Parliament. Why then impose a binding referendum

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that allows people not directly affected by the result (ie. those not on the Māori electoral roll) to determine an outcome?

**“Not the most important local government issue at this time when Local government is struggling on several fronts. The sector is overwhelmed and facing the most significant period of change in 30 years, and there are more pressing issues to address at this time like infrastructure, housing, transport, water, resource management, consenting processes, climate change impacts, and poor customer experiences.”**

We agree. The costs of polls are another unfunded mandate on councils. We have more than enough to do without distractions of fixing something that is not broken; that is in fact working well. Having a Māori ward works extremely well for Palmerston North. Why is the central government now telling us to spend more ratepayer money and time on a referendum?

We ask that the Local Electoral Act provisions with regard to the establishment of Māori wards and constituencies not be changed.

Ngā mihi nui



Grant Smith JP  
MAYOR  
Palmerston North City Council



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29 May 2024

## Submission of Te Pae Tāwhiti Rōpū

### To: Justice Committee regarding the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill

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Te Pae Tāwhiti Rōpū is a rōpū (group) made up of Māori Ward Councillors from the Horizons Region.

The Horizons Region is the Manawatū-Whanganui area of the lower North Island. The region is made up of eight Councils:

- Horizons Regional Council
- Palmerston North City Council
- Manawatu District Council
- Ruapehu District Council
- Rangitikei District Council
- Horowhenua District Council
- Tararua District Council
- Whanganui District Council.

All of the Councils of the Horizons Region, except Whanganui District Council, established at least one Māori ward/constituency in 2021, in time for the 2022 local elections. In October 2023, Whanganui District Council voted to establish a Māori ward for the 2025 and 2028 elections.

This submission in opposition to the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill (Bill) is based on the views of Māori Ward Councillors who belong to Te Pae Tāwhiti Rōpū.

Although we are current Councillors, we make this submission not to advocate for our personal positions on Council but for the future preservation of Māori wards and constituencies, to ensure that Māori who choose to be on the Māori electoral role, continue to have the choice of Māori representation in local government.

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#### Introduction

We are Local Government elected members, elected to represent the best interests of Māori within our ward/constituency, and in addition we serve all constituents across the wider Districts and Region we represent. We provide a connection into Council and advocate for residents and ratepayers.

We believe that Māori have been under-represented in Local Government for far too long, and the establishment of Māori wards/constituencies at our Councils in 2021 have helped bridge this gap.

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Since we were elected in 2022, we have striven to provide a voice, true representation and a Te Ao Māori view on our respective councils. We wish to emphasise that the decisions by our respective Councils to establish Māori wards/constituencies in 2021 each followed an extensive public consultation process, whereby all members of the community had an equal chance to be heard, and Councils openly debated and decided the issues.

Poll provisions, by contrast, are a “tool of the majority” and never favour minority groups such as Iwi Māori. This has been proven to be the case since 2001 under the previous Māori wards regime – with only two Councils being able to establish Māori wards prior to the 2021 Amendment Act (Waikato Regional Council in 2013 and Wairoa District Council in 2016). All 15 other initiatives to establish Māori wards were voted down by binding poll.

Bringing back the poll provisions will recreate a higher procedural standard for Māori wards than that of general or wards for “communities of interest” such as rural wards, for which Council decisions are democratically made in a representation review and cannot be subject to a binding poll. This is completely unfair and seeks to silence the voice of Māori. We believe that Māori wards and constituencies should be treated the same as all other wards and not be subject to poll provisions. Instead Local Government should be empowered to make its own decisions – not have the ability to do so taken away.

In this respect, we fully support the letter dated 20 May 2024 to the Government from the 52 Mayors and Chairs, LGNZ and Te Maruata, and agree that this legislation is a complete overreach on the Coalition Government’s part, on local decision-making.

Ultimately, given the track record of binding polls in the past, we believe the Bill will result in many Māori wards and constituencies across the country being disestablished. Not having a Māori ward or constituency will remove the option for Māori voters to choose whether to be represented by general or Māori ward councillor and we believe that any alternative mechanisms for Māori participation in Local Government would not be the same as having a dedicated seat at the decision-making table.

We fully support the Waitangi Tribunal Report dated 17 May, which found that this Bill will breach the Treaty of Waitangi and its principles, and recommended the Bill be paused for further policy development and consultation. The Tribunal findings also show that the Department of Internal Affairs advised the Minister of Local Government against this move, providing good rationale and that it is likely to breach Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

We do not agree with the Government putting its commitment to its Coalition agreement above Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and with the extremely rushed way in which the Coalition Government is progressing this change of legislation process, including only allowing 4 working days for a submission to be made.

#### **Māori Wards Contribution to Local Government**

#### **We are opposed to this Bill because it does not honour and respect the contribution of Māori Wards to Local Government.**

As Councillors of a Māori ward or constituency, we are honoured and privileged to represent Māori in our respective Councils. The participation of Māori representatives is crucial for fostering a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive Council. It’s about having faces at the table that reflect their community and bringing our values, and lived and real perspectives to discussions and collective decision making.

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Māori ward/constituency elected members bring valuable cultural knowledge and perspectives to Local Government, enhancing the cultural competence of Councils. This leads to:

- Better Decision-Making with diverse viewpoints contributing to robust and well-rounded policy decisions
- Cultural Responsiveness in policies and services that are more in line with to the needs and aspirations of Māori
- Social Cohesion which promotes mutual respect and understanding between Māori and non-Māori populations.

Inclusive governance that actively involves Māori can lead to improved outcomes across various sectors, such as:

- Environmental Stewardship with Māori often bringing a deeper understanding of and commitment to environmental sustainability, informed by traditional ecological knowledge
- Social Wellbeing where policies reflect Māori values and needs can contribute to healthier, more vibrant communities.

We wish to note that, while we have Councillor colleagues elected to general wards and constituencies who have whakapapa Māori, and they can also seek to bring their Māori-centric experiences to the Council table, those Councillors did not campaign to be (and may not want to be) a voice or representative for Māori on their Council. They are not and should not be expected to represent the voice of Māori in the way that we, as specifically-elected Māori Ward/Constituency Councillors, are.

#### **Honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi**

**We are opposed to this Bill because it does not honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi.**

Te Tiriti o Waitangi establishes a foundational relationship between Māori and the Crown, emphasising partnership, participation, and protection. The changes enacted by the Crown in 2021 have helped ensure Māori representation in Local Government aligns with the principles of Te Tiriti by:

- Partnership - facilitating collaborative decision-making processes that involve Māori perspectives
- Participation - encouraging active Māori involvement in governance, ensuring these voices and concerns are heard
- Protection - safeguarding Māori rights and interests, particularly in areas impacting our whenua, resources, and cultural heritage.

The participation of Māori Councillors is crucial for fostering a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive governance structure.

We fully support the Waitangi Tribunal Report dated 17 May. Although the Tribunal was forced to draft the Report under intense time pressure due to the imminent introduction of the Māori Wards legislation into Parliament, the report findings are comprehensive and compelling. The Tribunal found that this Bill will breach the Treaty of Waitangi and its principles, and recommended the Bill be paused for further policy development and consultation.

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**Poll Provisions – not compatible with complex constitutional matters**

**We are opposed to this bill because binding polls are not fair in practice and not compatible with complex constitutional matters such as establishing Māori wards.**

The Waitangi Tribunal findings show that the Crown’s own advisors on Local Government issues – the Department of Internal Affairs advised the Minister of Local Government against this move, providing good rationale and that it is likely to breach Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Historically, providing poll provisions for Māori wards and constituencies did not deliver on the original policy intent which was to involve the community in decision making, and to support Māori communities by providing an avenue for them to demand that their Council holds a poll to establish Māori wards or constituencies.

The effects of poll provisions from 2002 to 2019 have proven to be an insurmountable barrier to establishing a Māori ward or constituency. From the 16 polls taken between 2002 and 2019 only one poll was successful (Wairoa District Council 2016). This was a Council initiated poll with 54% in favour and 46% against.

Instead of being a mechanism for community participation, they have deterred Councils and communities from proposing a Māori ward or constituency.

The Department of Internal Affairs, in advice to the Minister on this Bill, summed up the problems with poll provisions in that:

*Reinstating the polls will be unpopular with many in the local government sector and Māori communities;*

*Since the 2021 law changes, 46 local authorities have resolved to establish Māori wards. Our understanding is that many councils previously did not seriously consider establishing Māori wards. This was because of the perception that the polls could harm community relationships, including relationships with mana whenua, and undermine social cohesion.*

*We anticipate most of these councils will be very concerned about the re-introduction of the polls. It is likely to discourage any other councils considering establishing Māori wards in the future. The change is also likely to be very unpopular with Māori communities, especially where wards have been established.*

*Before the 2021 amendments, Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) and Taituarā – Local Government Professionals advocated strongly to remove the polls. In a 2018 letter, LGNZ noted “It is imperative that the Government act to address the unfairness created by the poll provisions and put in place a legislative framework that will enable mature and constructive conversations about options for Māori representation in local authorities”.*

*An LGNZ survey of elected members found that, after the 2022 local elections, about 21% of members identify as Māori or are of Māori descent. This is up from 14% in the 2019 survey.*

**We agree with this statement from the Department of Internal Affairs.**

Advice to Minister Brown from Department of Internal Affairs 5 December 2023:

*The polls proved to be an almost insurmountable barrier to establishing Māori wards. Only two councils were able to establish Māori wards using the Local Electoral Act process. When polls were held, community division and animosity was common. As a result many councils*

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*opted not to even put the option on the table because of the risk of community conflict. Similarly, mana whenua sometimes asked councils not to consider Māori wards because of the risk of a backlash against their community. The poll provisions gave no scope for councils to balance minority interests in the final decision because the poll outcome was binding, based on a straight majority. Since the poll provisions were removed, 46 councils have resolved to establish Māori wards*

**We agree with this statement from Department of Internal Affairs.**

*The Waitangi Tribunal has observed that “Alternative mechanisms for Māori participation in local government are not the same as having a dedicated seat at the council table”. A Māori ward or constituency is the only mechanism that guarantees Māori representation on the body that makes the final decisions (for example committees of council cannot adopt a District Plan or Long-Term Plan).*

**We agree with this statement from Department of Internal Affairs citing the Waitangi Tribunal.**

The advice from the Department of Internal Affairs to Minister Brown was:

*“Referendums and polls are an instrument of majority rule which can suppress minority interests. Normal lawmaking process have safeguards to make sure minority rights and interests are considered – human rights legislation, parliamentary debates and the select committee process. But referendums do not require that tabling and balancing of interests, and the outcome will depend on the majority’s perception of the minority interests.”*

**We completely agree with this advice and believe that the Department of Internal Affairs summed this up perfectly. The issue of representation for Māori is complex and should be decided upon locally by Councils in consultation with Iwi / Māori and its communities, not by a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ poll.**

Further to this, the former LGNZ President Dave Cull summed up binding polls by saying:

*“Of equal concern, the polls reduce a complex issue to a simple binary choice, which, by encouraging people to take sides, damages race relations in our districts. Matters of representation and relationships should be addressed in a deliberative manner that employs balanced and considered dialogue – not by poll. In fact, a poll is not necessary. Should a council resolve to establish Māori wards or constituencies, or any other ward, against the wishes of its community then the community has the option to hold that council to account at the next election – this is how representative democracy is intended to work*

**Again, we agree with this statement and also believe that binding polls and poll provisions in general are divisive and do nothing to enhance relationships within communities. In fact, it will do quite the opposite.**

In summary, we are in opposition to the reinstatement of polls for Māori wards and constituencies and ask that this be relooked at and withdrawn.

If polls are to be implemented then we strongly urge the following to be implemented:

- That only those on the Māori roll vote in a poll. These are the only residents and ratepayers who will be affected by the outcome of the poll and therefore should have the most input into it.

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- We ask that there is an increase in the petition threshold from 5% to 10% of electors to initiate a poll. Five per cent is a low threshold given the costs and impacts of polls on communities. It is therefore not unreasonable to expect a larger demonstration of a desire for a poll before undertaking one. A move to 10 per cent would align with the threshold set out in the Citizens Initiated Referenda Act 1993.
- We also recommend making the polls non-binding but require councils to give them due consideration in their decision making process. This would give the poll weight in the decision making process, but still enable these decisions to be made within the wider legal context and with due consideration of a range of relevant factors.

**Cost to Ratepayers**

The significant cost to ratepayers is another reason we oppose this Bill.

This change in legislation could result in up to 45 councils being required to hold a poll on Māori wards and constituencies at the 2025 elections, with the outcome to take effect in 2028. This is dependent upon what is decided by August 2024 in terms of disestablish now or ride it out until a poll in 2025. Councils throughout the country have extremely tight budgets and will need to fund the extra cost for the poll, as well as an early representation review. Many Councils are in the process of reviewing their Long Term Plan with proposed rates increases the highest ever seen. This in the midst of a cost of living crisis that will constrain Council budgets further. The cost of a poll and representation review will be dependent on the size of the council and district/region with an estimate at around \$175,000 for a poll and potential costs of up to \$170,000 for a representation review. In addition, Council staff and resource will be required.

**Timing of Poll Should it Proceed**

Finally, we are concerned at the timing of the proposed poll on Māori wards and constituencies. All Māori ward candidates will need to campaign for their seat, engage with Māori and participate in electioneering, while simultaneously convincing the community of the value of a Māori ward or constituency. This will be a huge undertaking and put potential Māori ward/constituency councillors to an unfair burden. The responsibility of educating the community on Māori wards will naturally fall to iwi to lead and coordinate without guaranteed resources or support.

**Summary and Recommendation**

In summary, Māori should be fairly represented in local government. This Bill will likely result in the disestablishment of many Māori wards and constituencies across the country. Disestablishing Māori wards and constituencies, and making them subject to a higher procedural standard than that of general or rural ward is opposed by Te Pae Tāwhiti Rōpū.

We recommend that the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill not be progressed and that status quo remains.

Whilst we oppose the reintroduction of poll provisions for Māori wards and constituencies, should these be reintroduced, we recommend the following:

- Increase the petition threshold from five per cent to 10 per cent of electors to initiate a poll. Five per cent is too low a threshold given the costs and impacts of polls on communities.
- Only those registered on the Māori roll can vote on a Māori ward and constituency poll.
- Make the poll non-binding and require councils to give them due consideration.

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We would like the opportunity to speak in support of this submission.

*Parties to the submission:*

Roly Fitzgerald

**Te Pūao Māori Ward Councillor, Palmerston North City Council**

Korty Wilson

**Ruapehu Māori Ward Councillor, Ruapehu District Council**

Justin Tamihana

**Horowhenua Māori Ward Councillor, Horowhenua District Council**

Nina Hori Te Pa

**Horowhenua Māori Ward Councillor, Horowhenua District Council**

Coral Raukawa

**Tiikeitia ki Tai (Coastal) Ward Councillor, Rangitikei District Council**

Piki Te Ora Hiroa

**Tiikeitia ki Uta (Inland) Ward Councillor, Rangitikei District Council**

Bridget Bell

**Ngā Tapuae o Matangi Māori Ward Councillor, Manawatū District Council**

Fiona Kahukura Hadley-Chase

**Ruapehu Māori Ward Councillor, Ruapehu District Council**

Channey Iwikau

**Ruapehu Māori Ward Councillor, Ruapehu District Council**

Naioma Chase

**Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua Māori Ward Councillor, Tararua District Council**

Te Kenehi Teira

**Tonga Māori Councillor, Horizons Regional Council**

Turuhia (Jim) Edmonds

**Raki Māori Councillor, Horizons Regional Council**

*And from Horizons Regional Council:*

Wiremu Te Awe Awe

**Councillor, Horizons Regional Council.**



## // 04

### Entrenchment of Māori wards seats for local government

**Remit:** *That LGNZ proactively promote and lobby to entrench the Māori Wards and Constituencies for the 64 councils which currently have these, to require the support of a supermajority of parliament should either parliament or councils seek their removal.*

**Proposed by:** Northland Regional Council  
**Supported by:** LGNZ Zone 1 (Northland Regional Council, Far North District Council, Whangarei District Council)

#### Why is this remit important?

Zone 1 opposes the changes proposed to Māori wards and constituencies provisions in the Local Electoral Act 2001 (LEA), the Local Government Electoral Legislation Act 2023, and the Local Electoral Regulations 2001.

Zone 1 views are summarised below:

- a) Māori wards and constituencies are an appropriate and necessary way to deliver on Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations — they are not a race-based selection.
- b) Reversion to a poll system to establish / retain Māori constituencies in local government is inconsistent with the national electoral system of a Māori roll and Māori seats in Parliament. There is no rational reason for the different approach.

#### Background and Context

The current government has agreed to amend the legislation and regulation related to the establishment and continuation of Māori wards in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The proposed changes have a major impact for the representation of Māori communities and the unique opportunities and challenges they face. It also compromises the ability of local government across the country to deliver on its Treaty of Waitangi obligations.

Zone 1 members do not support the proposed changes and have submitted their views as individual councils and the broader local government sector through LGNZ.

As discussions have developed on the proposed amendments, the need to align Māori ward representation models with parliamentary Māori electorate representation model has become evident.

#### How does this remit relate to LGNZ’s current work programme?

This proposal aligns with LGNZ’s policy that states:

- Remits must be relevant to local government as a whole rather than exclusively relevant to a single zone or sector group or an individual council;



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- Remits should be of a major policy nature (constitutional and substantive policy) rather than matters that can be dealt with by administrative action.

In accordance with LGNZ's strategy, this proposal would strengthen local government as a whole to support our communities to thrive - environmentally, culturally, economically and socially.

### **How will the proposing council help LGNZ to make progress on this remit?**

Northland Regional Council, with the support of Far North District Council and Whangarei District Council, will advocate, lobby, and promote the cause and case for the entrenchment of Māori ward seats in local government governance structures.



## // 05 Graduated driver licensing system

**Remit:** *That LGNZ advocate for changes to the fee structure for driver licensing, better preparing young people for driver license testing, and greater testing capacity in key locations throughout New Zealand, in order to relieve pressure on the driver licensing system and ensure testing can be conducted in a quick and efficient manner.*

**Proposed by:** Ashburton District Council

**Supported by:** Hurunui District Council, Kaikōura District Council, Selwyn District Council, Timaru District Council, Waimakariri District Council and Waitaki District Council

### Why is this remit important?

Communities across New Zealand are being impacted by excessive wait times associated with the graduated driver licensing system (GDLS). There are three stages to the GDLS, and those aged 16 or older can enter the system and undergo both theoretical and practical testing to graduate from a learner’s license (accompanied driving) to a full license (license without restrictions) over the space of 24 months. Currently, across the country, demand for testing significantly exceeds testing capacity leading to negative implications for our young people, and the wider community. Action is required to ensure young people in our community can undertake testing without delay, failing to remedy this situation could result in:

- Reduced ability to access testing
- Increases in testing failure rates
- Social and economic disadvantages for young people

### Background and Context

Work undertaken by Waka Kotahi and other agencies identified the need to remove barriers for young people associated with obtaining a driving license in New Zealand. Through this work, re-sit fees were identified as a potential barrier. According to Waka Kotahi data, only 53% of people on a restricted license pass their practical driving test first time around, meaning many young people trying to graduate were being financially burdened by subsequent fees in completing a re-sit.

From October 1 2023, Waka Kotahi introduced a revised fee structure for a learner’s, restricted, or full license, which removed re-sit fees for drivers who failed a first or subsequent attempt. While this change makes graduation through the system more financially obtainable, it has put increased pressure on testing services as those who fail the first time are rebooking immediately. This, in combination with the shortage of assessors, is causing significant wait times across the country. The increase in wait times has multiple implications which are summarized below using national and local examples.

- Reduced ability to access testing: In 2020, the national average wait time to sit a restricted driving test was 16 days, this has dramatically increased to 53 days in 2023/24. Drivers in the Ashburton district are facing a 94-day delay in booking a restricted license test, with only one agent (VTNZ) being able to facilitate testing.



- Increases in testing failure rates: excessive wait times in Ashburton may be causing young people to book testing in alternative locations. According to information obtained during an Ashburton District Road Safety Co-ordinating Committee meeting, some young people from Ashburton and Timaru are travelling to the West Coast (3-5 hours away) to undertake practical testing, there is concern that completing a practical test on unfamiliar roads may lead to an increase in failure rates. Reports have also been made that the decision to remove re-sit fees has led to young drivers completing the test before they are ready, leading to multiple failed attempts.
- Social and economic disadvantages for young people: there are social and employability benefits to holding a driver’s license. According to MBIE, two-thirds of all jobs advertised in New Zealand have a minimum requirement of a restricted license. The reduced ability for young people to obtain a restricted or full license may see otherwise suitably skilled candidates miss out on employment opportunities while they wait to sit and obtain the required license. This also has impacts for the community, in particular local businesses, who will potentially struggle to source young candidates for entry level roles. This is further amplified in our community where public transport is non-existent, with the only quasi-public transport available being the Mid Canterbury Connector – a locally led, volunteer driven service operating on a booked return trip service between rural communities.

Relevant legislation, policy or practice

- Land Transport Act 1998 (part 4)
- Land Transport (Driver Licensing and Driver Testing Fees) Regulations 1999.
- NZTA driving licensing fees schedule

**How does this remit relate to LGNZ’s current work programme?**

While this is not currently part of LGNZ’s work programme, engaging with central government will be essential to making progress in this area. Ensuring that the local voice is heard and understood by central agencies is the only way in which this issue will be able to be addressed. Given the impact on our young people, and the subsequent effects this has on their ability to gain independence and contribute to our communities and local economies, we believe this is a worthy project for LGNZ to drive on behalf of the sector.

**How will the proposing council help LGNZ to make progress on this remit?**

While changing the fee structure will help incentivise people to pass their tests on their first attempt, other changes should be made to better prepare people, particularly young people, who are trying to obtain a driver licence, and ensure there is sufficient capacity in the system.

Ashburton District Council is willing to trial/pilot the practical applications of an improved graduated driver’s licensing scheme.

Our Mayors Taskforce for Jobs programme has been highly successful, working with community groups and schools to identify people who are disadvantaged in the labour market. A significant proportion of this group are seeking drivers’ licences in order to improve their chances of employment. There is an opportunity to align the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs programme with an enhancement of an Ashburton based training and accreditation centre, leveraging the MTFJ programme’s experience in driver licensing schemes. The goal of this would be to better prepare

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young people for driver licence tests and reduce the pressure on the system imposed by people having to re-sit tests.

Ashburton District Council also proposes a pilot scheme to work with government to attract, train and supply increased numbers of examiners for the Ashburton district along with other centres throughout the country. Ashburton district would become a training region; prospective examiners would be based in the region while they train and qualify before returning to their respective regions to fill gaps and boost capability. Our region is well suited to examiner development, being close to Christchurch but more affordable and having a network of urban and rural roads.

**Hon Simeon Brown**

Minister for Energy  
Minister of Local Government  
Minister of Transport  
Minister for Auckland  
Deputy Leader of the House



ITEM 9.2  
ATTACHMENT 2

James Meager MP  
Member of Parliament for Rangitata  
Parliament Buildings  
WELLINGTON

24 MAY 2024

Dear James

Thank you for your letter of 2 May 2024 regarding the driving licence processing delays in the Rangitata electorate. I share the frustration being experienced by people wanting to engage driver licence services only to be met with significant delays.

The Automobile Association (AA) and Vehicle Testing New Zealand (VTNZ) have been providing regulatory services on behalf of the NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) since 1999.

NZTA advises me that since the previous government's decision last year to remove the re-sit fee for theory and practical tests there has been a significant increase in demand for testing services, leading to unacceptable delays.

The inability to engage driver licence services in a timely manner is having an impact on the employability of learners and delaying their progression into the community.

NZTA and VTNZ are currently taking measures to accommodate the current high demand by re-prioritising driver testing officers to driver licencing agent sites with high booking numbers and increasing site opening hours. NZTA is aware of the urgency and my expectation that the issues be addressed promptly.

These delays across New Zealand, which follow the previous government's changes to re-sit fees, are unacceptable. I remain very concerned about these delays and am currently considering advice on options to address it, which may include reinstating a re-sit fee.

Regarding your request that NZTA remove the age limit for booking drivers licence tests, I have been advised that it is a legal requirement for applicants of driver licences to be 16 years or older.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely

Hon Simeon Brown  
Minister of Transport

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Ashburton District Council Remit 2024



## // 06

### Proactive lever to mitigate the deterioration of unoccupied buildings

**Remit:** *That LGNZ advocate to Government:*

- *For legislative change enabling local authorities to compel building owners to remediate unoccupied derelict buildings and sites that have deteriorated to a state where they negatively impact the amenity of the surrounding area.*
- *To incentivise repurposing vacant buildings to meet region-specific needs, for example, accommodation conversion.*

**Proposed by:** Gisborne District Council

**Supported by:** Rotorua Lakes Council, South Wairarapa District Council, Wairoa District Council, New Plymouth District Council, Napier City Council, Rangitikei District Council, Whanganui District Council, Dunedin City Council

#### Why is this remit important?

There is no legislation enabling councils to take proactive action on the decaying condition of vacant buildings. Intervention is only possible when buildings become so dangerous that the Building Act 2004 (BA04) allows for dangerous building notices.

The absence of enabling regulations and enforcement tools can result in derelict sites negatively affecting both neighbourhoods and city centres. The public expects their local authorities to maintain community standards and they are frequently disappointed by our inability to intervene. Especially where keystone buildings deteriorate over decades.

The economic and social consequences of unoccupied derelict buildings negatively affect local businesses, city centre revitalisation, regional economic development, and tourism activity. Negative impacts suppress local investment and the prosperity of regional centres throughout New Zealand. Legislative change to enable the remediation of decaying building conditions and unlock their economic potential is in the national interest and significant to local government as a whole.

#### Background and Context

##### Existing building legislation is too late to mitigate decaying buildings

Once a Code Compliance Certificate has been issued, there is no regulatory avenue for proactive remediation of a vacant building’s decaying condition. The BA04 is silent on maintenance responsibilities until the public is likely to be harmed by unsafe building conditions.

The BA04's approach to dangerous buildings is reactive as it seeks only to remediate dangerous conditions. The impact of a deteriorating building on its surrounding environment is not taken into consideration.

Waiting until a building becomes dangerous is too late to remediate the significant economic and social effects of vacant and deteriorating buildings.



In regional centres like Gisborne, a small number of deteriorating assets can have a significant impact on surrounding businesses and perceptions of the city centre. Long-term underinvestment means significant capital is required to restore these buildings before prospective owners and/or tenants can reoccupy the space. Investment is often cost-prohibitive, leaving vital buildings empty and further deteriorating.

In May 2024, Gisborne’s Mayor wrote to Government detailing the national impact of this legislative gap (letter attached). The letter’s appendix, *Ten years of the National Problem*, outlines how problematic buildings are challenging local authorities throughout New Zealand.

**Local authorities have developed ad hoc, imperfect solutions to address the legislative gap**

Upper Hutt City Council's Unoccupied Commercial Premises Bylaw and Clutha District Council's Regulatory Bylaw both aim to prevent building deterioration. However, bylaw solutions are unenforceable without costly prosecutions that risk uncertain outcomes.

In Rotorua, where houses are problematic, rather than commercial buildings, Rotorua District Council has spent \$60,000 on consultants' reports and legal advice for a single abandoned property because it lacks the authority to require its demolition.

The BA04 seeks to ensure safety and well-being, sustainable development, and building code compliance. However, because it does not provide local authorities with effective tools to encourage essential maintenance and building utilisation, we have no way to intervene when buildings are deteriorating until the problems are significant, sometimes beyond repair.

Wellington City Council recently signaled its intention to remove ten buildings from its heritage list as part of a district plan review. Among those buildings were the dangerous, unoccupied Gordon Wilson Flats, a contentious feature of the Wellington skyline intended for demolition by their owner, Victoria University, due to restoration cost.

List removal failed to secure ministerial approval. However, this situation illustrates the impossible predicament faced by local authorities when heritage buildings have not been adequately maintained, and the extraordinary measures they must take when buildings have deteriorated beyond repair. Local authorities’ inability to prevent the deterioration of vital assets threatens a loss of national heritage and identity through demolition. The solution must be to enable proactive measures addressing deteriorating conditions before buildings are demolished by neglect.

**Mitigating the social and economic consequences of underutilised buildings urgently requires:**

- A new legislative lever that will enable earlier intervention and action to remediate deteriorating building assets and or
- Collaboration between local and central government and regional providers to develop region-specific incentives encouraging the use of unproductive assets, e.g., repurposing buildings for accommodation.

**How does this remit relate to LGNZ’s current work programme?**

Addressing the gap in building legislation and its consequences for regional economic development does not currently feature in LGNZ’s broader advocacy work programme. However, LGNZ has for some time been aware of the legislative gap and advocated on this issue as it aligns with their strategic priority of focusing advocacy on the big issues impacting local government.



In 2014, LGNZ wrote to the Minister of Building and Construction suggesting the BA04 define derelict sites, which would allow for such properties to be included in their Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policies. LGNZ’s 2015 submission to the Rules Reduction Taskforce highlighted that derelict building issues are a regular source of community distress, presenting risks to health, fire hazards, and sites for criminal behaviour. In 2022, LGNZ again proposed that the government define derelict buildings; however, attempts to meet the Minister of Building and Construction were unsuccessful.

While these efforts failed to find favour, advocacy to political leaders is urgently required because:

- Current BA04 considerations are inadequate in addressing building issues that need to be remediated before buildings become derelict.
- The Government’s accelerated review of building code requirements extends to improving economic activity.
- The Government has signalled its intention to develop housing improvement strategies through a cross-government Ministerial Working Group on Housing.
- Legislative change and incentives to activate unproductive buildings and unlock regional economic improvement align with the Coalition’s Decision-Making Principles A – E.

**How will the proposing council help LGNZ to make progress on this remit?**

Gisborne District Council will:

- Continue advocating directly to the Ministers for Building and Construction, Housing and Local Government.
- Collaborate with LGNZ, councils, Government and stakeholders to develop new legislative tools to tackle this issue, strengthening our national economic resilience.
- Share any appropriate research and development, and data analysis from our region.
- Undertake any pilot programme involving temporary rule changes or funding initiatives, such as incentivising the conversion of commercial buildings to housing.
- Identify and work with local providers and property owners on the implementation of any pilot.



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2 May 2024

Hon Chris Penk - Minister for Building and Construction  
Hon Chris Bishop - Minister for Housing  
Hon Tama Potaka - Associate Minister Social Housing  
Hon Simeon Brown - Minister Local Government



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**LEGISLATIVE CHANGE IS REQUIRED TO UNLOCK SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC AND HOUSING IMPROVEMENTS IN NEW ZEALAND'S REGIONAL CENTRE**

Good morning Ministers,

I would like to bring to your attention a gap in current building legislation, which is affecting local businesses, city centre revitalisation, regional economic development and tourism activity in our region.

**In short, there is no enabling legislation that allows regulatory agencies to take proactive action on the decaying condition of vacant buildings.**

Intervention is only possible when buildings become so dangerous that the Building Act 2004 allows for dangerous building notices. The absence of enabling regulations and enforcement tools, results in keystone buildings remaining idle and unproductive, sometimes for decades.

The attachments to this letter provide more information on the challenges facing Gisborne District Council and many other local authorities across New Zealand.

**Legislative change to unlock the economic potential of underutilised and decaying buildings is in the national interest because the negative economic and social impacts created by underutilised buildings are nationally significant.**

Unproductive buildings negatively impact regional prosperity throughout the country. We believe:

- New legislative tools are needed to unlock the economic potential of underutilised buildings.
- Urgent collaboration between local and central government is needed to develop a solution that will enable earlier intervention and action on commercial building issues.

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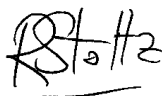
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- Activating unproductive buildings to support regional economic development is strongly aligned with the Government's Ongoing Decision-Making Principles A – E.

As this matter is significant for local government as a whole, Council will be putting forward a remit on this matter at the upcoming LGNZ Annual General Meeting.

We look forward to working with the Government to develop new legislative tools to enable us to tackle this issue and continue to strengthen our national economic resilience.

Warm regards,



**Rehette Stoltz**  
Mayor Gisborne District Council

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**Attachments:**

Attachment 1 – Gisborne’s Deteriorating Buildings

Attachment 2 – Problem definition: Current legislation is too late to mitigate decaying buildings

Attachment 3 – Ten Years of the National Problem

Attachment 4 – Seized buildings in Gisborne

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Attachment 1 – Gisborne’s Deteriorating Buildings

Main Street retail space. Corner Gladstone Rd and Peel St



Former Westlake Hotel. Corner Gladstone Rd and Peel St



Premium retail space. Peel St



Deteriorating building. Lowe St



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Main Street retail space. Gladstone Rd



Deteriorating building. Childers Rd



Masonic Hotel decaying façade. Lowe St



Masonic Hotel frontage. Gladstone Rd



Abandoned detritus. Adjacent to Masonic Hotel



Main Street building decay. Gladstone Rd



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**Attachment 2: Problem definition: Current legislation is too late to mitigate decaying buildings**

During deliberations on the Gisborne Dangerous, Affected and Insanitary Buildings Policy 2024<sup>1</sup> under the Building Act 2004 (the BA04), Gisborne District Council (Council) identified inadequacies in the existing building legislation framework. Also identified were the negative impacts these deficiencies are having both regionally and nationally.

**Once a code compliance certificate (CCC) has been issued, there is no enabling legislation that allows regulatory agencies to take proactive action on the decaying condition of vacant buildings. Mitigation of problematic buildings is only possible when they eventually deteriorate to a condition so dangerous that BA04 provisions allow for dangerous building notices. The absence of enabling regulations and enforcement tools, in between CCC and dangerous building notices, results in essential buildings remaining idle and unproductive, sometimes for decades.**

**The BA04's approach to dangerous buildings is reactive. It seeks only to remediate dangerous conditions and does not consider the impact a decaying building has on its surrounding environment. This means it is both too late to remediate problematic conditions and an inadequate tool to address the significant economic effects caused when buildings become locked in a deterioration spiral. In Gisborne's case, deteriorating conditions negatively impact surrounding businesses and perceptions of the city centre, affecting a decline in economic activity. As regional economies underpin national economic prosperity,<sup>2</sup> the negative impact of underutilised buildings has a ripple effect on the national economy.**

As a building's condition declines, the required investment in its essential maintenance and works (e.g. earthquake strengthening and cosmetic upkeep) decreases. The deteriorating condition of commercial buildings is particularly problematic in regional city centres, as this inefficient use of key placemaking assets contributes to poor amenity.

In regional centres, where the heart of the city is comprised of only a handful of buildings, even a small number of deteriorating assets can have a significant impact. A prolonged lack of maintenance requires significant investment to get a building back up to scratch before prospective owners and/or tenants can once again operate out of it. The required work is often cost-prohibitive, and vital buildings can remain empty, which leads to further deterioration.

The BA04 seeks to ensure safety and well-being, sustainable development, and building code compliance. However, because the current BA04 legislation does not provide local authorities with effective tools to encourage essential maintenance and building utilisation, we have no way to intervene when buildings are deteriorating until the problem is significant. We can only intervene when buildings have decayed to such a condition that they are likely to harm the public.

The public expects their local authorities to prevent city centre building deterioration, and they are frequently disappointed by our inability to intervene. Regional communities such as Gisborne, where the problem is acutely felt, are unable to prevent the gradual decline of their city centres. Without a legislative tool enabling the remediation of inactive buildings, and no central Government solution either, Council cannot achieve its aspiration of maintaining a

<sup>1</sup> Gisborne Dangerous, Affected and Insanitary Buildings [Policy](#) 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Hon Steven Joyce (2016) *Regions lead recovery from Global Financial Crisis*. This Beehive [Release](#) emphasises the instrumental role regional economies, including Gisborne, played in leading New Zealand's economic recovery from the Global Financial Crisis.

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high-quality urban environment that capitalises on heritage, tourism, and lifestyle to attract economic investment and development.

#### The Problem in Gisborne

Gisborne's Central Business District (CBD) contains several **vacant** and **underutilised buildings** that have been **neglected for long periods**.<sup>3</sup> Their deteriorating aesthetic condition **negatively affects the city's appearance, impacting tourism experiences** and **suppressing local utilisation, economic growth**, and community wellbeing.

**Deterioration of Buildings:** A lack of basic maintenance has led to the disrepair of unoccupied buildings in Gisborne. This includes premium ground-floor retail spaces on Gladstone Road, Gisborne's main street (see **Attachment1 – Gisborne's Deteriorating Buildings**).

**Negative Community Impact:** Reduced vibrancy in the CBD has suppressed community utilisation and local commerce,<sup>4</sup> making it less attractive to new businesses and shoppers. This decline in activity fosters increased incidences of vandalism and the impression of an unsafe CBD.

**Homelessness Consequences:** The declining condition of city buildings leads to squatters occupying vacant buildings, resulting in litter, sanitation issues, and antisocial behaviour adversely affecting adjacent businesses, some of which are rate-paying owner-occupiers. Council increasingly incurs the financial burden of cleanup and the disassembly of homeless encampments in conjunction with the Police.

**Economic Investment Deterrence:** Visible city centre decline creates the perception of an economically depressed area and discourages economic investment from outside the region, weakening local economic resilience. Decreased revenue from idled assets reduces the likelihood that owners of earthquake-prone buildings will fund reinforcement works, threatening key buildings with demolition.

**Suppressed Tourism and Economic Growth:** Tourism, a vital part of Gisborne's economy, is growing slower than the national average,<sup>5</sup> limiting regional employment opportunities. The declining state of Gisborne's CBD negatively impacts tourists' experiences in our region, which challenges the Government's recent commitment to support tourism.<sup>6</sup> A vibrant and welcoming city centre is essential for creating positive visitor experiences, as it influences overall impressions of a place.<sup>7</sup> However, buildings becoming locked into a spiral of declining

<sup>3</sup> In June 2007, Gisborne witnessed a 1.3% decline in retail sales despite national economic growth accelerating to 2.6%. In the same period. The number of commercial permits issued in Gisborne also fell by 13%. In December 2008, Gisborne experienced the largest quarterly decline in retail sales at a time when national retail sales were trending upward. Commercial building consents dropped by 6.1% in the same quarter. Sources: The National Bank Regional Trends Economics reports, February 2007, February 2008. In the wake of the global financial crisis, Council's 2010/11 Annual [Report](#) identified Gisborne's retailers among those most affected by economic conditions at the time.

<sup>4</sup> Over 55% of Gisborne employment is currently located outside of land zoned for business.

<sup>5</sup> The tourism sector contributed \$56.3 million to Gisborne GDP in 2022, accounting for 2.3% of the region's economic output and 7.1% of total annual employment. In 2022, total tourism spending in Gisborne was down 0.1% year on year, while national tourism spending increased by 1.4% in the same period. In the 10-year period 2012-2022, Gisborne has experienced only 1.8% annual employment growth, lagging 2.1% national growth. Sources: Trust Tairāwhiti (2023) [Draft Destination Management Plan](#) utilising data retrieved from Infometrics.co.nz; Infometrics (2023) *Tairāwhiti at a Glance: 2022* retrieved from Infometrics.co.nz on 7 March 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Acknowledging tourism is the second biggest contributor to New Zealand's recent economy, the Tourism Minister, Hon. Matt Doocey, recently affirmed government commitment to supporting the growth of tourism and hospitality operators. Source: Hon Matt Doocey (2024) *Tourism data shows determination of sector*. Beehive [Release](#).

<sup>7</sup> The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment [Destination Management Guidance](#) emphasises that supporting infrastructure and amenities are essential to cultivating compelling visitor experiences.

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investment and physical deterioration presents a significant barrier to regional aspirations for a vibrant, thriving city that is a destination for business, employment, and tourism.

Figure 1 - the old Masonic Hotel greets cruise-ship tourists walking from Gisborne's port to the city centre.



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**The Problem nationwide**

Gisborne is not the only region with declining, under-utilised buildings. Provincial areas are experiencing a downward spiral in the status of city centre vitality when compared to major urban areas.<sup>8</sup> Unoccupied buildings are contributing to this decline. They pose safety risks and affect community well-being, property values, and public perception of city centres around the country.

**Attachment 3 – Ten Years of the National Problem** outlines how issues with idle, unproductive buildings have become a nationwide concern in the last decade. Neglected heritage buildings face significant challenges as councils struggle to intervene where *demolition by neglect*<sup>9</sup> becomes irreversible. The lack of clear criteria for identifying and addressing derelict properties hinders councils' ability to take proactive measures to remediate these buildings as they deteriorate.

**Legislative Inadequacies Prevent a Proactive Approach**

**1. Building Maintenance Responsibility**

- After local authorities have issued code compliance certificates and no further building work is required, building maintenance is the responsibility of property owners.
- Local authorities have no means to enforce minimum maintenance standards for dormant or underutilised buildings, even in cases where buildings are left to decay.
- The absence of any tool to encourage proactive maintenance means local authorities can be left with unsightly buildings, often in prominent locations. This creates a cycle of declining investment that negatively impacts regional prosperity.
- Gisborne has five large, central buildings locked in an ongoing legal dispute between the Police and silent offshore owners. This contested ownership status prevents building remediation, even under dangerous building notices, as no party assumes responsibility for remediating the unsafe conditions.

**2. The Building Act 2004 Does Not Adequately Consider Remediation**

- The BA04 enables local authorities to compel remediation via dangerous or insanitary building notices only when building issues become so dangerous, they may harm occupants or the public.
- These notices are a last resort. They cannot address situations where buildings essential to a city's social, cultural and economic fabric decay due to neglect. This is because the BA04 does not consider the negative consequences experienced during a building's decline when its conditions are deteriorating but not yet dangerous.
- Councils can intervene when there is evidence of infestation or fire risk; however, the threshold for action is high.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Aigwi, I., et al. (2019). *A performance-based framework to prioritise underutilised historical buildings for adaptive reuse interventions in New Zealand*. *Sustainable Cities and Society*, [48](#), 101547-101547.

<sup>9</sup> Dunedin City Council defines *demolition by neglect* as a building being allowed to deteriorate to the point that demolition becomes necessary, or restoration becomes economically unreasonable. In some cases, building owners may allow this to happen to bypass heritage protections and the substantial financial investment to enable ongoing use. Source: Dunedin City Council's 15 May 2023 [Agenda](#).

<sup>10</sup> [Newshub](#). (2022). Call for law change as councils say there is an increasing problem of derelict, unoccupied houses.

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- Neglected heritage buildings are particularly vulnerable to becoming dangerous and, in instances of continued neglect, demolition.<sup>11</sup> Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga recently requested Council policy<sup>12</sup> encourage heritage building owners to undertake preventative maintenance and upgrades to conserve their essential heritage character. However, BA04 considerations do not provide any mechanism for local authorities to encourage such action. Therefore, any suggestion or encouragement of proactive maintenance via a dangerous building policy would be unenforceable under the current BA04 considerations.
- In cases where heritage buildings have been neglected, the costs associated with restoration or repurposing can be prohibitive for building owners. Lotteries funding is not always readily available<sup>13</sup> and heritage funding prioritises category-one buildings. Not all vital buildings are so categorised, and few buildings in Gisborne meet eligibility requirements.

**Solution needed: Legislative Change**

Activating unproductive buildings to unlock regional economic improvements aligns with the Coalition's Decision-Making Principles A – E:

- **Principled** decisions based on sound policy principles and economic efficiency;
- **Focused** on improving productivity and economic growth to increase prosperity, and enhance housing affordability, efficiency and effectiveness.
- Stopping interventions that aren't delivering **Results**.
- **People-focused** public services will be designed around the needs of public and tourist users. The Government will be **accountable** for clear public service targets and regular progress reporting on these objectives.

Proactive remediation measures do not sit comfortably within the BA04 framework because it was not designed to address the problem of inactive buildings and the associated economic consequences. Fixing the problem requires:

- a lever compelling proactive remediation of deteriorating city centre assets and or
- incentivising the utilisation of unproductive assets.

Examples of proactive legislative tools for unlocking the potential of unproductive buildings can be found in both the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

**United Kingdom's Town and Country Planning Act 1990**

The UK mitigates unproductive buildings via Section 215,<sup>14</sup> which enables Local Planning Authorities to:

- take proactive steps towards sustainable regeneration of local areas, including conditions that adversely affect the amenity of the surrounding area
- consider local circumstances, such as site conditions and impact on the surroundings
- require a broad scope of works, including painting, external repairs, demolition and re-building

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<sup>11</sup> The Ministry of Culture and Heritage identified late requests to 'save' buildings are commonly requested at the last possible moment due to communities not seeking remediation until a building is under threat of demolition. Source: Ministry for Culture and Heritage. (2018). *Strengthening protections for heritage buildings: Report identifying issues within New Zealand's heritage protection system.*

<sup>12</sup> HNZPT (2023) [submission](#) (Page 51) on the Gisborne District Council Dangerous Buildings Policy 2024.

<sup>13</sup> Lottery Environment and Heritage Committee year on year funding [declined](#) by 46% in the 2023/24 financial year.

<sup>14</sup> Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 215 [Best Practice Guidance](#) and [Act](#).

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- use Section 215 notices in conjunction with other powers, such as repair notices for heritage-listed or dangerous buildings.

'Amenity' is a broad concept not formally defined in the legislation. This means assessment is a matter of degree. A clear and well-presented case that stresses the adverse impact of the site on the local street scene has proven more effective than a technical definition of 'loss of amenity'.

**The Republic of Ireland Derelict Sites Act 1990**

Ireland mitigates unproductive buildings with the Derelict Sites Act,<sup>15</sup> which defines *derelict sites* and makes local authorities responsible for dealing with them. Derelict sites are defined as detracting from the amenity, character or appearance of the neighbourhood with:

- structures in a ruinous, derelict or dangerous condition
- land or structure condition that is neglected, unsightly or objectionable
- deposits or collections of litter, rubbish, debris, or waste.

Under the legislation, local authorities can mitigate problems by:

- prosecuting owners who do not comply with notices
- making compulsory land purchases
- carrying out necessary work and recovering cost.

**Proactive Measures to Mitigate Inactivity would not conflict with the New Zealand Bill of Rights 1990 (BORA)**

BORA protects human rights and fundamental freedoms; however, it does not provide for a general right to privacy or property enjoyment. BORA protections are subject to reasonable limitations where they are demonstrably justifiable in a free and democratic society.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the Justice Minister, Hon Paul Goldsmith, has indicated the government wishes to strike an appropriate balance between individual rights and the public interest.<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the public interest should be safeguarded from neglected buildings and the significant negative impacts they have on our communities' life, livelihood, and economic output.

The [New Zealand Bill of Rights \(Right to Lawfully Acquired Property\) Amendment Bill](#) (introduced into Parliament on 27 July 2023) proposes reasonable compensation for property owners when deprived of the right to own and use lawfully acquired property. Enabling local authorities to encourage and or incentivise remediation or utilisation of vacant buildings would not conflict with this amendment, should it become law.

**Alignment with improving housing availability**

The Minister of Housing, Hon Chris Bishop, seeks to fix the housing crisis by increasing supply through the removal of barriers to construction. The Minister's recent Cabinet Briefing Paper *Fixing the housing crisis*<sup>18</sup> outlines a programme to lift productivity, wages and ultimately national income by unleashing urban growth. The briefing paper identifies that:

- New Zealand's houses are among the world's least affordable due to persistent undersupply
- unaffordable housing has far-reaching social and economic consequences.

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<sup>15</sup> Republic of Ireland Derelict Sites [Act](#) 1990.  
<sup>16</sup> New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, [Section 5: Justified limitations](#)  
<sup>17</sup> [RNZ](#) (2024) Bill of Rights won't stop gang patch ban - Justice Minister  
<sup>18</sup> [Hon Chris Bishop \(2024\) Fixing the Housing Crisis Cabinet Paper.](#)

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- increasing housing supply and lowering housing costs will improve the living standards of all New Zealanders and lift productivity and wages by allowing more workers to live and work in cities.

Council agrees with the Minister’s assessment that fixing the housing crisis will involve collaborative actions across Government and by different Ministers.

**Gisborne is currently experiencing a critical housing shortage while city centre buildings deteriorate due to a lack of investment. There is an opportunity for the Government to address the housing shortage by incentivising building owners to repurpose buildings for accommodation before they decay beyond repair.**

As an example, in 2017, the city of Vancouver introduced an [empty homes tax](#). Which currently charges owners three per cent of a property's value if it remains unoccupied for more than six months. Since inception, the number of vacant properties in Vancouver has decreased by 54% and CAD\$142 million has been raised for the city's housing initiatives.<sup>19</sup>

Figure 2 - Trends in Vancouver's Declared Vacant Properties 2017 – 2022. Source: City of Vancouver



<sup>19</sup> Housing Vancouver. (2023). Empty Homes Tax Annual Report 2023. City of Vancouver.

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### Attachment 3 – Ten Years of the National Problem

**27 February 2013:** Upper Hutt City Council adopted an Unoccupied Commercial Premises [Bylaw](#) that aims to prevent unoccupied commercial premises from falling into disrepair by setting standards for the maintenance of unoccupied commercial premises. By requiring commercial premises be maintained to an immediately tenantable standard, the bylaw attempts to address issues such as rubbish, boarded windows, vermin and overgrown foliage. However, at best, this is a half-measure because it does not address utilisation and investment issues, which are the underlying cause of cosmetic conditions.

A fundamental problem with use of bylaws is unless new regulation enables fines, enforcement requires a prosecution. This would be cost-prohibitive with no guarantee of success or remediation of problematic conditions. This would waste a lot of time and resources that ratepayers expect to be well-utilised elsewhere.

**2014:** Following discussion with a number of councils, including discussion at an LGNZ Rural and Provincial Sector meeting, LGNZ wrote to the Minister of Building and Construction asking that the Government provide councils with powers to deal with problems created by derelict buildings to combat demolition by neglect. Specifically: "That a definition for derelict sites and homes be developed and included in the Building Act. This would enable Territorial Authorities to include such properties in their Dangerous and Insanitary Buildings Policy and update their procedures to respond in a timely and cost-effective manner to the needs of their community." However, as [reported](#) in Dunedin City Council's 15 May 2023 Agenda, the MBIE response was this was not a priority at the time.

**22 April 2014:** South Wairarapa District Council identified derelict commercial [buildings](#) as a problem that did not qualify as dangerous or unsanitary. The inability to take proactive remediation action has resulted in a perception of Featherston's town centre as unattractive and run-down.

**4 May 2015:** LGNZ's [submission](#) to the Rules Reduction Taskforce highlights that councils regularly face derelict building issues with requests for action coming from many sources, including neighbours and health officials. Buildings in serious disrepair cause neighbours distress, are a risk to health, a potential fire hazard, and are sites for criminal activity. However, councils have limited powers to remediate derelict properties. Over a period of five years, Rotorua District Council has spent more than \$60,000 on consultants' reports and legal advice for a single abandoned property because they lack the authority to require its demolition.

**1 August 2016:** The Christchurch City Development Forum, made up of city councillors and the business community, [urged](#) Christchurch City Council to develop an incentivisation policy to encourage owners to develop their derelict sites. Frustrating city revitalisation efforts are buildings that remain in limbo due to unresolved intentions or insurance disputes. High-profile heritage buildings are also part of the concern. However, despite derelict buildings being dangerous, unsanitary and an eyesore the city council had limited powers to deal with them.

**21 October 2016:** Stuff.co.nz reporting [highlights](#) that shuttered, deteriorating buildings are frustrating towns around the country, with Councils in these towns having found there is virtually nothing they can do legally about it. South Wairarapa District Council found that despite complaints that problematic buildings were holding the town back, there was no effective legal remedy. While the council can take the owners of these buildings to court under the Resource Management Act for loss of amenity, it is a subjective rather than objective issue, making it challenging to win in court. Additionally, even if they did win, taking someone to the Environment Court is expensive, with potential costs ranging from \$60,000 to \$100,000. Enforcement remains difficult even after winning a case. In Rotorua, the problem is with houses

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rather than commercial buildings, but the issue remains the same. Derelict sites have potential fire risks, and the impact of these structures negatively impacts the value of surrounding properties. These abandoned buildings are eyesores; however, what is considered offensive is debatable under the law.

**19 May 2017:** Christchurch City Council outlines their [plan](#) for tracking derelict CBD sites they consider a barrier to the regeneration of the city centre. The plan of action seeks to address concerns about the sites, to improve investor confidence and to create a more positive impression of the central city. The third and final phase of their plan (to be used only as a last resort) involves joint action by agencies with enforcement and land acquisition powers. *\*This plan illustrates the problem: without legislative change, local authorities cannot prevent buildings from deteriorating to such a condition that outside agencies are required to facilitate collaborative solutions.*

**16 June 2021:** In the wake of a derelict house fire that destroyed a neighbouring house and damaged two others in Wellington, experts [question](#) why only a limited number of buildings meet strict criteria for dangerous or insanitary criteria. Otago University housing expert researcher Dr Lucy Telfar-Barnard said the bar was set too high for a dangerous or insanitary building. Regarding derelict houses, Victoria University Professor of Building Science Robyn Phipps says: "It's a ticking time bomb."

**23 April 2022:** Local authorities called for a change in the law to address the problem of derelict and unoccupied houses. In Whanganui, absentee owners are responsible for 10% of the derelict CBD buildings, committing to *demolition by neglect*. Litigating problem buildings is cost-prohibitive, and the bar is extremely high. Councils are completely powerless if a building simply looks terrible. As a result, LGNZ has [proposed](#) that the government define derelict buildings so that action can be taken. Stuart Crosby, LGNZ president, has highlighted that this problem is growing and needs to be addressed.

**12 May 2022:** Clutha District Council [identified](#) that its staff do not currently have the necessary tools to deal with abandoned buildings that become a target for vandals or unsightly in a town's main shopping street or issues of excessive waste and vegetation growth on private property.

**May 2022:** Dunedin City Council reports\* that In May 2022, another attempt by LGNZ to meet the Minister of Building and Construction regarding derelict sites was unsuccessful. \*Recounted in Dunedin City Council's 15 May 2023 [Agenda](#).

**February 2023:** As part of its submission to the Environment Select Committee on the Natural and Built Environment Bill and Spatial Planning Bill, DCC requested\* the inclusion of "provisions in the NBEA to explicitly enable the management of neglected heritage buildings where a lack of maintenance is having an adverse effect on the structural stability, weather tightness, or long-term retention of a scheduled heritage building (aka demolition by neglect). This is urgently necessary for DCC (and other territorial authorities) to take actions to save heritage buildings where neglect has not yet progressed to a point of no return". \*Reported in Dunedin City Council's 15 May 2023 [Agenda](#).

**15 May 2023:** Dunedin City Council (DCC) [identifies](#) that demolition by neglect is an issue in cities across New Zealand, yet is not regulated nor specifically referred to in either the Resource Management Act 1991, the Building Act 2004 or the Local Government Act 2002. DCC reports demolition by neglect is an issue for historic buildings that require significant investment to enable ongoing use. DCC asserts that, in the absence of legislative change, incentivisation is required to help motivate building owners to maintain buildings.

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**9 August 2023:** The Press [reports](#) that the absence of legislation dealing with derelict properties has resulted in a derelict Christchurch property that, despite significant decay, does not meet the threshold for action.

**6 September 2023:** Considering lower rates for businesses and higher rates for vacant land, Wellington City Councillors express [frustration](#) with the inability of local authorities to target underutilised land due to it being too difficult to define: "It's deeply frustrating ... we can't make people do more with their land."

**8 February 2024:** Homeless persons squatting in a derelict building near Point Chevalier's town centre raise well-being and safety [concerns](#). Local businesses report daily harassment from intoxicated individuals and an increase in shoplifting, which they attribute to the squatters.

**8 April 2024:** Wellington City Council aims to remove ten buildings from the heritage list as part of its district plan review, utilising a 2012 amendment to the Resource Management Act (RMA) amendment aimed at ensuring more housing intensification in the country's largest cities. Among the ten buildings are the dangerous, unoccupied Gordon Wilson Flats. Considered unsafe due to potential earthquake and wind damage and empty since 2012, the flats have become a contentious feature of the Wellington skyline.

This move by Wellington City Council illustrates the extraordinary measures local authorities must take when buildings have deteriorated beyond repair resulting in a loss of national heritage and identity. The solution must be to enable proactive measures that address deteriorating conditions before buildings reach this level of decay.

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**Attachment 4 - Seized buildings in Gisborne**

For almost a decade, five prominent Gisborne buildings have been the subject of an ongoing legal dispute between the Police and silent offshore owners. One of these buildings is Gisborne's finest, the heritage-listed [Masonic Hotel](#), and another features prominently in the Gisborne skyline (Figures 13 and 14, overleaf).

In 2016, Singaporean national Thomas Cheng was arrested in Gisborne for the importation and supply of methamphetamine. The Police subsequently obtained restraining orders over six commercial properties in Gisborne as part of a wider investigation into alleged tax evasion and money laundering by Cheng's father, William Cheng, and stepmother Nyioh Chew Hong, who live in Singapore.

An investigation into the "complex" ownership structure of the buildings saw restraining orders placed on associated bank accounts along with nine other buildings across Whanganui, Te Puke, Pahiatua, Timaru, and Gisborne. In 2020, the Police applied for the forfeiture of these buildings and associated bank accounts. The courts have recently declared the buildings to be beyond the reach of the drug investigation. However, legal proceedings continue to restrain the buildings.

In 2023, the Wellington High Court [ruled](#) that Cheng Jnr does not hold an interest in or have effective control of Cheng Snr's property. Therefore, the properties are not subject to forfeiture relating to Cheng Jnr's drug crimes. However, as the Police have appealed the ruling, the buildings remain in limbo, further complicated by possible [tax-evasion and money laundering](#) by Cheng Snr and Ms Hong.

Council has found it impossible to address building issues via Cheng Snr's New Zealand representatives. Cheng Snr is likely reluctant to undertake works without knowing what percentage of the buildings he will retain. The Police will not do anything as they are temporary custodians ill-equipped to deal with building remediation and unsure what percentage of the buildings they will retain.

This contested ownership status prevents building remediation, even under dangerous building notices, as no party assumes responsibility for remediating the unsafe conditions. Council has issued one seized building with a dangerous building notice; however, as ownership is contested, mitigation of dangerous conditions is not easily progressed. The restrained buildings, including the Masonic Hotel, continue to decline but are a long way from becoming Dangerous. Continued attempts by Council to engage building owners have met with little success.



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Seized building: Gisborne's Masonic Hotel (now closed) prior to its decline. 46 Gladstone Rd



Seized building (left). 200 Gladstone Road.



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## // 07

### Appropriate funding models for central government initiatives

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**Remit:** *That LGNZ proactively promote and lobby for the development of a more equitable and appropriate funding model for central government initiatives.*

**Proposed by:** Northland Regional Council

**Supported by:** Zone 1 (Northland Regional Council, Far North District Council, Whangarei District Council).

#### Why is this remit important?

The constant reprioritisation of funding has a major impact on the ability of local government to provide quality infrastructure and services to the communities they are legally obliged to serve.

The development of a more equitable and appropriate funding model for central government initiatives would mitigate the risks and challenges the current funding model creates.

#### Background and Context

The reprioritisation of spending from community needs and services, to the implementation of central government policy and regulation, continues to be a major challenge for many councils.

Experience to date has shown that the current funding model needs to be reviewed and improved, to better reflect the community and operational realities of local government.

Zone 1 members firmly believe that central government should fully fund initiatives they wish to implement, or provide funding to local government in situations where they are required to implement a central government initiative.

#### How does this remit relate to LGNZ’s current work programme?

This proposal aligns with LGNZ's policy that states:

- Remits must be relevant to local government as a whole rather than exclusively relevant to a single zone or sector group or an individual council;
- Remits should be of a major policy nature (constitutional and substantive policy) rather than matters that can be dealt with by administrative action.

In accordance with LGNZ's strategy, this proposal would strengthen local government as a whole to support our communities to thrive – environmentally, culturally, economically and socially.

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ITEM 9.2 ATTACHMENT 2

**How will the proposing council help LGNZ to make progress on this remit?**

Northland Regional Council, with the support of Far North District Council and Whangarei District Council, will advocate the case for the development of an improved equitable funding model for central government initiatives.



## // 08

### Goods and services tax (GST) revenue sharing with local government

**Remit:** *That LGNZ be proactive in lobbying central government on sharing GST revenue with local government, derived from local government rates and service fees related to flood protection mitigation, roading, and three waters, for investment in these areas.*

**Proposed by:** Northland Regional Council

**Supported by:** LGNZ Zone 1 (Northland Regional Council, Far North District Council, Whangarei District Council).

#### Why is this remit important?

Local government faces funding and resourcing challenges due to current funding models. The sharing of GST revenue derived from local government rates and service fees related to flood protection, roading, and three waters, would allow for increased spending and investment in these areas.

#### Background and Context

S&P Global Ratings note that local government rates have not increased, as a percentage of the economy, in the past 100 years – compared with central government taxation which has gone up 200% in the same period.

This funding gap presents many challenges for local government and its ability to provide infrastructure and services to its communities.

Member councils of Zone 1 have not lobbied central government individually to date. However, there was full support for the position of LGNZ given on the matter on 27 February 2024.

This proposal seeks to elevate the matter and make it a high priority for LGNZ to lobby, with a view to achieve, the diversion of GST revenue for localised investment in flood protection mitigation, roading, three waters, and the related capital expenditure and debt servicing.

#### How does this remit relate to LGNZ’s current work programme?

This proposal aligns with LGNZ’s policy that states:

- Remits must be relevant to local government as a whole rather than exclusively relevant to a single zone or sector group or an individual council;
- Remits should be of a major policy nature (constitutional and substantive policy) rather than matters that can be dealt with by administrative action.

In accordance with LGNZ’s strategy, this proposal would strengthen local government as a whole to support our communities to thrive – environmentally, culturally, economically and socially.

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ITEM 9.2 ATTACHMENT 2

**How will the proposing council help LGNZ to make progress on this remit?**

Northland Regional Council, with the support of Far North District Council and Whangarei District Council, will advocate, lobby, and promote the case for the sharing of GST revenue with local government from the areas noted in this proposal.

## 10 Reports for Information

### 10.1 Small Projects Fund Update - June 2024

Author: Kezia Spence, Governance Advisor

#### 1. Allocation

1.1 The yearly allocation of the 2024/25 Small Projects Fund for the Marton Community Committee is \$4,167.19, this includes the carry-forward of \$667.19.

#### 2. Sport Whanganui- Libby Rayner Application

2.1 Libby Rayner will be attendance to speak to her application on behalf of Sport Whanganui.

2.2 The email request and Rangitikei basketball league wish list is included below.

#### 3. Men's Group- Mark Pringle Application

3.1 Mark Pringle will be in attendance to speak to his application for his Men's Group.

3.2 The application received is included below.

#### Attachments:

1. Email Request- Libby Rayner [↓](#)
2. Rangitikei Basketball League [↓](#)
3. Application- Men's Group- Mark Pringle [↓](#)

#### Recommendation

That the report 'Small Projects Fund Update – August 2024' be received.

Fwd: Funding request for consideration

Carolyn Bates <martoncc.cab@gmail.com>

Wed 14/08/2024 12:13 PM

To: Kezia Spence <Kezia.Spence@rangitikei.govt.nz>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Libby Rayner** <

Date: Tue, 23 Jul 2024 at 11:51

Subject: Funding request for consideration

To: Carolyn Bates <[martoncc.cab@gmail.com](mailto:martoncc.cab@gmail.com)>

Kia ora Carolyn,

Next Monday 29<sup>th</sup> July, we are due to begin a 9-week basketball competition - The Rangitikei Primary School's Basketball League, held at Memorial Hall.

Last year, you popped into visit one on one of our game nights and mentioned there was a possibility of support by way of funding by the Marton Community Committee.

Our debut programme last year was such a success that we have 10 more teams entered for the 2024 competition. This is fantastic, but presents challenges due to only having one indoor court in town, so I am currently trying to secure a second and third venue for the Miniball (Year 3-6) grade. Multiple venues requires multiple resources and we are needing more scoreboards and balls in the first instance to make this possible. I have written to Huntley School and to Rangitikei College to request the use of their gymnasium and asked if they have any students keen to umpire our games also.

So, I thought I would write to you and request consideration from the MCC to fund some of these things. The irony of it all is that the Tū Manawa Fund that Sport Whanganui administers would absolutely support this kaupapa, but because I am staff, I cannot apply to it!

I have attached a "wish list" document for reference of the items that would support this local initiative supporting our tamariki.

Hei konā mai,

Libby



**Libby Rayner**  
Rangitikei Community Connector  
Healthy Active Learning  
Mobile: 027 241 8021  
85 Hendersons Line, Marton  
[sportwhanganui.co.nz](http://sportwhanganui.co.nz)



**Healthy Active Learning**

Rangitikei Basketball League wish list

Match balls x 4	\$199.96
Hand pump whistles x 4	\$101.48
Scoreboard (either tabletop or electronic)	\$85 - \$1690
First aid kit	\$51.99
Total	\$438.43-\$2043.43



Precision Hand Whistle (Red...  
**\$25.37**  
 Dick Smith NZ  
 Free delivery



**HART Table Top Scoreboard**  
**\$85.00**



**HART LED Electronic Scoreboard with Stand**  
**\$1690.00**



Rebel Sport Silver Fern...  
**\$51.99**  
 Rebel Sport



CODE	IMAGE	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
MO00273		MOLTEN BG3800 COMPOSITE LEATHER BASKETBALL – SIZE 5 Official Match Ball of BBNZ National Championships and Secondary Schools Premierships/National Championship	\$84.00
MO00272		MOLTEN BG3800 COMPOSITE LEATHER BASKETBALL – SIZE 6 Official Match Ball of BBNZ National Championships and Secondary Schools Premierships/National Championship	\$84.00

**Application to Marton Community Committee Small Projects / Grants Fund**

Submissions deadlines: 28<sup>th</sup> of Jan / Mar / May / Jul / Sep / Nov for consideration at the next Committee Meeting.

<b>Applicant</b>	Mark Pringle
<b>Organisation</b> (if applicable)	
Contact Address	
Telephone	
Email	mark.p1776@gmail.com
<b>Amount Requested</b>	\$200 - \$400
<b>Project Title</b>	Brief title eg Paint road side wall of Community Hall / Promote a "Have a go day" / Set Up "...." Activity.  <b>Weekly Marton Men's Circle</b>
<b>Detail</b>	<p>Please provide an overview / explanation of what you hope to achieve with this request.</p> <p>I've started a weekly mens circle but am having trouble spreading the word and getting more men to attend as I am new to town. So far only relying on local FB groups. Would love some additional funding for advertising eg FB ads etc.</p> <p>I've been involved in mens work for many years now in Australia and would love to contribute to the community by establishing a weekly group.</p> <p>WHO IT'S FOR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Men feeling isolated, lonely and lost</li> <li>- Those struggling with depression and/or anxiety</li> <li>- Fathers, husbands, and partners facing challenges</li> <li>- Men feeling stuck, hopeless, or powerless in life</li> <li>- Those experiencing stress or burnout from work</li> <li>- Men dealing with anger, rage, or grief</li> <li>- Anyone seeking a supportive and non-judgmental space</li> </ul> <p>WHAT TO EXPECT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A safe space to share and be supported</li> <li>- Opportunities to see they're not alone in their struggles</li> <li>- Chances to give and receive advice and support</li> <li>- Tools for managing anger, rage, and grief</li> <li>- Discussions on navigating life's challenges and finding purpose</li> <li>- A supportive environment where they can open up at their own pace</li> <li>- Connection with other men who share in similar struggles</li> <li>- Strategies for improving relationships and communication</li> <li>- Encouragement to explore personal growth and self-awareness</li> </ul>
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	Who / how many people do you anticipate could benefit from this support? Ideally 10 - 20 men regularly each week and the benefits would extend to everyone around each man (his family, his children, his workmates etc) as he continues to do this work each week. There is also the option to train other men to start and run their own circles in other towns nearby.
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	Are quotes or estimates attached? If quote(s) or estimate(s) are not available or relevant, an indication of costs would be useful – eg screen shots from websites or links to them.
<b>Alternative Funding</b>	What efforts have been (or will be) made to source funding? What level of success has been achieved? If the total amount requested is not approved, how will you make up the shortfall? Open to any support, I've run paid ads before so I know there are different options depending on funds.
<b>Bank Details</b>	Please attach confirmation of your bank account, eg provide a deposit slip or an screenshot / image showing your bank account name and number (no transactions need to be provided).

The purpose of the fund is to assist entities with the purchase of small items or additional services which are not included in Council's operating budgets and which will benefit the local community. Examples would be signage, park furniture, plants, paint, a leaflet or other publication or an event, including implementing community-led initiatives.

Applications are normally expected to be for the benefit of the whole Community (not for individuals or small groups eg only club members). More than one application can be submitted in any financial year.

Applications cannot be for:

- Provision of training or conference attendance.
- Additional payment(s) for goods or services subject to a contract with Rangitikei Council.
- Amounts which exceed the Committee's annual allocation.

If you have any queries regarding your application please contact a committee member (or call 021-342-524).

Send request to: Marton Community Committee: [martoncc.cab@gmail.com](mailto:martoncc.cab@gmail.com) or deliver c/o 7 Dalrymple Place, Marton.

**10.2 Welcome to the Rangitikei Billboards**

**Author:** Kym Skerman, Manager- Venues and Events

**Authoriser:** Gaylene Prince, Group Manager - Community

**1. Reason for Report**

1.1 There is a need to update the ‘Welcome to the Rangitikei’ billboards which were last updated in 2010- 14 years ago.

**2. Context**

2.1 The Te Kahui Tupua group who last funded the billboards is now disestablished and no longer has a presence in our district. The billboards are out of date and looking less than appealing.

**3. Discussion and Options Considered**

3.1 Many surrounding districts/regions have updated and modernised their welcome signs. These signs are showing scenic highlights of the regions such as the nearby mountains, rivers, native bush as well as activity attractions such as fishing, rowing, cycling etc.

3.2 The billboards are a prime opportunity to showcase the uniqueness of our district, the hidden scenery and the activities that have the potential to attract more people to the area.

3.3 The areas that have been identified as having the potential to attract more visitors are:

- 1. Rafting and kayaking
- 2. Golf- 5 courses throughout Rangitikei
- 3. Cycling- quiet, scenic backcountry roads
- 4. Fishing- river and coastal
- 5. Walkways and reserves

3.4 The idea is to promote these attractions in the specific areas they are located.

**4. Financial Implications**

4.1 The signs are estimated to cost \$10,200 +GST to replace. This would come from the District Promotions budget.

**5. Impact on Strategic Risks**

5.1 We are communicating with community groups to keep them informed on the decision-making process.

5.2 There is a risk of nothing happening to update the signs if groups are not in agreement as to the images or look of the billboards as there is a limited amount of time that can be spent on this project due to other commitments.

**6. Strategic Alignment**

6.1 The proposed new billboards are in alignment with the Destination Management Plan in terms of promoting and celebrating our best natural assets and activities.

**7. Mana Whenua Implications**

- 7.1 Te Kahui Tupua (lwi tourism group) is now disestablished so there is no conflict of interest. It was also stated in the MOU that the billboards would become Council's responsibility after 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010.
- 7.2 The macron will be used in Rangitikei as the correct spelling.

**8. Statutory Implications**

- 8.1 NZTA is being consulted due to the visibility next to the state highways.

**9. Conclusion**

- 9.1 The 'Welcome to The Rangitikei' billboards need to be updated and modernised. They are a key asset to promote and showcase the amazing scenic locations and activity attractions throughout our district.

**10. Decision Making Process**

- 10.1 We would like to keep the community informed of the revitalisation of the district signage and our communications team will keep all community groups updated about the project.

**Recommendation**

That the 'Welcome to the Rangitikei Billboards ' report be received.

**Recommendation**

That the new 'Welcome to The Rangitikei' billboards be accepted as a positive step and inclusion to the Destination Management Plan with the intention of showcasing our natural assets and activities from around the district.

### 10.3 Funding Schemes Update - August 2024

**Author:** Kezia Spence, Governance Advisor

#### 1. Overview

- 1.1 Council currently administers four funding schemes for the Rangitikei District, these are:
  - a. Community Initiatives Fund
  - b. Events Sponsorship Scheme
  - c. Creative Communities Scheme
  - d. Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund

#### 2. Community Initiatives Fund

- 2.1 This is a Council fund intended to support community-based projects in the Rangitikei District that develop community cohesion and community resilience.
- 2.2 Council allocated \$30,000 to this fund annually, to be distributed across two separate funding rounds.
- 2.3 Council allocated \$13,730 in round one at the Finance and Performance meeting on the 31 August 2023.
- 2.4 Round two for 2023/24 opened on the 02 October 2023 and closed on the 31 March 2024.
- 2.5 Decisions on allocation of funding were made at the Finance and Performance committee meeting on the 24 April totalling \$9,357.
- 2.6 Round one for 2024/25 will open 01 July 24 and closes 31 August 24.

#### 3. Events Support Scheme

- 3.1 This is a Council fund intended to support events in the district that help to develop community cohesion and reinforce economic growth.
- 3.2 Council has allocated \$25,000 to this fund annually, to be distributed across two separate funding rounds.
- 3.3 Council allocated \$18,470 in round one at the Finance and Performance meeting on the 31 August 2023.
- 3.4 Round two for 2023/24 opened on 01 February 2024 and closed on the 31 March 2024.
- 3.5 Decisions on allocation of funding were made at the Finance and Performance committee meeting on the 24 April at totalling \$4,902.
- 3.6 Round one for 2024/25 will open 01 July 24 and closes 31 August 24.

#### 4. Creative Communities Scheme

- 4.1 This fund is supplied by Creative NZ and administered by Council. Applications are encouraged from community groups and individuals whose projects:
  - Demonstrate growth over time
  - Develop and support local artistic communities
  - Encourage a transfer of artistic skills

- Support diversity and inclusion
- Projects with a youth focus are also encouraged

- 4.2 Creative NZ typically allocates \$24,090 (+ GST) to the Rangitikei District Council on an annual basis, and this is distributed across two separate funding rounds.
- 4.3 Round one for 2024/25 opens 21 June 24 and closes 09 October 24.

#### 5. Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund

- 5.1 This fund is supplied by Sport NZ and administered by Council. The fund is targeted at young people aged between 5 and 19 years and is open to rural sport club teams and rural school club teams with eligible members who require subsidies to assist with transport expenses to local sporting competitions.
- 5.2 Sport NZ typically allocates \$9,500 (+ GST) to the Rangitikei District Council on an annual basis. There is one funding round per year. This year the fund increased to \$12,825.
- 5.3 The allocation of funds was made at the Sport NZ Rural Travel Fund meeting on the 24 April.

#### 6. Further Information

- 6.1 More details about these funding opportunities can be found on the Council website (link below) and this is also where applications can be submitted:  
<https://www.rangitikei.govt.nz/district/community/grants-funding>

#### Recommendation

That the Funding Schemes Update –August 2024 be received.

**11 Meeting Closed.**