



# Questions and Answers

9 June 2015

## Background information Hawke's Bay Local Government Reorganisation

### How did this process start?

- The process started when Hawke's Bay people formed a group called A Better Hawke's Bay and applied to the Local Government Commission in 2013 for a local government reorganization under the Local Government Act 2002.
- Its application called for the disestablishment of all five current Hawke's Bay councils, and the establishment of a single Hawke's Bay Council. The application proposed that the new Hawke's Bay Council would be a unitary authority, which combines the functions of a regional council with those of a territorial authority (district and city councils).

### What were the stages in the process?

- Feb 2013: A Better Hawke's Bay makes an application to the Local Government Commission for a single unitary authority (one council). The Commission accepts the application and calls for alternatives.
- May 2013: Commission receives 19 responses, from which six were identified as alternative proposals, and of these three were subsequently identified as "reasonably practicable options" (along with the status quo).
- Feb-Oct 2013: Commission meets a wide range of interest groups, subject matter experts and members of the public in the region.
- Nov 2013: Commission releases a draft proposal in favour of a single council for the region with community boards.
- Nov 2013-June 2014: Public feedback on draft proposal through submissions and public hearings. More than 700 submissions received.
- Nov 2014: Commission releases position paper with revisions following consultation and law changes allowing for local boards (rather than community boards).
- Mar 2015: Commission releases its proposal to ring-fence debt and assets of existing councils for 5 years to 2021; and conducts survey of 2000 Hawke's Bay residents on their views.

- June 2015: Commission releases its final decision.

### **What happens now?**

- Either residents (affected electors) request a poll or the proposal goes ahead.
- At least 10% of the registered electors of any “affected area” in the region must sign a petition for a poll to proceed.
- A poll needs to be requested within 60 working days of the Commission giving notice of its final proposal. The poll itself will be held between September and December 2015, depending on when a valid petition is received.
- If 50% or more vote against the proposal, the process ceases and the status quo prevails.
- If more than 50% of electors support the proposal, or there is no poll, the proposal proceeds and the new council is elected in October 2016.
- A Transition Board will be appointed by the Commission to work through detailed arrangements for the new council. It will have 11 members – two elected representatives from each of the current councils, and an independent Chair. The transition board will also appoint an interim Chief Executive for the new Council.

### **What is an “affected area”?**

- An area impacted by the proposed changes. In this case: Wairoa District, Central Hawkes Bay District, Napier City, Hastings District and affected electors in the small sections of the Rangitikei and Taupo Districts.

### **Why are sections of the Rangitikei and Taupo Districts considered “affected areas”?**

- Because small areas of these two districts are included under the current Hawke’s Bay Regional Council jurisdiction. The final proposal is for a unitary authority with one coherent boundary, which excludes these areas. Under the proposal they will move to the Manawatu-Wanganui and Bay of Plenty Regions respectively.

### **What are the rules and requirements for a poll petition?**

- The requirements for a petition are available at [www.lgc.govt](http://www.lgc.govt)
- People who are 18 or over, resident in the region and registered on the electoral roll, or registered non-resident ratepayers, are eligible to vote.
- Because petitions have to be checked by the electoral officer for the district, people signing the petition must give their full name and residential address.

### **Can people advertise their support or opposition to the final proposal?**

- Yes. The only requirement is that the person(s) initiating the advertisement have to put their name and address on the advertisement.
- The only restriction on advertising is on local authorities, which cannot spend money or use their resources on advertising that opposes or promotes the final proposal. They can produce fair and balanced reference material on the proposal.

### **Why was a survey conducted in March 2015, and what were the results?**

- The Commission decided to conduct a survey on community views following the release of its November 2014 position paper, which outlined a revised reorganisation proposal involving more councillors, and local boards rather than community boards.
- The survey also aimed to get a wider representation of community views than had been gained through the submissions and hearings on the draft proposal.
- The telephone survey, conducted by Colmar Brunton, was of 2000 residents across the Hawke's Bay, with a region-wide margin of error of +/- 2.2%. In order to be representative, it included 400 residents in Wairoa, 601 in Hastings, 600 in Napier and 400 in Central Hawke's Bay. Face-to-face surveys were also conducted with 18 and 10 residents respectively in the areas of Taupo and Rangitikei Districts currently in Hawke's Bay Region.
- The Commission will release the results of the survey when the process reaches a conclusion and there is no chance of the results impacting on the community's decision on the final proposal.