



## **Local Government Commission Tasks and Approach On Auckland Governance Reforms**

**The purpose** of this paper is to:

1. outline the Commission's tasks relating to Auckland governance reforms as the Commission currently understands them<sup>1</sup>
2. outline the Commission's proposed approach
3. outline the Commission's timetable
4. set out the Commission's immediate next steps

### **Local Government Commission tasks**

The Local Government (Auckland Council) Bill sets out the following tasks for the Commission:

1. to determine the boundaries of Auckland
2. to determine the boundaries and names of wards
3. to determine the number, boundaries and names of local boards and the number of elected members for each board

On the Auckland boundaries:

- the Bill sets out specific requirements for the southern boundary i.e. to follow the existing regional boundary as far as is practicable with two exclusions:
  - the Mangatawhiri River and Mangatangi Stream catchments
  - the area between the Mangatangi Stream catchment and the Firth of Thames
- the Bill has no equivalent specific requirements for the northern boundary
- the Commission now awaits the enactment of the Bill and the final parameters for Auckland boundaries

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<sup>1</sup> The final parameters within which the Commission will work will only be confirmed when the Local Government (Auckland Council) Bill is enacted by Parliament, this is expected to be on or around 24 September 2009

On the establishment of wards and local boards, the Commission sees this task as essentially a large representation review exercise based on local communities of interest.

The Commission's *Representation Review Guidelines* identify three dimensions of community of interest which it will look to use:

- residents' sense of identity with and belonging to a community
- the ability to meet residents' needs for services (both council and non-council services)
- the ability to represent the interests and reconcile conflicts of the community

The following parameters for establishing wards and local boards are set out in the Bill:

- the establishment of wards so as to provide for effective representation of communities of interest
- a requirement for wards to provide fair representation for electors (i.e. the +/-10% rule will apply) but with provision for this to be waived in order to achieve effective representation of communities of interest
- fixing the number of local boards (between 20 and 30) with provision to go outside this number in order to achieve effective representation of communities of interest and a requirement for boards to be established for Waiheke and Great Barrier Islands
- fixing the number of members per local board (between 4 and 9)
- establishment of subdivisions for particular local board areas if necessary
- ensuring, so far as is practicable, that local board boundaries coincide with ward boundaries

These parameters will only be confirmed with enactment of the Bill on or around 24 September.

### **The Commission's approach**

The Commission is seeking input on current Auckland communities of interest.

To do this, it is putting in place specific processes including:

- an initial joint meeting with Auckland council representatives to outline the Commission's tasks, approach and timelines

- an invitation to all eight councils in the Auckland region for the elected members (including community board members) to meet with the Commission
- an invitation to other selected groups generally with a region-wide focus to meet with the Commission
- opportunities for interested groups and individuals to provide input to the Commission on communities of interest e.g. through its website
- the release of draft proposals for comment
- the issue of final determinations

### **The timetable**

The following are the key deadlines to note:

- Auckland Governance Legislation Committee reports back to Parliament: **4 September**
- Local Government (Auckland Council) Bill enacted: **24 September**
- Commission seeks initial input on Auckland's communities of interest **by 16 October**
- Commission releases draft proposals **by 20 November**
- Commission seeks responses to draft proposals **by 11 December**
- Commission revises proposals as necessary: **January**
- Commission approves final determinations to meet statutory deadline of **1 March**

**Immediate next steps** (for input requested by 16 October):

- an invitation sent to mayors/chair for elected members to meet with the Commission
- meetings with elected members of all eight councils (including community board members) and other selected groups in September
- release of general information on the Commission's tasks, approach and timeline (e.g. LGC website)
- collation of input received in preparation for release of draft proposals