



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

# Determination

of representation arrangements to apply for the  
election of the Buller District Council to be held on  
13 October 2007

### Background

1. The Buller District Council ("the Council") elected at the 2004 local election comprises 11 members and the Mayor. The 11 members were elected as follows:

Wards	Population	No. of members per ward	Population per member	Deviation from the district average population per member	Percentage deviation from the district average population per member
Seddon	1848	3	616	-259.18	-29.61%
Inangahua	1989	3	663	-212.18	-24.24%
Westport	5790	5	1158	282.82	32.32%
TOTALS	9627	11	875.18		

Note: These population statistics are obtained from the 2001 Census, in accordance with section 19X(1)(a) of the Local Electoral Act 2001.

2. Elections were also held for the Inangahua Community Board ("the Board") in 2004. The Board comprises 6 elected members and 3 appointed members. There are no subdivisions within the Inangahua Community.
3. In November 2005, the Council undertook a review of the representation arrangements for the Council and of community boards under sections 19H and 19J of the Local Electoral Act 2001 ("the Act"). On 23 November 2005 the Council resolved its initial proposal for representation arrangements to apply for the 2007 local election. These were publicly notified on 9 December 2005.
4. The Council's initial proposal was as follows:
  - (a) existing ward boundaries should be retained;

- (b) the Council should comprise the Mayor and 10 members, elected from the existing wards in the way outlined in the table below; and

Wards	Population	No. of members per ward	Population per member	Deviation from the district average population per member	Percentage deviation from the district average population per member
Seddon	1848	2	924	-38.7	-4.02%
Inangahua	1989	2	994.5	31.8	3.30%
Westport	5790	6	965	2.3	0.24%
TOTALS	9627	10	962.7		

Note: These population statistics are obtained from the 2001 Census, in accordance with section 19X(1)(a) of the Local Electoral Act 2001.

- (c) the Inangahua Community Board should be abolished.

5. The Council received 314 submissions on its initial proposal. The majority of these argued for the retention of the Inangahua Community Board. Following consideration of these submissions, the Council amended its initial proposal. Its final proposal was publicly notified on 29 March 2006, as follows:

- (a) existing ward boundaries should be retained;  
 (b) the Council should comprise the Mayor and 10 members, elected from the existing wards in the way outlined in the table below;

Wards	Population	No. of members per ward	Population per member	Deviation from the district average population per member	Percentage deviation from the district average population per member
Seddon	1848	2	924	-38.7	-4.02%
Inangahua	1989	2	994.5	31.8	3.30%
Westport	5790	6	965	2.3	0.24%
TOTALS	9627	10	962.7		

Note: These population statistics are obtained from the 2001 Census, in accordance with section 19X(1)(a) of the Local Electoral Act 2001.

- (c) the Inangahua Community Board should be retained. It should comprise 4 elected members and 2 appointed members. There should be no subdivisions within the Inangahua Community; and  
 (d) community boards should be constituted for the Seddon and Westport Wards respectively. Each community board should comprise 4 elected members and 2 appointed members. There should be no subdivisions within either community.

6. Fourteen appeals or objections were lodged against the final proposal. Every appellant and objector argued for a reduction in the total number of elected members for the District. Some appellants argued that council membership should be further reduced to 5 members and the Mayor. Arguments were

made for and against the retention of the Inangahua Community Board and the constitution of community boards for the Seddon and Westport Wards.

## Hearing

7. The Commission met with the Council, 3 appellants who had expressed a desire to be heard by it, and a delegation from the Inangahua Community Board, in Westport, on 8 August 2006. The Council was represented by Councillor Lynley Roberts. The appellants were Terry Archer, Reg Barrell, and Judy Gilmour. The Inangahua Community Board was represented by Councillor Bert Waghorn, and residents Gaylene Sweeney and Dawn Chandler.

## Matters for Determination

8. The statutory provisions in respect of these appeals and objections are contained in sections 19R, 19I and 19J of the Act.

### **19R. Commission to determine appeals and objections**

- (1) *The Commission must—*
  - (a) *Consider the resolutions, submissions, appeals, objections, and information forwarded to it under section 19Q; and*
  - (b) *Subject to sections 19T and 19V in the case of a territorial authority, and to sections 19U and 19V in the case of a regional council, determine,—*
    - (i) *In the case of a territorial authority that has made a resolution under section 19H, the matters specified in that section:*
    - (ii) *In the case of a regional council that has made a resolution under section 19I, the matters specified in that section:*
    - (iii) *In the case of a territorial authority that has made a resolution under section 19J, the matters specified in that section.*
- (2) *For the purposes of making a determination under subsection (1)(b), the Commission—*
  - (a) *May make any enquiries that it considers appropriate; and*
  - (b) *May hold, but is not obliged to hold, meetings with the territorial authority or regional council or any persons who have lodged an appeal or objection and have indicated a desire to be heard by the Commission in relation to that appeal or objection.*
- (3) *The Commission must, before 11 April in the year of a triennial general election, complete the duties it is required to carry out under subsection (1).*

### **19H. Review of representation arrangements for elections of territorial authorities**

- (1) *A territorial authority must determine by resolution, and in accordance with this Part,—*
  - (a) *Whether the members of the territorial authority (other than the mayor) are proposed to be elected—*
    - (i) *By the electors of the district as a whole; or*
    - (ii) *By the electors of 2 or more wards; or*

- (iii) *In some cases by the electors of the district as a whole and in the other cases by the electors of each ward of the district; and*
- (b) *In any case to which paragraph (a)(i) applies, the proposed number of members to be elected by the electors of the district as a whole; and*
- (c) *In any case to which paragraph (a)(iii) applies,—*
  - (i) *The proposed number of members to be elected by the electors of the district as a whole; and*
  - (ii) *The proposed number of members to be elected by the wards of the district; and*
- (d) *In any case to which paragraph (a)(ii) or paragraph (a)(iii) applies,—*
  - (i) *The proposed name and the proposed boundaries of each ward; and*
  - (ii) *The number of members proposed to be elected by the electors of each ward.*
- (2) *The determination required by subsection (1) must be made by a territorial authority —*
  - (a) *On the first occasion, either in 2003 or in 2006; and*
  - (b) *Subsequently, at least once in every period of 6 years after the first determination.*
- (3) *This section must be read in conjunction with section 19ZH and Schedule 1A.*

**19J. Review of community boards**

- (1) *A territorial authority must, on every occasion on which it passes a resolution under section 19H, determine by that resolution, and in accordance with this Part, not only the matters referred to in that section but also whether, in light of the principle set out in section 4(1)(a) (which relates to fair and effective representation for individuals and communities) —*
  - (a) *There should be communities and community boards; and*
  - (b) *If so resolved, the nature of any community and the structure of any community board.*
- (2) *The resolution referred to in subsection (1) must, in particular, determine—*
  - (a) *Whether 1 or more communities should be constituted:*
  - (b) *Whether any community should be abolished or united with another community:*
  - (c) *Whether the boundaries of a community should be altered:*
  - (d) *Whether a community should be subdivided for electoral purposes or whether it should continue to be subdivided for electoral purposes, as the case may require:*
  - (e) *Whether the boundaries of any subdivision should be altered:*
  - (f) *The number of members of any community board:*
  - (g) *The number of members of a community board who should be elected and the number of members of a community board who should be appointed:*
  - (h) *Whether the members of a community board who are proposed to be elected are to be elected—*
    - (i) *By the electors of the community as a whole; or*
    - (ii) *By the electors of 2 or more subdivisions; or*
    - (iii) *If the community comprises 2 or more whole wards, by the electors of each ward:*

- (i) *in any case to which paragraph (h)(ii) applies, -*
- (i) *The proposed name and the proposed boundaries of each subdivision; and*
- (ii) *The number of members proposed to be elected by the electors of each subdivision.*
- (3) *Nothing in this section limits the provisions of section 19F.*

**19W. Factors in determination of matters in relation to community boards—**

*In determining the matters specified in paragraphs (a) to (i) of section 19J(2), the territorial authority and, where appropriate, the Commission must ensure—*

- (a) *That, in the case of the matters specified in paragraphs (a) to (g) of section 19J(2), it has regard to such of the criteria as apply to reorganisation proposals under the Local Government Act 1974 or the Local Government Act 2002 as the territorial authority or the Commission considers appropriate in the circumstances; and*
- (b) *That the election of members of the community board, in 1 of the ways specified in subparagraphs (i) to (iii) of section 19J(2)(h), will provide effective representation of communities of interest within the community and fair representation of electors; and*
- (c) *That the boundaries of every community, and of every subdivision of a community, coincide with the boundaries of the current statistical meshblock areas determined by Statistics New Zealand and used for parliamentary electoral purposes.*

9. When applying the provisions detailed above, the principles of the Act (set out in section 4) need to be taken into account, particularly the principle of fair and effective representation for individuals and communities.

### **Consideration by the Commission**

10. While the Council's representation review generated some disagreement about the number of elected members and the appropriate balance between community board and Council representation, there was little or no disagreement between the Council, submitters, and appellants, about:
- retaining existing ward boundaries;
  - reducing community board membership to 4 elected members and 2 appointed members; and
  - not subdividing communities for electoral purposes.

### **Requirements for effective representation and other factors**

11. Representation arrangements must ensure effective representation for communities of interest, and fair representation of the electors of each ward or subdivision. When considering these fundamental electoral principles, the Commission is required to apply the criteria contained in sections 19T and 19V of the Act.

12. The requirement to ensure effective representation for communities of interest applies when deciding whether the Council should be elected at large, or by wards, or partly at large and partly from wards. The Council's proposals, and community members' submissions, appeals and objections indicate strong support throughout the District for retaining an electoral system based on ward representation. A small number of submitters argued that some members should be elected at large. These submitters considered that at-large representation would mitigate the negative consequences of what they saw as parochialism or patch-protection amongst existing council members.
13. The Buller District comprises a large number of townships and settlements. These are separated by considerable distances. The Commission believes that, in these circumstances, it would not be practical for a councillor elected at large to effectively represent a district-wide constituency.
14. It notes that wards are for electoral purposes only, and that all members, upon election, pledge an oath to represent the interests of the whole District.
15. The Commission then considered the number and boundaries of wards necessary to ensure the effective representation of the various communities of interest in the District. In doing so, the Commission must also have regard to the fundamental electoral principle of fair representation, or equal right to representation for electors. Section 19V(2) of the Act, requires that "*the population of each ward or constituency or subdivision, divided by the number of members to be elected by that ward or constituency or subdivision, produces a figure no more than 10% greater or smaller than the population of the district or region or community divided by the total number of elected members*". Balancing these two fundamental principles requires the Commission to consider how best to group communities of interest to ensure that all residents have access to effective local government representation.
16. Section 19V(3) provides that the only ground for exemption from the requirements for population equality prescribed by section 19V(2) is in cases where the effective representation of *isolated communities* is required.
17. The Council's proposal, as well as community members' submissions, appeals and objections, indicate unanimous support throughout the District for the retention of the Westport, Seddon, and Inangahua Wards, based on their existing boundaries. These Wards may be characterised as follows:

*Westport Ward*

18. The majority of the population of the Westport Ward lives in Westport Township. From here, the boundaries of the Ward extend north, encompassing the settlement areas around Port Tauranga, and along the coastal State Highway 6. Charleston is located approximately 25 minutes drive from Westport. Punakaiki, the Ward's most southern settlement, is located approximately 80 minutes drive from Westport. The Paparoa Range provides a natural barrier between these coastal communities and the inland communities in the Inangahua Ward.

*Seddon Ward*

19. The Seddon Ward extends some 160 kilometers north, from the outskirts of Westport township to Kahurangi Point.

20. The first recognisable settlement north of Westport is Waimangaroa, which is approximately 10 minutes drive from Westport.
21. The majority of the population of the Seddon Ward lives in one of the string of coastal townships between Westport and the Karamea Bluff. The almost continuous townships of Hector, Ngakawau, and Granity account for approximately 50% of the population of the Seddon Ward, and are located approximately 35 minutes drive from Westport. The Commission believes that residents of these settlements have easy access, and would travel regularly, to Westport.
22. Approximately 450 people live in the township of Karamea, which is located to the north of the Karamea Bluff, some 90 minutes drive from Westport. The Commission heard that residents of other small settlements to the north of Karamea Bluff would use services and facilities in Karamea, and would generally travel less frequently to Westport than residents who live to the south of the Bluff do. Access across the Bluff can be restricted due to ice and snow. While these factors contribute to the distinctiveness of Karamea from other Seddon Ward settlements, the population of Karamea is insufficient to warrant specific council representation. The Commission does not believe that Karamea is isolated to the extent that its effective representation requires exemption from the requirements for elected member to population equality under section 19V(2).
23. The Commission must therefore consider how best to group communities of interest to ensure their effective representation. The only access from Karamea is via the coastal State Highway 67, through other Seddon Ward townships and Westport. The Commission believes this would result in shared interests between the townships on either side of the Karamea Bluff. The communities in the Seddon Ward also share a coastal and rural perspective, as well as socio-economic characteristics, that are different to those of residents of the Westport Township.
24. Broadly speaking, the Commission is satisfied that, while the actual boundary between the Seddon and Westport Wards is somewhat arbitrary, a boundary between them is necessary to ensure effective representation for distinct communities of interest. This reflects the fact that both Wards comprise a large area and a number of distinct communities of interest.
25. Having considered the evidence presented to it against the criteria of effective representation for communities of interest, and taking into account its wider considerations regarding fair representation, appropriate membership, and community boards, the Commission sees few advantages in transferring areas between the Seddon and Westport Wards at this time.

#### *Inangahua Ward*

26. While the Seddon and Westport Wards comprise mostly coastal populations, the Inangahua Ward is an inland area surrounded by mountain ranges. The only access to it from other areas of the Buller District is via State Highway 6, through the lower Buller Gorge from Westport. The small settlement of Berlins is the closest recognisable settlement from Westport in the Inangahua Ward, though Inangahua Junction, with a population of approximately 150, is a more visible entry point. Inangahua Junction is located approximately 25 minutes drive from Westport.

27. From Inangahua Junction, the remainder of the Ward is interconnected via State Highways 6 and 7, and Highways 69 and 65, which provide a circular route between many small settlements. This reflects the basin characteristic of the area's topography.
28. Reefton is located approximately 45 minutes drive south of Inangahua Junction via Highway 69. With a population of approximately 1000 people, Reefton comprises the majority of the population of the Ward. Many residents of the outlying settlements in the Ward would use services and facilities available in Reefton on a regular basis.
29. Maruia and Springs Junction are the Ward's most outlying settlements, located approximately 45 minutes from Reefton and 120 minutes from Westport. Travel in this area is occasionally difficult due to ice and snow. The population of this area is a small fraction of the total ward population. The Commission does not believe the area is isolated to the extent that its effective representation requires exemption from the requirements for elected member to population equality under section 19V(2).
30. The Commission believes that many residents of the Inangahua Ward would find it easier to travel to Greymouth, via State Highway 7, than to Westport. It notes that, at present, it is not possible to travel from the Inangahua Ward to Westport and back using public transport in a single day.
31. The Commission believes that the boundaries of the Inangahua Ward reflect a distinct group of communities of interest. At this time, it sees few benefits in altering these boundaries.
32. Based on the considerations above relating to geography, the roading network, and community interests, and taking into account the purposes and principles of local government relating to community-based decision-making, the Commission believes there is a strong case for retaining the existing boundaries of the Westport, Seddon, and Inangahua Wards.
33. As noted above, representation arrangements must ensure the fundamental electoral principles of effective representation for communities and fair representation for electors. A comparison between the 2001 census and the 2005 population estimates provided by the Government Statistician indicates that, while the populations of the Westport and Inangahua Wards remain stable, the population of the Seddon Ward declined by approximately 7% between 2001 and 2005. A continued decline in the population of the Seddon Ward will require future Councils to re-examine existing ward boundaries to ensure that future residents and communities have access to fair and effective representation.
34. The Council's proposal is for a reduction from 11 to 10 members. A number of appellants argued that the Council should comprise 5 members and the Mayor. Both a 5-member Council and a 10-member Council would meet the +/-10% requirement on the basis of the ward boundaries proposed by the Council. This is illustrated in the following tables:

Wards	Population	No. of members per ward	Population per member	Deviation from the district average population per member	Percentage deviation from the district average population per member
Seddon	1848	2	924	-38.7	-4.02%
Inangahua	1989	2	994.5	31.8	3.30%
Westport	5790	6	965	2.3	0.24%
TOTALS	9627	10	962.7		

Note: These population statistics are obtained from the 2001 Census, in accordance with section 19X(1)(a) of the Local Electoral Act 2001.

Wards	Population	No. of members per ward	Population per member	Deviation from the district average population per member	Percentage deviation from the district average population per member
Seddon	1848	1	1848	-77.0	-4.02%
Inangahua	1989	1	1989	64	3.30%
Westport	5790	3	1930	5.0	0.24%
TOTALS	9627	5	1925		

Note: These population statistics are obtained from the 2001 Census, in accordance with section 19X(1)(a) of the Local Electoral Act 2001.

35. Submitters, appellants, and councillors in favour of a five-member council argued that:
- it would result in the remuneration pool being spread amongst fewer elected members, and that an increased salary would attract more capable candidates;
  - compared with the elected member to population ratio of other local authority areas (such as Christchurch City), the Buller District is over-represented;
  - the present membership of 12 results in a patch protection mentality, and a 5-member council would mean this was less likely;
  - a larger Council is unnecessary given that available communication technology enhances accessibility between residents and elected members without the need for physical travel; and
  - it would result in efficiencies to administrative and governance process.
36. The Commission does not believe that any evidence was presented to support the argument that a five-member council would reduce the perception that councillors have a bias toward the interests of their own electoral ward. Nor is it convinced by the argument that increased councillor salaries would attract more 'capable' candidates, or that such an outcome is intended by the system of representative democracy provided by the Act.

37. The Commission also notes that the Act does not set out any guidance as to the appropriate number of members to represent a certain number of people in any one district across New Zealand. The only requirement, under section 19A of the Act, is that the membership of each local authority must fall within the range of 6 to 30 elected members. The fundamental purpose of the legislation is to allow flexibility in respect to the unique circumstances facing each local authority area. The purpose of the LGA, under section 3, is to “...to provide for democratic and effective local government that recognises the diversity of New Zealand communities...”
38. In considering the appropriate number of elected members, the Commission took into account the following matters, which relate to the ability of residents and elected members to have access to each other:
- the District covers a large area;
  - the District comprises many communities with distinct interests;
  - many of these communities are considerable distances from each other; and
  - it is likely that most councillors in the Buller District will continue to have other jobs.
39. In particular, the Commission is concerned that one councillor would not ensure effective representation for the outlying communities in the Inangahua and Seddon Wards.
40. Based on these factors, the Commission does not believe that a 5-member Council would ensure the effective representation of the communities of interest in the Buller District. The Commission is satisfied that a 10-member Council would ensure effective representation. It therefore upholds this part of the Council’s proposal.

## **Communities**

### *General Comment*

41. The Council’s initial proposal was to abolish the Inangahua Community Board. This aspect of the initial proposal generated significant opposition from residents of the Inangahua Community. A small number of submitters also argued that a community board for the Seddon Ward should be constituted. Following consideration of these submissions, the Council altered its proposal and decided to retain the Inangahua Community Board. It also proposed to constitute two new community boards – for the Westport and Seddon Wards respectively.
42. The Commission notes that while having community boards across the whole district might be seen to be “fair” within the broader meaning of the term, this is not the meaning provided under section 19V of the Act. In this context, “fair representation” relates to electoral fairness or population equality in respect to:
- (a) the member to elector ratio *between* wards *within* a district; or
  - (b) the community board member to elector ratio *between* subdivisions *within* a community.

43. The argument that if one ward has a community board then all wards should have a community board is not, in itself, a criteria for considering the constitution or abolition of community boards.
44. Sections 4(1)(a) and 19W of the Act require the Commission to consider the constitution or abolition of each community board with respect to:
  - (a) the fundamental principles of fair and effective representation for residents and communities; and
  - (b) any of the criteria for considering local government reorganisation under subpart 2 of Schedule 3 of the LGA that the Commission considers appropriate. These criteria raise the following questions:
    - (i) Will the proposal promote the good local government of the parent district and the community concerned?
    - (ii) Will the district and the community have the resources necessary to enable them to carry out their respective responsibilities, duties and powers?
    - (iii) Will the district and the community encompass an area that is appropriate for the efficient and effective exercise of their responsibilities, duties and powers?
    - (iv) Will the district and the community contain a sufficiently distinct community of interest or sufficiently distinct communities of interest?
    - (v) Will the district and the community be able to meet the decision-making requirements of section 76 of the LGA, to the extent that they are applicable?
45. While “good local government” is not defined in the Act or the LGA, the Commission believes that the purposes of local government contained in section 3 of the LGA, and the principles relating to local authorities contained in section 14, should be taken into consideration. The Commission has also had regard to the provisions of the LGA dealing with community boards, these being Schedule 7, and Subpart 2 of Part 4.
46. At the hearing of appeals, one submitter said that community boards existed to advocate and not to govern. The Commission is concerned that this description implies a division between the respective roles of community boards and councils that is not intended by the Act and the LGA.
47. Section 52 of the LGA sets out the role of community boards. Sections 52(a) to (e) set out a board’s basic advocacy and reporting roles, while section 52(f) enables a Council to delegate a wider range of responsibilities under clause 32 of Schedule 7 of the LGA.
48. Community boards should not be seen as independent of district-wide governance. Their role is complementary to that of councils in that they seek to advance the same purposes and principles of local government. These are contained in sections 10 and 14 of the LGA and sections 3 and 4 of the Act. While community boards serve a community-wide constituency, councils serve the whole district, including the areas represented by a community board. In the Commission’s view, achievement of the purposes and principles of local government would be enhanced by good integration and communication between boards and their parent council, and clear definition and agreement about the roles of the Board and the Council in any particular

circumstance. To this extent, section 52(f) provides an important opportunity to advance the ability of a community board and its parent council to achieve the purposes and principles of local government.

#### *Inangahua Community*

49. The area of the Inangahua Community is the same as that of the Inangahua Ward, as described in paragraphs 26 to 29.
50. The Commission was presented with many examples of the contribution made by the Inangahua Community Board to the effective governance of the Inangahua Community. These examples related not only to Reefton, but also many of the scattered settlements that make up the Community. Submissions made to the Council and the Commission indicate strong community support for the retention of the Board.
51. There is a strong sense of community belonging amongst residents of the Inangahua Community, many of whom are active participants in community life. The Commission heard that the Community contains about 80 community groups (excluding sports groups), and that the Board has well-developed relationships with many of them. It is clear that many residents feel that the Board provides them with effective access to the Council's governance and decision-making processes. This, in turn, enhances the Council's ability to meet the decision-making requirements of section 76 of the LGA.
52. Based on the factors described above and on page 8, the Commission believes that the Inangahua Ward comprises an appropriate area, and contains sufficiently distinct communities of interest, to warrant continued community board representation. It believes that the Inangahua Community Board provides an effective and efficient governance structure that makes a significant contribution to the wellbeing of residents and communities. It believes the retention of the Board is necessary to provide a means for local issues to be addressed, and to complement the District-wide perspective of the Council. The Commission therefore upholds the Council's decision to retain the Board.
53. The Council proposed to reduce membership of the Board to 4 elected members and 2 appointed members. It also proposed that the Community should not be subdivided for electoral purposes. The Commission is satisfied that these membership arrangements would ensure effective representation for all residents in the Inangahua Ward. It therefore upholds this aspect of the Council's proposal.

#### *Westport Community*

54. No submissions, appeals, or objections to the Council's proposals expressed support for the constitution of a community board for the Westport Ward. The Council did not raise any particular reasons for constituting a Westport Community Board. The Commission is not satisfied that constituting a community board for the Westport Ward would improve local government. It does not believe that a community board is necessary to ensure effective representation for the residents of the Westport Ward.

### *Seddon Community*

55. The Council proposed to constitute a community board for the Seddon Ward. Some submitters supported this aspect of the Council's proposal, largely on the basis that it was necessary for ensuring the effective representation of communities with rural interests. These submitters claimed there were similarities between the Inangahua and Seddon Wards.
56. As previously noted, the Commission has decided that the boundaries of the Seddon Ward should be retained at this time, to ensure that the communities in the Seddon Ward are represented at Council level.
57. The vast majority of the population of the Seddon Ward is dispersed among one of the string of townships that lie at varying distances along Highway 67 between Westport and Karamea. The majority of residents of the Ward are within 35 minutes drive from Westport. This is a similar proximity from Westport as for the residents of Port Tauranga and Charleston in the Westport Ward. The only access from the Seddon Ward is via Westport. Most residents of the Seddon Ward would use the services, facilities and opportunities in Westport on a regular basis.
58. Based on these geographical, roading, and community of interest factors, the Commission is not satisfied that the efficient and effective delivery of local government responsibilities, duties, and powers in the Seddon Ward would be improved by the constitution of a community board. Geography and proximity enable and require residents to travel regularly to Westport.
59. Based on presentations made to it, the Commission is satisfied that Seddon Ward residents have good access to Council members, either as individuals or as members of local community groups. It is not satisfied that the Council has sufficiently considered the role that a Seddon Community Board would play in the District's governance, nor that a Community Board would receive sufficient community support.
60. At this time, it does not believe that constituting a community board for the Seddon Ward would improve local government in the Seddon Ward or the Buller District. It does not believe that constituting a Seddon Community Board is necessary to ensure effective representation for residents.

### **Commission's Determination**

61. Under section 19R of the Local Electoral Act 2001, the Commission determines that for the general election of the Buller District Council to be held on 13 October 2007, the following representation arrangements shall apply –
  - (1) Buller District as delineated on S.O. Plan 11451 deposited with Land Information New Zealand, shall be divided into three wards;
  - (2) Those three wards shall be -
    - (a) The Westport Ward, comprising the area delineated on S.O. Plan No. 14453 deposited with Land Information New Zealand;
    - (b) The Seddon Ward, comprising the area delineated on S.O. Plan No. 14452 deposited with Land Information New Zealand;and

- (c) The Inangahua Ward, comprising the area delineated on S.O. Plan No. 14454 deposited with Land Information New Zealand:
- (3) The Council shall comprise the Mayor and 10 members, elected as follows -
  - (a) Six members shall be elected by the electors of the Westport Ward;
  - (b) Two members shall be elected by the electors of the Seddon Ward; and
  - (c) Two members shall be elected by the electors of the Inangahua Ward.
- (4) There shall be an Inangahua Community, comprising the area of the Inangahua Ward.
- (5) The Inangahua Community Board shall comprise four elected members and two members of the Council representing the Inangahua Ward and appointed to the Community Board by the Council.

62. As required by sections 19T(b) and 19W(c) of the Local Electoral Act 2001, the boundaries of the above wards coincide with the boundaries of current statistical meshblock areas determined by Statistics New Zealand and used for Parliamentary electoral purposes.

## **THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION**

Sue Piper (Chair)

Gwen Bull (Commissioner)

Wynne Raymond (Commissioner)

1 September 2006