



LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION
MANA KĀWANATANGA Ā ROHE

MEDIA RELEASE

31 January 2012

Nelson-Tasman reorganisation scheme approved by Local Government Commission

A new local government structure for the Nelson and Tasman area, to be called the Nelson Tasman District, has been approved by the Local Government Commission which will be put to the electors of both districts for approval in separate polls. If approved the new scheme will come into effect on 1 November 2012.

The new scheme was proposed by the LGC in June last year in response to the presentation of an elector initiated petition. Basil Morrison, Chair of the Local Government Commission, says this kicked off the process of considering the proposal by the LGC. "We put forward a draft reorganisation scheme and called for submissions and sought information which was then carefully considered.

"After receiving and considering over 400 submissions, the draft reorganisation scheme has now been approved with modifications and reissued as a reorganisation scheme," says Mr Morrison.

He says that the LGC is required under legislation to consider several factors that will ensure there are benefits for local government in the new district. These include, for example, the new district providing a more distinct community of interest, more efficient and effective local government and improved decision making. "The Commission is of the view that the structure set out in the reorganisation scheme meets these criteria."

The Nelson Tasman District will be divided into eight wards with a mayor and 16 members. A Māori Board and Rural Advisory Committee are also to be established alongside two community boards in Golden Bay and Motueka. The administrative headquarters for Nelson Tasman District will be located in Richmond.

Mr Morrison says that in finalising the details of the scheme the Commission has carefully considered the wide ranging submissions and modified proposals where appropriate from the draft scheme issued last year.

The reorganisation scheme is subject to approval by a poll of electors to be held in both Nelson City and Tasman District in April this year. A majority of electors in both polls need to be in favour of the proposal for it to proceed.

Mr Morrison acknowledged the efforts of many people through the process of considering this proposal. “The Commission has appreciated the good level of local involvement from both communities and the interest shown. This will be a significant change for local government in the area, and we value the cooperation we have received from the two Councils and many people across the wider area.”

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Further information about the scheme, including transition details can be found on the Local Government website www.lgc.govt.nz/nelsontasman

Information will also be provided t Council Service centres, libraries and other community facilities.

Attached: Information sheet – Union of Nelson City and Tasman District



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Union of Nelson City and Tasman District

Details of scheme

The Local Government Commission has issued a reorganisation scheme for the union of Nelson City and Tasman District. The new Nelson Tasman District will have a council consisting of a mayor and 16 councillors.

The councillors will be elected from eight wards as follows: Golden Bay one councillor, Lakes-Murchison one councillor, Motueka two councillors, Moutere-Waimea two councillors, Richmond three councillors, Stoke three councillors, Nelson three councillors, and Atawhai one councillor.

The new Council will be required to have a rural advisory committee and a Maori board as standing committees to represent these important interests in the district. There will also be two community boards where they currently exist, that is in Golden Bay and Motueka, both having four elected members plus the ward councillors. The community boards have significant decision-making powers.

The new Council will be based in Richmond as proposed in the draft reorganisation scheme.

Advantages and disadvantages

As with any significant change, there are advantages and disadvantages to the scheme. However the Commission believes the advantages of a union of Nelson City and Tasman District strongly outweigh the disadvantages.

The new Nelson Tasman District recognises the clearly identifiable Nelson Tasman community of interest. This community of interest is reflected in the close economic relationship between Nelson City and Tasman District, the growing cross-boundary work patterns of Nelson and Tasman residents, and a wide range of social, service and recreational activities which span the present territorial authority boundary.

The new Council will be able to develop a comprehensive and integrated plan for the whole Nelson Tasman area including the fast growing Nelson-Richmond urban area. It will also provide integrated decision-making in respect of the provision of infrastructure, regulation and services to the regional community. In addition, the new Council will be able to effectively promote the Nelson Tasman area, both nationally and internationally.

The union will result in financial savings, such as from manager and staff reductions, though it is not possible to quantify the full extent of these until decisions are made by the new Council. Some of these savings will be offset by one-off transition costs such as staff

redundancies, or may be reinvested in organisational systems, so savings may not be translated into reductions in rates.

To ensure no sudden significant financial impact on ratepayers from the union, the Commission has provided for the existing rating arrangements of the two councils, such as levels of general and targeted rates and uniform annual charges, to continue for a three year period. This will be until the new Council adopts a new long-term plan, including funding policies, prior to 1 July 2015. The Council will be required to consult the community in the development of this plan.

The new Council will have an organisation able to employ more specialist staff in a number of areas to help address key issues and opportunities facing the Nelson Tasman area without the need for them having to be involved in liaison and coordination with another council.

There will be a clear distinction between district-wide or regional decision-making, undertaken by the mayor and councillors, aimed at enhancing the well-being of the Nelson Tasman area as a whole, and local community decision-making undertaken by the community boards. This will help public understanding of the council role and encourage public participation at the appropriate level of decision-making. The Commission expects further community boards or ward committees will be established in the future.

The reorganisation scheme meets all statutory criteria, as far as the Commission considers is reasonably practicable, and as a result it will promote good local government of the Nelson Tasman area.

The Commission acknowledges that the union will result in fewer councillors representing the wards of the new district/region. This will be offset, however, by significantly enhanced local decision-making powers for the community boards. Members of community boards will also be able to sit on Council committees.

The Commission also acknowledges that there will be uncertainty for staff of the existing councils as a result of the union during the six-month transition period and possibly for a short period after the new council is established.

Next steps

The reorganisation scheme will now be voted on by the electors of Nelson City and Tasman District in separate polls in April. A majority of voters in both polls is required for the union to proceed.

If a majority of electors in both polls vote in favour of a union, the reorganisation scheme will be implemented by an Order in Council.

A transition committee, comprising representatives of both Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council plus an independent chairperson, will then meet to put in place the necessary steps for the new Council to come into existence on 1 November 2012. This will follow elections for the new council and community boards in October 2012. The Transition Committee will recommend appointment of a transition manager to manage the detailed transition process.