

Invitation for alternative reorganisation applications in response to an application for a change to the boundary between Horowhenua District and Palmerston North City

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Introduction

On 4 October 2018 the Local Government Commission received a local government reorganisation application from the “Tokopiki Boundary Change Group” for a change in the boundary between Horowhenua District and Palmerston North City. The effect of the proposal would be to transfer the township of Tokomaru and rural locality of Opiki and adjacent areas from the district into the city.

On 29 November the Commission determined the application met the necessary statutory tests and agreed to assess the application. The Commission is now inviting alternative applications to this original application.

This document sets out alternative applications from Ngāti Turanga, a hapū of Ngāti Raukawa, for the Commission’s consideration.

Ngāti Raukawa

In the lower North Island Ngāti Raukawa comprises 25 hapū and iwi, with 29,000 beneficiaries, across a rohe extending from the Rangitikei River in the north, to the Waikanae River in the south, and from the Ruahine/Tararua ranges in the east across to the western coastline (Annex 1).

Ngāti Raukawa is represented by Te Rūnanga o Raukawa Ltd, the iwi-mandated authority in resource management matters.

The Rūnanga provides support and resourcing to hapū (where sought) and engages with central and local government agencies and industry to ensure Raukawa’s tikanga is appropriately recognised and upheld, and the wellbeing of its people is protected.

The Rūnanga is in the process of addressing Raukawa’s Treaty of Waitangi claims.

Ngāti Turanga

Ngāti Turanga is one of the 25 hapū within the Ngāti Raukawa iwi. Ngāti Turanga connects to the Paranui marae, located a short distance north of Foxton. Ngāti Turanga have lived alongside the Manawatu River mai uta, ki tai (all of the time). Its area of interest extends from Palmerston North, Tokomaru, Opiki, Tuwhakatupua, and along the Hau-a-uru coastline (which is across several Council areas). Ngāti Turanga are the kaitiaki of the eastern boundary and uphold the tribal maxim stated by Te Rangiotu at Tuwhakatupua “Te manawaroatanga o Ngāti Raukawa ki te pupuri i te taonga ara ko te Rangimarie, ko te Whakapono” (The stoutheartedness of Ngāti Raukawa, to hold fast to the peace of God by means of the Gospel).

A boundary change that considers the needs of indigenous communities, local marae and hapū groups would be welcomed. Council boundaries that cut across iwi and hapū rohe will place stress on our capacity. This stress could be alleviated by extending the Horowhenua region (preferably beyond Himatangi and into Tawhirihoe, and south into the Kapiti region on agreement with mana whenua hapū of Raukawa).

The ‘Tokopiki’ proposal¹

The proposers of the boundary change provide the following rationale in support of their proposal:

- Community of Interest - the Tokomaru and Opiki communities have a greater affiliation with Palmerston North and Levin based upon history, business and family connections, and other government agency boundaries
- Shared boundaries – the Tokomaru and Opiki areas share a boundary with Palmerston North
- Council concerns – Tokomaru and Opiki residents have concerns with how Horowhenua District Council manages its affairs, and the level of service provided to residents for the rates paid

Alternative application – option 1

As stated above, Ngāti Raukawa is preparing for its upcoming Treaty of Waitangi settlement claim proceedings. Key dates for the proceedings are still to be confirmed, and we acknowledge there is uncertainty about what outcomes will be achieved from such a process. That said, Ngāti Raukawa will be seeking some form of co-governance model to ensure we have a decision-making role in respect of our people and the natural resources within our rohe. A co-governance model of this nature has implications for various central (e.g. education, health, and welfare) and local (i.e. Horizons Regional Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council, Rangitikei District Council, Manawatu District Council, Palmerston North City Council, Horowhenua District Council, Kapiti Coast District Council) government agencies.

¹ Ngāti Raukawa takes exception to use of this name, which is simply a shortened combination of two pre-existing place names. It does not take into account the rich pre-European history of this area, nor pre-existing Maori names for the area in question. We respectfully ask that use of ‘tokopiki’ be discontinued in favour of a more culturally appropriate label. Ngāti Raukawa is happy to assist the Commission in this process.

Through our current work streams, we have experienced widely varying levels of acceptance, engagement, commitment, and support from these agencies. Current and recent local government work streams include involvement in major resource consent processes for wastewater treatment plants, water takes, and State Highway construction projects, plan review and change processes, and policy and strategy development.

Irrespective of the nature of the relationship, the administrative and workload burden associated with engaging with so many agencies, particularly agencies carrying out the same function but in different parts of the rohe, is significant. From our perspective, this is highly inefficient in terms of resourcing and effectiveness, and we see it is a major barrier to the achievement of meaningful outcomes for our people and environment.

It is on this basis, Ngāti Raukawa proposes an alternative approach for the Commission's consideration. Ngāti Raukawa seeks a rationalisation of local government agencies within Ngāti Raukawa's rohe and/or better alignment of agency boundaries with Ngāti Raukawa's rohe.

Under this proposal, Ngāti Raukawa is seeking²:

- realignment of Horizons Regional Council/Greater Wellington Regional Council boundary to align with the rohe boundary [s24(1)(d) of the Local Government Act 2002]. This would involve a shift of the Wellington regional boundary southwards towards Waikanae,
- amalgamation of Rangitikei District Council, Manawatu District Council, Palmerston North City Council, Horowhenua District Council, Kapiti Coast District Council within the Ngāti Raukawa rohe [s24(1)(a)(c) of the Local Government Act 2002], to form a single council

Reducing the number of local government agencies Ngāti Raukawa would be required to enter into co-governance arrangements with, would significantly benefit Ngāti Raukawa in terms of:

- reducing engagement and resourcing costs,
- increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of available resources,
- achievement of positive outcomes for our people and environment,
- better aligning local government with the Ngāti Raukawa community of interest (rohe), and
- addressing highly variable levels of engagement across the various local government agencies

Such a reorganisation would increase local government's effectiveness and efficiency with respect to meeting and delivery of Treaty of Waitangi obligations and responsibilities, and realisation of cultural, social, environment and economic aspirations. This is something local government currently struggles with, particularly the smaller councils due to budget and personnel constraints.

The level of community support for such a proposal has not been canvassed at this time, because the need and timing for the proposed local government reorganisation is somewhat moot until such

² Ngāti Raukawa is also seeking a similar amalgamation/revision of central government agency (e.g. education, health and welfare) areas and boundaries, but recognise such a proposal is beyond the scope of the current process.

time as Ngāti Raukawa's Treaty claim is settled, and a co-governance model is endorsed. Rather, this proposal signals the local government changes Ngāti Raukawa will be seeking when/if co-governance eventuates at some point in the future.

Alternative application – option 2

In the event a local government reorganisation on the scale anticipated under Option 1 is considered too ambitious or disruptive, Ngāti Turanga proposes a second option for the Commission's consideration.

The Ngāti Turanga rohe extends across the Manawatu, Horowhenua and Kapiti districts. The bulk of, Ngāti Turanga's rohe sits within the Horowhenua district, but the hapū is required to engage with two other councils. This is resource hungry, inefficient, and ineffective for hapū and the councils, for the same reasons outlined under option 1.

Ngāti Turanga currently has good working relationships with Horowhenua District Council, and it is on this basis we propose the following alternative application (option 2). That the Horowhenua district (i.e. area administered by Horowhenua District Council) is expanded to better align with the Ngāti Turanga rohe boundary [s24(1)(a)(c) of the Local Government Act 2002].

The benefits of option 2 are similar to those outlined for option 1, but will accrue at a hapū rather than an iwi level.

Ngāti Turanga wishes to speak to this proposal.

Annex 1: Ngāti Raukawa rohe, showing location of marae

NGĀ MARAE E PIRI TONU ANA I NGĀTI RAUKAWA KI TE TONGA

Mai i Waitapu ki Rangataua, Mai i Mīria te Kakara ki Kūkūtauaki

(Ko te rohe pōtae o Ngāti Raukawa)

