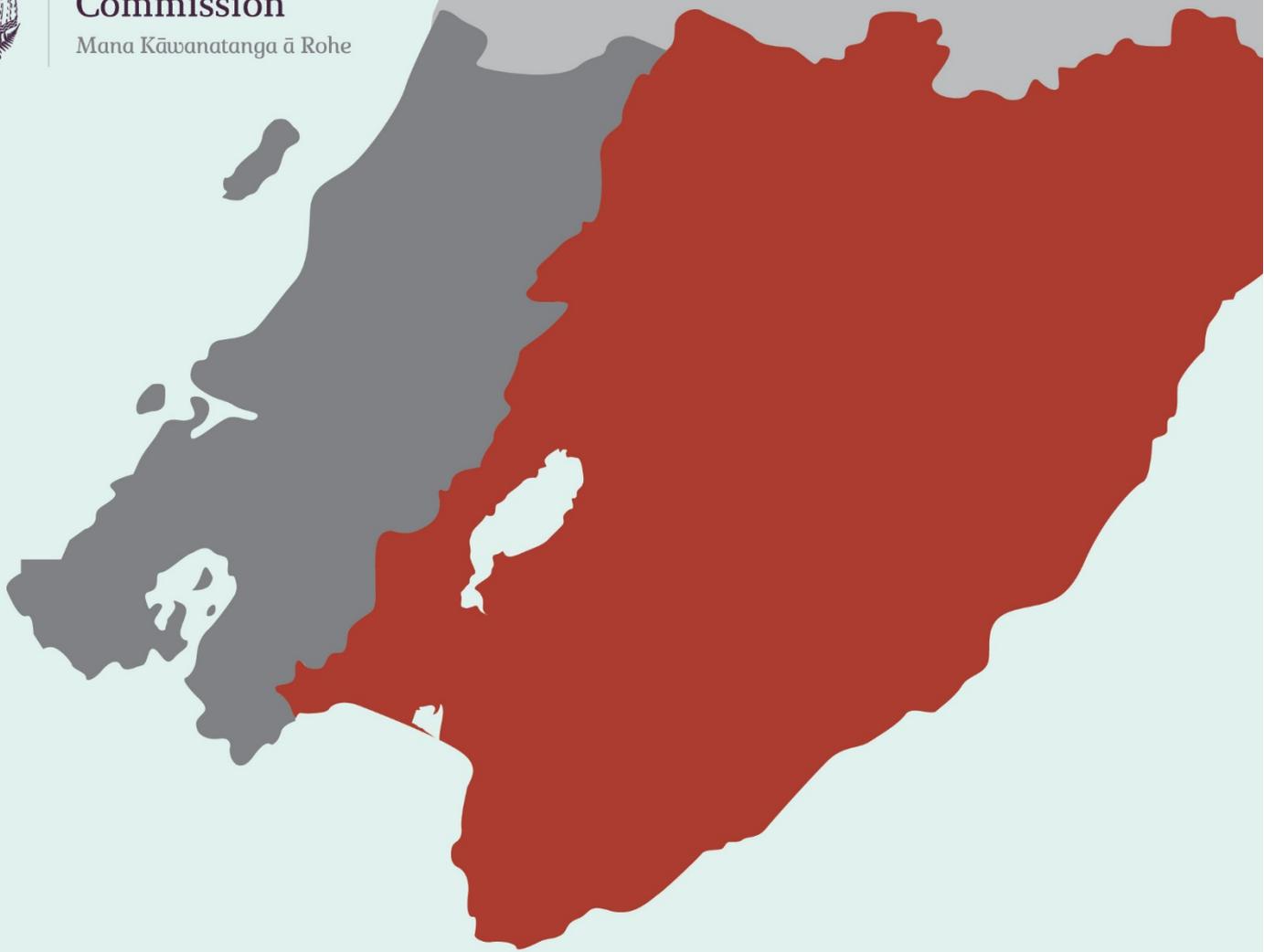




Local Government
Commission

Mana Kāwanatanga ā Rohe



Results of engagement

Draft Proposal for Wairarapa District Council

Wairarapa
District Council

JULY 2017

www.lgc.govt.nz

Introduction

On 15 March 2017, the Local Government Commission published its draft proposal for a Wairarapa District Council combining the South Wairarapa District Council, the Carterton District Council and the Masterton District Council. The Commission then sought public feedback on the proposal through:

1. submissions on the draft proposal
2. a telephone survey

This document is an overview of this feedback. The detailed reports can be found on the Wairarapa resources page at www.lgc.govt.nz.

The 2016 public engagement that led to the development of the draft proposal is also covered on the Commission's website.

1. Submissions

The Commission invited submissions on the draft proposal with a closing date of 3 May 2017. A total of 1191 submissions were received by the closing date of 3 May 2017.

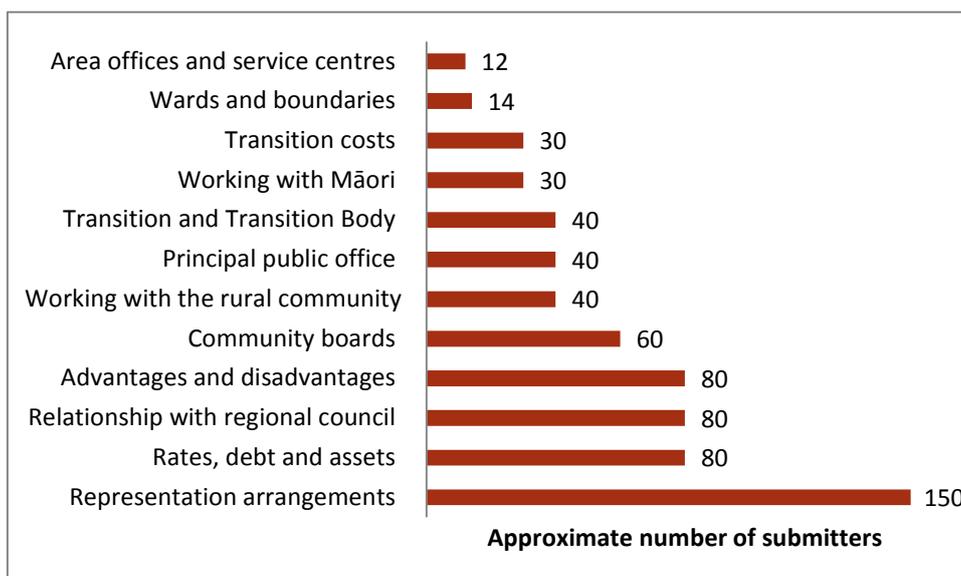
Public notices, leaflet drops, information days and newspaper articles were used to encourage Wairarapa people to make a submission.

Submissions overview

Overall, 824 submissions opposed the draft proposal, 356 supported it or supported it with some amendments, and 11 neither supported nor opposed it.

Many submissions made suggestions as to how to improve the proposal. The main topics submitted on are show below:

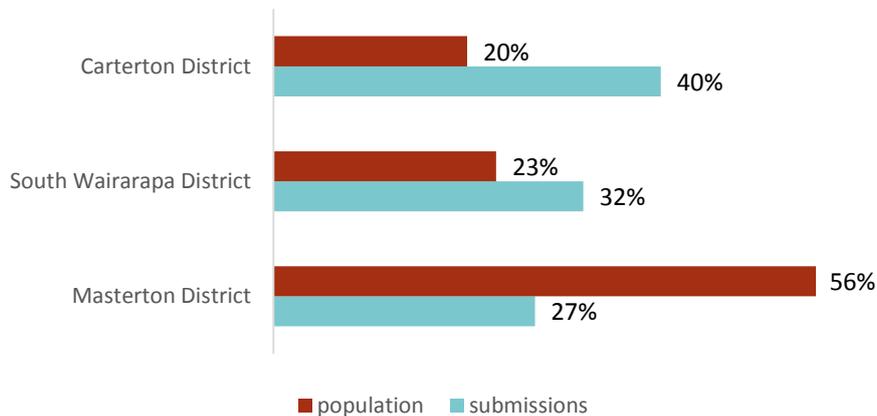
Chart 1: Number of submitters who made comments on each topic



Submissions by district

Submissions from the South Wairarapa and Carterton districts were high relative to their respective shares of the Wairarapa population. The South Wairarapa District has 23 per cent of the population and had 32 per cent of the respondents. The Carterton District comprises 20 per cent of the region’s population and accounted for 40 per cent of the submissions. The Masterton District, which has 56 per cent of the population, accounted for only 27 per cent of total respondents.

Chart 2: Comparison of population share* and proportion of submissions from each district



*Based on each district’s share of the total Wairarapa population, as estimated by Statistics New Zealand at 30 June 2015.

In South Wairarapa, most submitters (269 out of 363, or 74 per cent) opposed the draft proposal. In Carterton, most submitters (390 out of 461, or 85 per cent) were in opposition to the draft proposal. In Masterton, however, the majority of submitters (168 out of 304, or 55 per cent) were in support of the draft proposal.

Submitters from organisations

Some 36 submissions were identified as from organisations, including affected councils and iwi. Of these, 17 (47 per cent) supported the draft proposal, some with amendments, 11 (31 per cent) were opposed, and eight (22 per cent) neither opposed nor supported it. Several of these organisations represent large numbers of people: for example, the Wairarapa Chamber of Commerce has a membership of around 200; Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa represents up to 7000 people and Rangitāne about 3000.

Reasons for support

The main reason given by those people supporting the proposal was that it would create a stronger mandate for the council to advocate for the Wairarapa as a whole (89 per cent); 68 per cent identified there being only one council to deal with as important; 62 and 60 per cent respectively were for council staff being spread less thinly, and a new council having a stronger financial base.

Reasons for opposing

The main reason given by people opposed to the proposal was that they were happy with their council as it is (71 per cent); 60 per cent said there was no reason to change; 52 per cent said there were other ways to improve efficiency under the current model.

2. Telephone survey

Survey methodology

The Local Government Commission (the Commission) employed UMR Research to design and conduct a telephone survey of Wairarapa residents. The survey took place between 4 and 10 May 2017. The purpose of the survey was to gauge public opinion on, and awareness of, the draft proposal for a combined Wairarapa District Council.

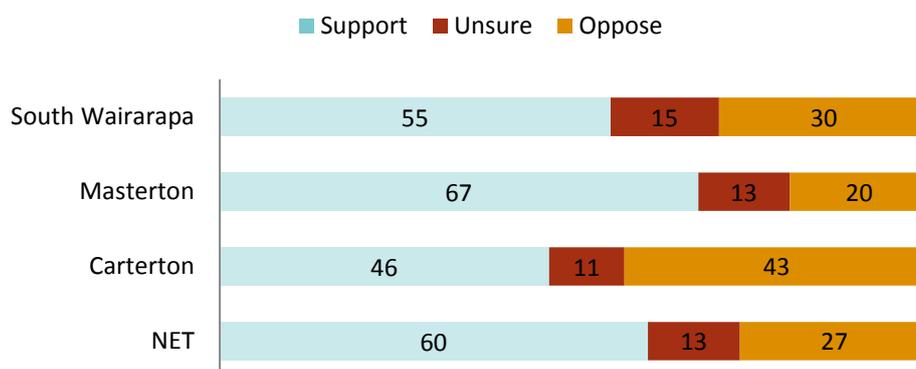
The survey sample was 1000 residents over the age of 18. The sample size, age, and gender distributions were set in each of the three districts based on the most recent census statistics, with oversampling in Carterton and South Wairarapa districts to increase accuracy in these smaller areas. The margin of error for a 50 per cent figure at the 95 per cent confidence level is plus or minus 5.5 per cent for Carterton and South Wairarapa districts and 3.1 per cent overall.

Summary of results

A clear majority (87%) of all respondents said they were aware of the draft proposal by the Commission. Half of respondents said there needed to be a change in the way local government in the Wairarapa is organised, 17 per cent were unsure and 33 per cent said there did not need to be change.

When asked specifically about the draft proposal 60 per cent said they supported a combined Wairarapa District Council, 13 per cent were unsure and 27 per cent opposed the combined council. Masterton respondents were more likely to support the proposal at 67 per cent support, while Carterton respondents were less likely to support at 46 per cent. South Wairarapa had 55 per cent of respondents in support.

Chart 3: Support or opposition to forming a Wairarapa District Council



The main reasons given for supporting a combined council was that it would be more efficient, give Wairarapa a stronger, more united voice and that the proposal did not include Wellington.

Conversely, over half of opponents of the combined council said that it would have worse representation and the current councils are working well now. Carterton opponents were particularly concerned that it would be worse for their district, while South Wairarapa respondents were more concerned about worse representation for smaller towns.