



# Local Government Commission

Mana Kāwanatanga ā Rohe



## Purpose and content of this report

1. This report summarises the feedback received on the draft proposal for the reorganisation of local government in Wellington (the draft proposal). The draft proposal was for the replacement of the current nine councils in the Wellington region with one Greater Wellington Council comprising a governing body and eight local boards
2. Written submissions on the draft proposal were sought on 4 December 2014 with a closing date of 2 March 2015. Late submissions were accepted. The Commission also held public hearings across the region.
3. This summary of submissions is document is in two parts:
  - *Part 1 – Regional summary of submissions:* Summarises the feedback received from across the Wellington region on the draft proposal at an aggregate level along with the views of key stakeholders (i.e. affected councils; community groups; government agencies, iwi and Māori, businesses and business groups).
  - *Part 2 – District level summary of submissions:* Summarises the feedback the Commission received from submitters from each of the 8 territorial authority districts that were affected by the draft proposal.
4. The Commission is required by clause 20 of Schedule 3 of the Local Government Act, to invite public submissions on any draft proposal it issues. It must consider each submission that is received and may hold hearings or meetings with persons making submissions. The consideration of submissions is a key aspect of the Commission's subsequent decision whether to issue a final proposal, or to adopt one of the other options available to it.

## PART 1 – Regional summary of submissions

5. This part of the report summarises the feedback received from across the Wellington region on the draft proposal.
6. There has been a high level of interest in the draft proposal from across the region with 9,142 written submissions received. The Commission also held 18 days of hearings across the Wellington region between 9 March and 22 April 2015, at which 456 submitters were heard. Hearings were held in Wellington City, Lower Hutt, Upper Hutt, Porirua, Paraparaumu, Carterton and Masterton. A further submitter was heard on 14 May.
7. Overall, a significant majority (89%) of submitters opposed the proposal with a minority (10%) in support. A small group were neutral or unclear (0.4%). A significant number, however, offered comments or suggestions in favour of some form of change or improvement in local government in the region.

**Table 1 – Feedback on the proposal**

Total submissions	Opposed	Support	Neutral/unclear
9,142	8,173	928	41
100%	89%	10%	Under 1%

### ***Response by type of submitter***

8. The vast majority of submissions have come from individuals (99%) and 90% of those oppose the draft proposal. Businesses and business organisations are more supportive of the proposal, with 54% supporting the proposal. Iwi/Māori tend to be against the proposal (60%). 6 out of the 9 local authorities oppose the proposal, although all of those continued to express support for some degree of change in local government in region, just not the particular package set out in the draft proposal.

**Table 2 – Responses to Proposal by Submitter Type**

Submitter Type	Against	Against (%)	For	For (%)	Neutral	Neutral (%)	Total
Individuals	8,103	90%	897	10%	19	0%	9019
Affected Councils*	7	80%	2	20%	1	0%	10
Other Councils	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	1
Community Organisations	42	75%	9	16%	5	9%	56
Iwi / Māori Organisations	6	55%	2	18%	3	27%	11
Businesses and Business Organisations	9	35%	14	54%	3	12%	26
NGOs	6	43%	3	21%	5	36%	14
Government agencies	0	0%	1	20%	4	80%	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,173</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>928</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>&lt; 1%</b>	<b>9,142</b>

\* Note- The count of affected councils includes a Joint Council submission from the South Wairarapa, Carterton, and Masterton Districts and Hutt City.

### ***Submission rates by district***

9. Response rates varied significantly between districts. Hutt Valley and Wairarapa submitters are over-represented on a population basis. Submissions from the Hutt Valley comprise 58% of submissions but these districts represent only 30% of the region's population. Similarly, 19% of submitters come from the Wairarapa districts which comprise 9% of the region's population.
10. The views of Wellington, Porirua and Kapiti Coast residents are under-represented on a population basis. For instance, only 9% of submissions came from Wellington City where 41% of the region's population live.
11. There were some form-like submissions that used material provided by groups such as "Carterton Voice" and "Hands off the Hutt" which were often largely standard in content but sometimes also included additional individual comment. Each such submission has been treated as an individual submission.

**Table 3 – Submission rates by district**

District	Total Number of submissions	% of submissions	% of regional population*
Hutt City	2,904	32%	21%
Upper Hutt	2,389	26%	9%
Wellington City	834	9%	41%
Masterton District	713	8%	5%
Kapiti Coast District	606	7%	10%
Carterton District	628	7%	2%
South Wairarapa District	400	4%	2%
Porirua City	157	2%	11%
Tararua District	3	<1%	<1%
Multiple/unknown/other council	508	6%	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,142</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Source –Department of Statistics, 2013 Population Estimates. Note: %ages across districts do not sum to 100% because of rounding to nearest whole number.

### ***District responses to the proposal***

12. Set out below are the responses to the proposal by district. No district has a majority of submitters in favour of the proposal, with Wellington (33%) and Porirua (25%) having the highest levels of support. There is strong opposition to the proposal in the Hutt Valley that averages 95% across the two Hutt Valley districts.

**Table 4 – Responses to the Proposal by District**

District	Against	%	For	%	Neutral/ Unclear	%	Total
Carterton District	578	92%	50	8%	0	0%	628
Masterton District	589	83%	118	17%	6	1%	713
South Wairarapa District	343	86%	54	14%	3	1%	400
Hutt City	2,704	93%	190	7%	10	0%	2,904
Upper Hutt City	2,333	98%	54	2%	2	0%	2,389
Porirua City	118	75%	39	25%	0	0%	157
Kapiti Coast District	535	88%	68	11%	3	0%	606
Wellington City	557	67%	270	33%	7	1%	834
Multiple/other/ unknown	413	81%	85	17%	9	1%	507
Tararua District	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3
Horizons Region	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,173</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>928</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>9,142</b>

## Themes to emerge from the consultation

13. This section uses the information provided by submitters to highlight the key themes and feedback emerging from the consultation process. This includes the reasons stated by submitters for opposing or supporting the proposal, submitters' suggestions for alternative models for change to the draft proposal, and key issues concerning the proposal.

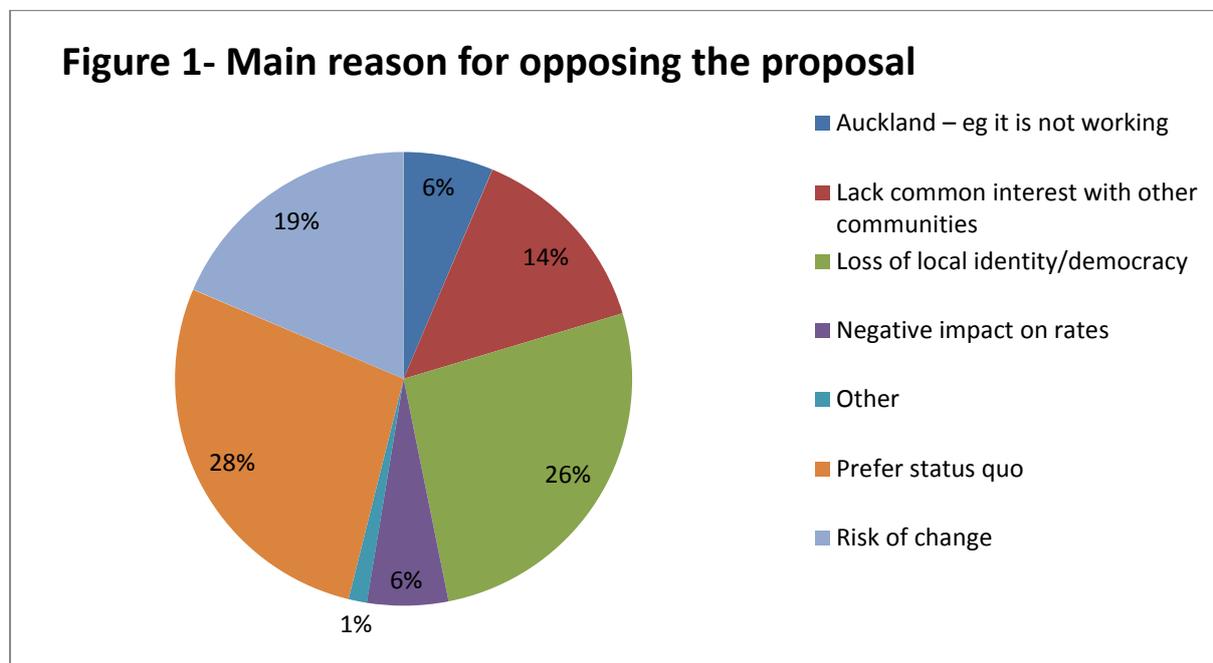
### ***Main Reason for opposing the proposal***

14. 6,342 submitters provided a reason why there were opposed to the proposal. This represented 78% of those opposed to the proposal. Figure 1 summaries the main reasons stated by submitters opposed the draft proposal.

15. Submitters most commonly opposed the proposal because they prefer the status quo (28%), prefer more localised democracy (27%), or are concerned about the degree of uncertainty and the risk involved in the scale of change proposed (19%). A smaller percentage of submitters (14%) opposed the proposal because of a perceived lack of common interest with other communities.

*"I oppose it as it won't be helpful at all for us as a council we will lose our voice around the table and Wellington will have too much power to tell us what to do."* – **Individual, Lower Hutt**

*"The local boards will have no real power because the super Council will hold the "purse strings"."* – **Individual, Lower Hutt**



### ***Main reason for supporting the proposal***

16. 672 submitters supporting the proposal gave a main reason for doing so. This represented 72% of submitters supporting the proposal. The main reason for supporting

the proposal is that it streamlines and improves decision making (30%) (e.g in areas like spatial planning).

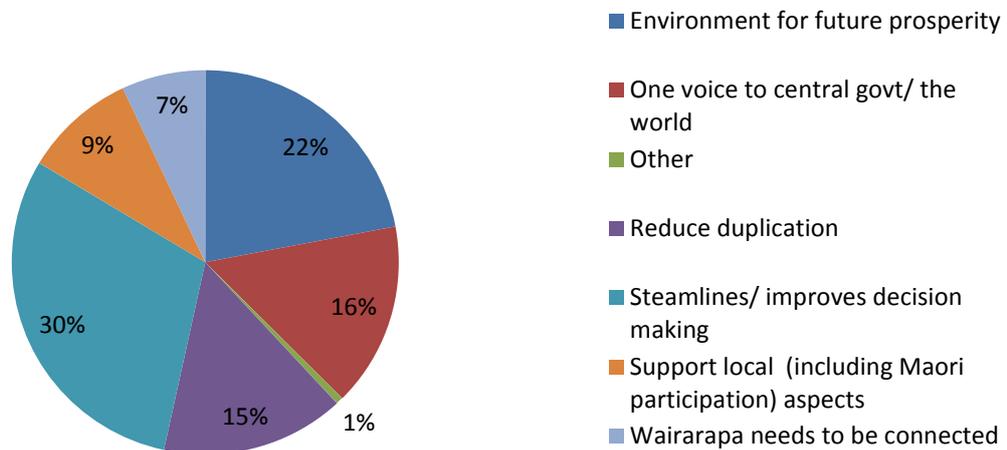
- Other significant reasons for supporting the proposal are the potential of the proposal to build an environment for future prosperity through larger scale and greater co-ordination (22%), the desire to have one voice to central government and the world (15%), and to reduce duplication (15%).

*“The proposal addresses the key issues for the region by enabling the regional issues...to be implemented with greater efficiency and more holistic engagement by those affected.” –*

**Individual, Lower Hutt**

*“Someone needs to think strategically. That’s why one council planning and thinking regionally is the way forward.” –* **Individual, Lower Hutt**

**Figure 2- Main reason for supporting the proposal**

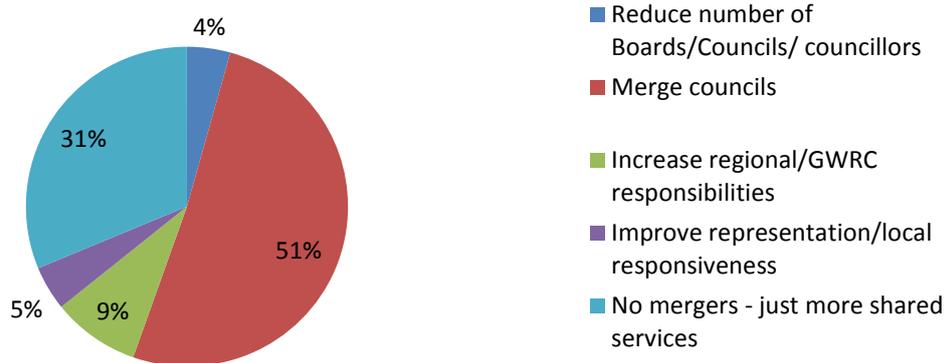


***Changes/ improvement suggested***

- Submitters suggested 3,667 changes and/or alternatives to the proposal. This represented approximately 40% of all submitters. The suggested changes and alternatives largely most frequently mentioned focused on either merging particular combinations of local authorities, or having more shared services among local authorities.

- Figure 3 shows that of those who suggested changes to the proposal: 51% (or about 20% of all submissions) proposed an alternative option for merging local authorities, 31% (about 13% of all submissions) proposed no mergers and more shared services and/or greater collaboration between councils. A smaller number proposed increasing responsibilities at the regional level (9% or about 4% of all submissions).

**Figure 3 - Suggested changes/alternatives**



20. The 51% recorded as suggesting the merger of councils includes a variety of particular proposals. Some of these were for the merger of combinations of territorial authorities, some proposed the establishment of multiple unitary authorities, while there were others where it is not clear which of the two was envisaged.

21. The most commonly expressed options were to merge the Wairarapa Councils (43% or about 9% of all submissions) and the Hutt Valley Councils (23% or about 5% of all submissions). Proposals for multiple unitary authorities totalled 23% of suggestions, with the option most frequently mentioned being that of three unitary councils - Wairarapa/Hutt Valley/Western – accounting for 13% of suggestions (or about 3% of all submitters).

**Table 5 – Alternative merger options proposed by submitters**

Merger options	Number	%
Merge Wairarapa	800	43%
Merge Hutt Valley Councils	437	23%
Three Unitary Authorities	244	13%
Merge Wellington Metropolitan councils	156	8%
Four Unitary Authorities	106	6%
Two Unitary Authorities	81	4%
Merge Western Councils	44	2%
<b>Total submitters that proposed mergers</b>	<b>1,868</b>	<b>100%</b>

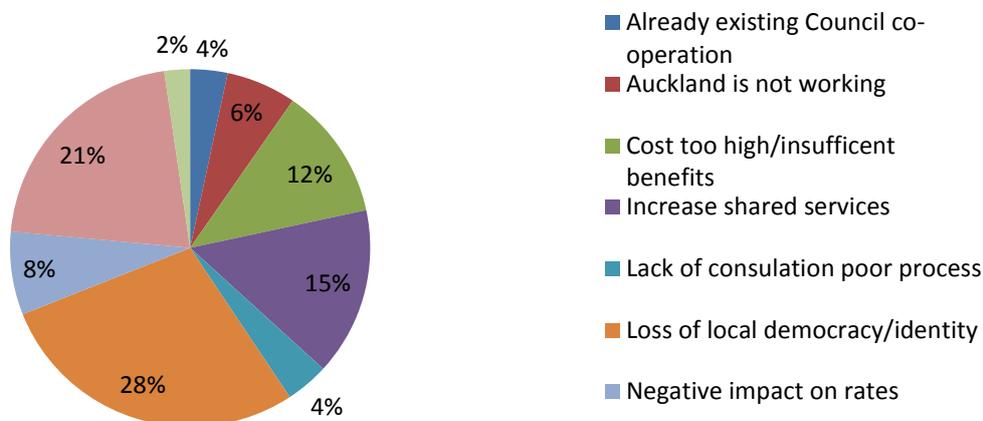
**Key issues**

22. Submitters highlighted 7,414 key issues concerning the proposal, set out in Figure 4. These tended to mirror the reasons why submitters opposed or supported the proposal, such as concern around a loss of local democracy (28%), a preference for the status quo (21%) or (for those supporting the proposal) that one Council improves decision-making (3%).

23. However, a smaller number of submitters used this opportunity to highlight other issues that were important to them. In particular, a key issue for 465 submitters was that they

considered that Auckland was not working, and 288 submitters identified a lack of consultation in the reorganisation process itself as an issue.

**Figure 4 - Key issues concerning the proposal**



***Wairarapa should not be included***

24. A theme of submissions has been that the Wairarapa should not be included within a Greater Wellington Council. Eight of the nine affected Councils do not support Wairarapa being included in the proposal and a large number of submitters opposed the proposal because in their view, Wairarapa was not part of Wellington.

**Feedback from Hearings**

25. The Commission conducted 18 days hearings of submissions between 9 March and 22 April 2015, and heard one additional submitter on 14 May. A total 586 submitters requested and were offered an opportunity to speak. 457 submitters accepted this invitation and attended a hearing. This represented approximately 0.5% of total submitters.

**Table 6 – Total submissions heard by location/district**

District	Hearings Days	Submitters
Wellington	5.5	109
Wairarapa	5	167
Upper Hutt	2.5	54
Lower Hutt	3	77
Kapiti Coast	1	35
Porirua	1	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>456</b>

One additional submitter from Kapiti Coast District addressed the Commission remotely by telephone.

26. The hearings re-enforced the themes of the written submissions and emphasised a distinct district flavour. The key themes of the hearing process were:

- *Loss of local voice and loss of local democratic process* – There was concern that major decisions would be made by people with an insufficient understanding of the communities affected. This was particularly an issue in the Wairarapa, where submitters were concerned about a loss of services and decisions being dominated by metropolitan Wellington concerns. Set out below are some quotes from submitters:

*“Wairarapa is a rural area with rural issues, geographically separated from the rest of the Wellington region. We firmly believe the type of representation proposed will NOT give a fair voice / or a voice at all to our communities.”* – **Individual, Masterton**

*“The concern of the community has been that with each change, the community gets further distanced from decision-making, and its voice is successively diluted.”* – **Otaki Community Board**

*“The key word is “local”. Local members elected by local people, with the mandate to make the governance and financial decisions that suit Hutt City – and most importantly, be accountable at a local level.”* – **Wainuiomata Community Board, Lower Hutt**

- *Local Boards would not have sufficient authority to make decisions* – Submitters were concerned that the role and powers of local boards were too narrow and insecure and that “the real power” would be in hands of the governing body. There was also a concern that the number of representatives on the governing body suggested for particular areas was not enough to give their area an effective voice.

*“Oppose a Wellington takeover and only 2 representatives for the Wairarapa – an affront to local identity and mana.”* – **Individual, Masterton**

- *The costs arising from the amalgamation are too high* – There were concerns that the costs of change were disproportionate to the potential gains, and fears that rates would rise to pay for the costs arising from the amalgamation.

*“IT systems development will take a lot of time and cost a lot of money.”* **Individual, Wellington**

*“The huge cost of amalgamation, and the payback period of eight years cannot be justified. Furthermore, I do not believe the benefits claimed are there.”* – **Individual, Lower Hutt**

- *The process* – There was a theme of concern that there had been too little community and council engagement in the development of the proposal, that there had been inadequate communication about the proposal. In particular many felt that the length of time for submissions had been too short, and that the submissions process was poorly timed, spanning the Christmas period. These issues were raised by both the submitters who were both in favour of and opposed to the proposal.

*“It would have been better to have more conversations before decisions were taken. The whole process has been too fast.”* **Individual, Wellington**

*“We would recommend from here the process requires a much stronger focus to engage the business community to ensure proper and informed consultation takes place and debate on all the options.” – Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce*

27. While the majority of those appearing before the Commission opposed the draft proposal, it was apparent that there was a level of support for some form of change and/or improvement in local government in the region. Submitters who strongly opposed the draft proposal on numerous occasions indicated during hearings that they were open to lesser degrees of change. This included a willingness to consider more local mergers of neighbouring territorial authorities (particularly in the Wairarapa), and possible arrangements for particular responsibilities, such as infrastructure, to be delivered at a regional or sub- regional scale.
28. It was also apparent during hearings that some submitters did not have a great depth of understanding of some aspects of the system of local government in New Zealand. These included:
- the nature of the distinction between a unitary authority and a merger that might unite neighbouring territorial local authorities; and
  - the current division of roles and responsibilities between regional councils and territorial local authorities.

### **Views of key stakeholders**

29. This section of report summarises the views of key stakeholders including affected councils; community groups; businesses groups, iwi and Māori and government agencies.

### **Views of affected Councils**

30. The majority of affected local authorities oppose the proposal with those in support (Greater Wellington Regional Council and Porirua) each suggesting specific changes should the proposal proceed. In addition to their individual submissions, Carterton, Masterton, and South Wairarapa District Councils and Hutt City Council made an additional joint submission. This opposed the proposal because it:
- would not, in the LGC’s own assessment, be the most cost-effective means of delivering local government services;
  - undermines rather than promotes local democracy by transferring power and decision-making away from the local communities; and
  - is not supported by any evidence indicating a super-city will materially change the prospects for the Wellington regional economy.
31. All the Councils that opposed the proposal expressed a level of support for other options for improvements to the current system, involving changes either to local government structures or to the way councils worked and made decisions together. These included suggestions around more limited mergers or proposed enhancements to the status quo, through changes to governance arrangements and a greater emphasis on the use of shared services and council controlled organisations.
32. All affected councils in the Wellington region made oral submissions at the hearings. Table 7 provides a brief summary of the changes to the proposal suggested by the region’s councils.

33. More detail on the views of the individual territorial authorities is contained in Part 2 of this report which provides analysis of the feedback received on the proposal from each district. The views of Greater Wellington Regional Council follow the table.

**Table 7 – Summary of Changes/Improvements Proposed by Local Authorities**

<b>City/District Council</b>	<b>Proposed changes</b>
<b>Carterton District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prefers the establishment of a Wairarapa Unitary Authority. If that does not happen keep the status quo which will allow other options to be considered in the future.</li> </ul>
<b>Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the proposal with refinements to Local Boards and the Māori Board.</li> </ul>
<b>Hutt City</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance the status quo with increased use of shared services. Establish a regional entity for land transport. Supports a unitary authority for the Wairarapa.</li> </ul>
<b>Kapiti Coast District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall neutral stance, noting some specific aspects of the proposal that are supported and others that are not.</li> </ul>
<b>Masterton District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prefers a Wairarapa Unitary Authority. If that does not happen would see the amalgamation of the 3 Wairarapa territorial authorities with a separate regional council as acceptable.</li> </ul>
<b>South Wairarapa District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports establishment of a Wairarapa Unitary Authority, and expresses no view in relation to the rest of the region.</li> </ul>
<b>Porirua City</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission should consider excluding the Wairarapa from the proposed Greater Wellington Council and consider other options for addressing resourcing issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Upper Hutt City</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commission should look again at the “enhanced status quo” model to provide an “integrated governance framework” for regional decision making and restructure regional Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs), if necessary promoting legislative change to facilitate this.</li> </ul>
<b>Wellington City</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a case for change and the Commission needs to give further consideration to other options, particularly those that might include a separate Wairarapa Council, along with one or more metropolitan councils which might or might not be unitary authorities.</li> </ul>

*Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC)*

34. The GWRC supports the proposal, and would like to see the Commission continue the reorganisation process without delay. However, GWRC has submitted it would like to see a number of refinements to the proposal particularly around local boards. Refinements would include a dispute resolution process for local board agreements, and guidance around local board funding policies (especially around discretionary funds and targeted rates).
35. GWRC also submitted that governing body members should not be appointed to local boards (as it considers that structure runs the risk of the governing body dominating the decision making of the local boards). GWRC further submitted that the views of all iwi in the Region should be sought in determining a preferred arrangement for Māori participation, and that the role and statutory arrangements for the proposed Māori Board should be clarified.

### Submissions from Community Groups

Community organisations		
Against	42	75%
For	9	16%
Neutral	3	5%
Unclear or not stated	2	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100%</b>

36. 56 submissions were identified as coming from community groups. These included community boards, along with a range of other groups such as residents', progressive and community associations, community committees and other community groups. It also included a number of groups that had the specific aim of either supporting (Better Wellington, Better Hutt Valley, Better Kapiti, Better Wairarapa) or opposing (Carterton Voice, Like Upper Hutt Keep It Local, Hands Off the Hutt) the proposal.

37. A significant majority (75%) of community group submissions opposed the draft proposal. The most commonly stated reason for opposition among this group of submissions was concerns at the loss of local identity and weakening of local democracy. Other frequent themes were a preference for the status quo, a concern that the costs of change were too high, and that there was not sufficient evidence of a need for change.

38. 7 of the 8 Community Boards that submitted (from across the Hutt, Kapiti, Wellington and South Wairarapa districts) opposed the draft. The table below summarises a sample of the submissions from community organisations, including all Community Board submissions.

**Table 6- Summary of selected submissions from Community Boards and Local Community Groups**

Name of organisation	Key points on Proposal	Preferred option/amendments?
Kapiti Coast Grey Power (Kapiti Coast District)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neither supports nor opposes</li> <li>Concern at degree of uncertainty around costs and benefits</li> <li>Potential for loss of local voice and impacts on rates of those on fixed incomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefits from amalgamation can be achieved through co-operation in specific areas</li> </ul>
Martinborough Community Board (South Wairarapa District)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opposes the proposal</li> <li>Concern over loss of local knowledge and involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Status quo with continued progress toward shared services</li> </ul>

Mount Victoria Residents Association (Wellington City)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opposes a single council</li> <li>• Local democracy/decision making will be sacrificed</li> <li>• Concern Wellington City residents will pay for the debts of other councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater co-operation between locally based bodies</li> <li>• A regional council that is more considerate of local views</li> </ul>
Paraparaumu/Raumati Community Board (Kapiti Coast District)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opposes the proposal</li> <li>• Acknowledge need for change in governance</li> <li>• Concern over accessibility to decision makers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep the status quo, keep community boards acting as a voice for local communities and stronger cooperation between councils</li> </ul>
Petone Community Board (Hutt City)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opposes the proposal</li> <li>• Insufficient public support</li> <li>• Costs of change too high</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic development functions could be combined without amalgamation</li> <li>• Scope for increased shared services</li> </ul>
Pukerua Bay Residents Association (Porirua City)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the proposal</li> <li>• Strikes a good balance between improved regional efficiency and maintenance of local identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amalgamation should be done soon but need more detail around planning powers of local boards. Local boards should develop their own plans.</li> </ul>
Tawa Community Board (Wellington City)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports but recognises proposal may not succeed</li> <li>• Makes sense from a strategic and regulatory perspective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LGC propose an alternative plan more acceptable to region at large</li> </ul>
Wainuiomata Community Board (Hutt City)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opposes the proposal</li> <li>• Believes there is a high level of community opposition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status quo</li> <li>• Support in community for more shared services</li> </ul>
Otaki Community Board (Kapiti Coast District)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opposes the proposal</li> <li>• Opposed to changes that will result in the loss of the local community voice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status Quo or further explore how the status quo can be more efficient and effective with greater shared services.</li> </ul>
Makara-Ohariu Community Board (Wellington City)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not support the draft proposal in its present form.</li> <li>• Concern that the present proposal does not give sufficient recognition to "Communities of Interest".</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No specific suggestion</li> </ul>
Featherston Community Board (South Wairarapa District)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Majority opposed to the proposal</li> </ul>	

### **Summary of views of businesses and business organisations**

39. Overall, there is support for the proposal from the businesses and business organisations with 54% of submissions identified as coming from this group supporting the proposal. This support was strongest among businesses and organisations identified as based in Wellington City, or as having a regional or national focus, as compared to the submissions from more local businesses in other districts. It was notable that there was little support for the draft proposal from businesses identified as based in the Hutt Valley, and that the Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce also submitted in opposition to the proposal.

40. The submission from the Wellington Employers Chamber of Commerce provided valuable data on the results of surveys of members undertaken by the various Chambers across the region. This showed that:

- The Porirua Chamber members' poll showed 75% support for change to the structure of local government, 35% support for the proposal and 26% opposition;
- The Kapiti Chamber members' poll showed 65% support for change to the structure of local government, 47.5% support for the proposal and 20% opposition;
- The Wairarapa Chamber members' poll showed 79% support for change to the structure of local government, 65% support for the proposal;
- The Wellington Chamber members' poll showed 62% support for change to the structure of local government, 46% support for the proposal;

The Hutt Valley Chamber submission reported that its members' poll, differently worded from those above, found that 58.7% felt negatively towards the proposal and 41.3% positively.

41. Business organisations that supported the proposal tended to support the idea of a 'one stop shop' for businesses, and as leading to the streamlining rules and district plans. However, there is some concern around commercial rating issues, and the possibility that some parts of the region may need to subsidise other parts of the region.

42. A selection of the submissions from business organisations is summarised in the table below.

**Table 7- Summary of submissions from Business Organisations**

Name of organisation	Key points on Proposal	Preferred option/amendments
Business NZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the direction of the proposal</li> <li>• In favour of greater economies of scale and improved decision making around local government services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local government funding needs to be more rigorously addressed</li> <li>• The role of local government needs to be established on a principled basis and properly circumscribed.</li> </ul>

Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opposes the proposal but supports further consideration of change</li> <li>• Concern over loss of local voice/absorbing other areas debts</li> <li>• Submitted that there was no real evidence around efficiencies of scale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new structure may exclude the Wairarapa, combine the Hutt regions, and combine Wellington/Porirua</li> <li>• Would like to see its business community more involved in debates</li> </ul>
Kapiti Coast Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neutral but most members support some form of change</li> <li>• Amalgamation could bring resources/expertise to bear on large projects in Kapiti</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wants to ensure any rating system aligns costs and benefits fairly</li> <li>• Does not want to see any ring-fencing of debt</li> </ul>
Retail NZ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports change to the structure of local government in principle but does not support the proposal</li> <li>• Not convinced the proposal would result in savings for business (particularly SMEs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would like to see effective centralisation of decision making to avoid the unnecessary duplication of business processes</li> </ul>
The Wairarapa Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the proposal (in principle)</li> <li>• Amalgamation would be a catalyst to improved decision making/strategic capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of a Rural Advisory Board</li> <li>• Wants to ensure needs of rural community are met effectively</li> </ul>
Wellington Employers Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the proposal</li> <li>• Consider the current governance model as suboptimal</li> <li>• Concern that Wellington businesses may have to subsidise other regions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggested that the LGC could present a range of options at the next stage, akin to a referendum.</li> <li>• Would like to see its business community to be more involved in the debates</li> </ul>

### **Summary of views of Iwi and Māori organisations**

43. More submitters identified as from iwi, hapu or other Māori organisations opposed the proposal or were neutral, than supported it. Most of the submissions in this group were from the Wairarapa. Several of these submissions were concerned about preserving valued relationships that have been developed with local authorities, and the about the sort of relationships Māori want with local government in the region into the future regardless of the particular structure that might be in place.
44. Suggestions made included provision for tangata whenua representation on standing Committees, logistical support to enable iwi/Māori to participate, more representation at the local board level, and for the Māori Board to be resourced at the level of a local board (if the proposal were to proceed).

45. Set out below is the feedback from those Iwi and Māori organisations that provided a submission on the draft proposal.

**Table 8- Summary of submissions from Iwi and Māori organisations**

Name of organisation	Key points on Proposal	Preferred option
Ara Tahi, the partnership of Tangata Whenua leaders and Leaders of Greater Wellington Regional Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing with council/ councils should least be to the standard presently maintained with GWRC. This currently includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a formal partnership</li> <li>○ a joint natural resources committee,</li> <li>○ one Tangata Whenua member on each of the Council's standing committees</li> <li>○ arrangements to enable each Iwi to provide advice to Council</li> <li>○ logistical support</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neutral.</li> <li>• Want standard presently maintained with GWRC to be maintained and formalised through appropriate legislation.</li> </ul>
Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Iwi Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing with council/ councils should least to the standard presently maintained with GWRC               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a formal partnership,</li> <li>○ a joint natural resources committee,</li> <li>○ one Tangata Whenua member on each of the Council's standing committees</li> <li>○ Tangata Whenua monitor Council's performance of Treaty obligations</li> <li>○ logistical support</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neutral.</li> <li>• Want standard presently maintained with GWRC to be maintained and formalised through appropriate legislation.</li> </ul>
Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa – Tāmaki Nui ā Rua Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking changes to relationship with local government post-settlement through the negotiations process and are concerned that any local government reorganisation does not prejudice either the negotiations process or our eventual settlement. Set out concerns about adequacy of key aspects of the proposal relating to Māori participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neutral</li> <li>• Want to provide for broader iwi/Māori engagement that is more permanent.</li> </ul>
Ngati Kahu Kura Awhitia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opposed to what is on the table but not to combining the Wairarapa councils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opposed</li> </ul>
South Wairarapa District Council Māori Standing Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opposes the draft proposal on the basis that Tangata Whenua would lose their Mana Whenua.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the formation of a Wairarapa Unitary Authority.</li> </ul>
Te Runanga o Toa Rangatira Inc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ngati Toa does not expect the relationships to be diminished that have been established as part of a formal relationship with local government region resulting from a 2012 Treaty claim.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support a single tier option</li> <li>• Want Māori wards to be established as outlined in the LGA 2001.</li> </ul>

Wellington Tenth Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amalgamation would bring efficiencies e.g. reducing the number of plans and improving the regional roading network</li> <li>• The Māori Board needs to be resourced in a way a Local Board is.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally support proposal but wary of the devil in the detail.</li> <li>• Want appropriate resourcing for Māori Board</li> </ul>
Te Pou Herenga o Hiwaru Māori Reservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oppose the proposal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there is to be change combine Wairarapa territorial authorities</li> </ul>
Rangitane O Wairarapa Iwi Incorporated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opposed to proposal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• True partnership with Council not just an advisory group</li> </ul>
Naenae Māori Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oppose the proposal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No change</li> </ul>
Motuwairaka Marae	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oppose the proposal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supports the current Masterton District Council structure but if there is to be a change, the preferred option is a combining the 3 Wairarapa district councils</li> </ul>

### **Summary of submissions from government agencies**

46. Only a small number government agencies have provided written responses to the call for submissions. Most did not take strong positions either for or against the specific proposal. These responses are summarised below.

**Table 9- Summary of submissions from government agencies**

<b>Name of organisation</b>	<b>Key points on Proposal</b>	<b>Preferred option/amendments</b>
Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective regional collaboration is important for economic development.</li> <li>• Structural changes can be a catalyst for the building of collaboration</li> <li>• Important to ensure rural areas are fairly and efficiently represented</li> <li>• Co-ordinated urban growth planning should be a priority in deciding the final structure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neutral</li> </ul> <p>No fixed view on re-organisations. However, the proposed re-organisation offers the potential to improve economic outcomes across the Wellington region.</p>

<p>Ministry of Justice (Office of Treaty Settlements and Post Settlements Commitment Unit)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local governments' existing Treaty Settlements commitments should be retained and transferred to any new Council</li> <li>The aspirations of the settled and yet to be settled groups concerning the Māori Board need to be considered. Including their views on its role, their representation on it and making the committee permanent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neutral</li> </ul> <p>Advise the Commission to speak with settled and yet to be settled groups before finalising the proposal.</p>
<p>Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Important to consult with the Pacific community that have a wide range of views around the proposed amalgamation</li> <li>Pacific residents expect that any future structure will ensure Pacific input.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neutral</li> </ul> <p>Look forward to working closely with the Commission in regards to Pacific input on any future structure</p>
<p>NZ Transport Agency (NZTA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An effective regional governance will be an enabler of the integration of transport networks an integrated approach to land use and transport planning and efficient use of resources in transport investment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neutral</li> </ul> <p>No comment on broader aspects of proposal</p>
<p>Creative New Zealand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity for cultural infrastructure to be coordinated as a regional network</li> <li>Supports current Regional Amenities Fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Endorses proposal</li> </ul>

## Part 2 – District Level Summary of Submissions

1. This part of the report summarises the feedback the Commission received from each of the districts that were affected by the Local Government Commission’s proposal (the draft proposal) to amalgamate 9 existing councils into a Greater Wellington Council.

### Hutt City - Summary of Submissions

2. Set out below is a summary of the feedback received from Hutt City on the draft Wellington re-organisation proposal. This includes a summary of: feedback from submissions, Hutt City Council’s submission and feedback received from hearings that were held in Hutt City.

#### Feedback on proposal

3. Hutt City had the highest number of submitters in the region with 2,904 residents making a submission. A significant majority (93%) of Hutt City submitters were against the proposal with a small minority (7%) in support. A very small group were neutral or unclear (<1%).
4. Hutt City submitters were more opposed to the proposal than those across the region as a whole with 93% opposing the proposal compared to 89% opposition across the region.

**Table 1 – Hutt City feedback on the proposal**

District/Region	Submissions	Against	%	For	%	Neutral/ Unclear	%
Hutt City	2,904	2,704	93%	190	7%	10	Under 1%
Wellington region	9,142	8,173	89%	928	10%	41	Under 1%

#### ***Main reason for opposing the proposal***

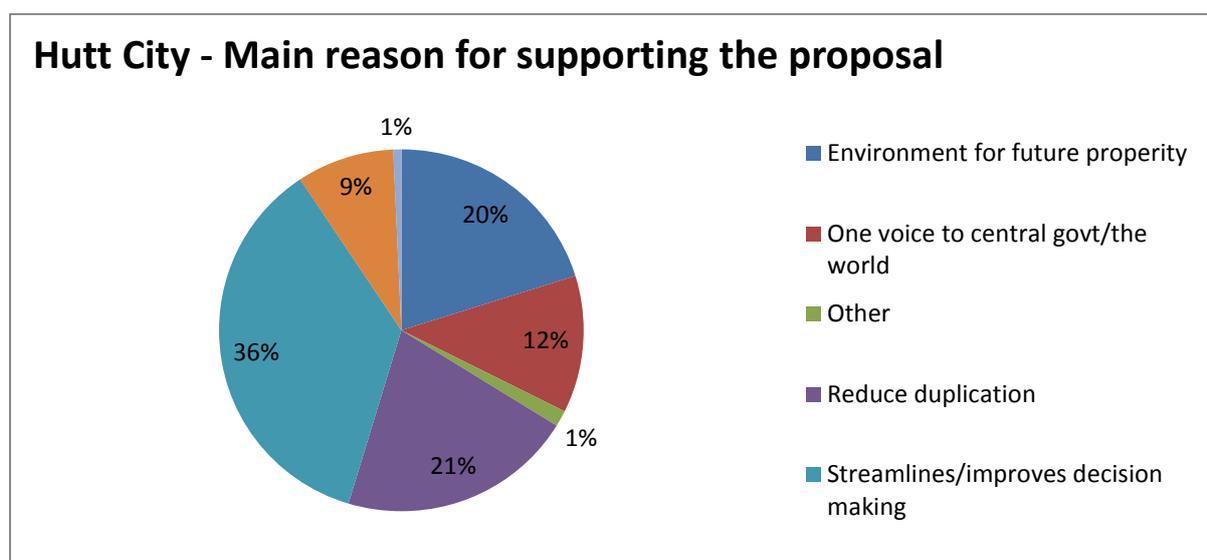
5. 85% of those Hutt City submitters (2,287 submitters) who opposed the proposal provided a reason for their opposition.
6. Submitters from Hutt City opposed the proposal mainly due to concerns about a loss of local democracy and identity (30%) and the risks of change (24%). See Table 2 for more details.

**Table 2 – Hutt City main reason for opposing the proposal**

Main Reason	Number	%	Regional Comparison
Loss of local identity/democracy	675	30%	27%
Risk of change	557	24%	19%
Prefer status quo	443	19%	28%
Lack common interests with other communities	234	10%	14%
Auckland - e.g. it is not working	185	8%	6%
Negative impact on rates	174	8%	6%
Other	19	0.8%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,287</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Main reasons for supporting the proposal**

7. Around 7% of Hutt City submitters supported the proposal with 139 of these setting out reasons for supporting the proposal.
8. The main reason for supporting the proposal is that it would be considered it would streamline and improve decision making (36%) (e.g. in areas like spatial planning), reduce duplication (21%) and create an environment for future prosperity (20%).



**Changes/ improvement suggested**

9. Hutt City submitters suggested 941 changes and/or alternatives to the proposal. Table 3 shows that 63% of the suggested changes to the proposal involved an alternative option for merging existing Councils. The most popular merger option was to merge the Hutt Valley Councils (30%), followed by the option of three unitary authorities (i.e. Western Wellington, Hutt Valley and Wairarapa) (11%). 22% proposed no mergers and more shared services. A smaller number proposed increasing responsibilities at the regional level (6%).

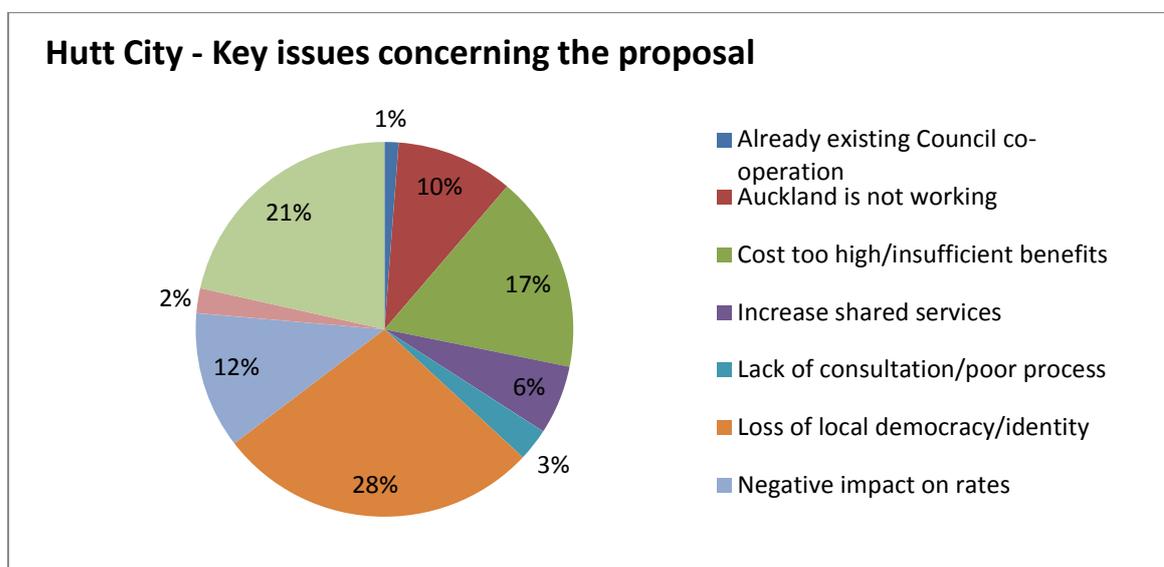
**Table 3 Hutt City - Changes/ improvement to the proposal**

Suggested changes/alternatives	Number	%	Regional Comparison
Merge Hutt Councils	271	30%	12%
No mergers - just more shared services	202	22%	31%
Three unitary authorities	99	11%	7%
Merge Wairarapa	70	8%	22%
Increase regional/GWRC responsibilities	51	6%	9%
Reduce number of Boards/Councils/councillors	50	5%	4%
Four unitary authorities	50	5%	3%
Improve representation/local responsiveness	40	4%	4%
Merge Wellington Metro-Wellington/Hutt Valley/Porirua/Kapiti	36	4%	4%
Merge Western Councils	23	3%	1%
Two unitary authorities - Wellington/Wairarapa	20	2%	22%
Other	2	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>914</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Key issues**

10. Hutt City submitters highlighted 2,333 key issues concerning the proposal. These key issues mainly tended to mirror the reasons why Hutt City submitters opposed the proposal, such as or concern around a loss of local democracy (28%), a preference for the status quo (21%), or concerns about the costs of change being too high (17%).

11. However, 12% of Hutt City submitters identified a negative impact on rates as a key issue and for 10% of Hutt City submitters their key issue was that the proposal was based on an Auckland model that was not working.



### **Submissions from community groups and businesses in Hutt City**

12. There were 13 submissions from community groups identified as based in Hutt City – including the “Hands off the Hutt” “Like Upper Hutt Keep It Local” and “Better Hutt Valley” groups which were focused on either opposing or supporting the proposal. 8 of these submissions including those from 2 community boards (Petone and Wainuiomata) opposed the proposal, while 1 other was neutral.
13. Only 3 submissions were identified as being made on behalf of businesses or business organisations based in Hutt City and all opposed the proposal. The Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce opposed the proposal and reported a survey of its members showing a majority (58.7%) viewed the proposal negatively.

### **Feedback from hearings held in Hutt City**

14. 3 days of hearings were held in Hutt City in March 2015. 97 submitters requested and were invited to speak. 77 submitters accepted this invitation. This represented 8% of total Hutt City submitters.
15. The majority of submitters heard at the Hutt City hearings were strongly against the proposal. The major concern expressed was that under the proposal there would be a loss of local democracy, with local boards being seen as powerless against the governing body. There was concern that this would result in decisions about the Hutt being taken by those that do not live in the Hutt, resulting in a loss of local control and the potential for Hutt issues to be regarded as lesser priorities.
16. Concern was also expressed about the transition costs involved in implementing the proposal being too high, with examples given from Auckland Council. The lack of sufficient time for adequate consultation and consideration as part of the reorganisation process was also a factor mentioned.
17. A consistent theme from those opposed was that the geography of the region means that separate communities form their own identities and therefore separate councils are preferable (i.e.: communities have their own distinct cultural issues).
18. Some submitters indicated their support for a merger of the two Hutt Valley city councils but in general did not consider the Hutt Valley had a shared community of interest with Wellington.
19. Those Hutt City residents and sector groups that spoke in support of the proposal thought that it was forward looking and would address the challenges local government will face over the next 25 to 30 years, including providing a rating base, economies of scale and the benefits of spatial planning for the whole region.

## **Views of Hutt City Council (HCC)**

20. HCC provided a detailed submission that expressed concern over what it considered was a proposal that undermined local democracy and the efficient provision of council services. The submission included a detailed critique of the draft proposal. HCC was concerned that local boards have limited budgets and would be subservient to the governing body. It noted that the Commission's preferred option was the riskiest and most expensive of the options and that there is a very large transaction cost to generate savings that were estimated the fifth highest in NPV terms.
  
21. HCC would prefer an 'enhanced status quo' option. It supports the creation of a standalone unitary authority in the Wairarapa, but it does not support the amalgamation of other councils in the Wellington area. It advocates the use of council controlled organisations (CCOs) to achieve regional delivery of capital intensive services rather than change to local authority boundaries. It supports the establishment of a single specialised land transport entity for the Wellington and Wairarapa regions.

## Upper Hutt City - Summary of Submissions

1. Set out below is a summary of the feedback received from Upper Hutt City on the draft Wellington re-organisation proposal. This includes a summary of feedback from submissions, Upper Hutt City Council's view on the proposal and feedback received from hearings that were held in Upper Hutt City.

### Feedback on proposal

2. Upper Hutt City had the highest proportion of submitters in the region relative to its population with 26% of total submissions coming from Upper Hutt, which is 8.5% of the region's population. The 2389 submissions from Upper Hutt was the second highest number for any district.
3. A significant majority (98%) of Upper Hutt City submitters were against the proposal with only a small minority (2%) in support. A very small group were neutral or unclear (0.1%).

**Table 1 – Upper Hutt City feedback on the proposal**

District/Region	Submissions	Against	%	For	%	Neutral Unclear/	%
Upper Hutt	2,389	2,333	98%	54	2%	2	Under 1%
Wellington region	9,142	8,173	89%	928	10%	41	Under 1%

4. Upper Hutt City submitters were more opposed to the proposal than submitters across the region as a whole, with 98% opposed the proposal compared to 89% across the region.

### ***Main reason for opposing the proposal***

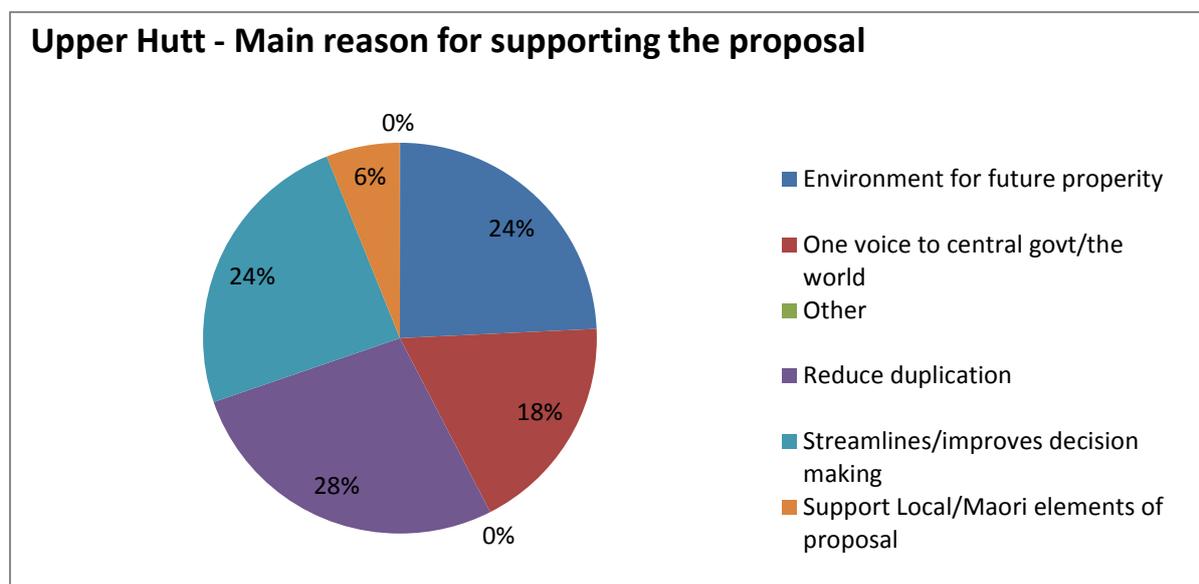
5. 91% of those Upper Hutt City submitters (2,129 submitters) who opposed to the proposal provided a reason for their opposition.
6. Table 2 summarises the main reasons submitters opposed the draft proposal. Upper Hutt City submitters showed the strongest preference in the region for the status quo (36%) and were also concerned about a loss of local democracy and identity (23%).

**Table 2 – Upper Hutt City: Main reason for opposing the proposal**

Main Reason	Number	%	Regional Comparison
Prefer status quo	765	36%	28%
Loss of local identity/democracy	490	23%	27%
Risk of change	275	13%	19%
“Hands off Hutt City” form submission	207	10%	
Lack common interests with other communities	172	8%	14%
Negative impact on rates	118	6%	6%
Auckland - e.g. it is not working	98	5%	6%
Other	4	<1%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,129</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Main reason for supporting the proposal**

- 2% of Upper Hutt City submitters supported the proposal with 33 of these (or 1.5% of Upper Hutt City submitters) setting out reasons for supporting the proposal.
- The main reason for supporting the proposal is that it reduces duplication 28%, streamlines and improves decision making (24%) (e.g. in areas like spatial planning), and provides an environment for future prosperity (24%).



**Changes/ improvement suggested**

- Upper Hutt submitters suggested 823 changes and/or alternatives to the proposal. Table 3 shows that 62% of the suggested changes to the proposal were to have no mergers and more shared services. This is significantly higher than the regional average of 31%.

10. Only 27% of suggestions highlighted a proposed an alternative option for merging existing councils compared to 51% of suggestions across the region. The most frequently mentioned merger option was to merge the Hutt Valley Councils (15%), although support for this option was well below the level in submissions from Hutt City (30%).

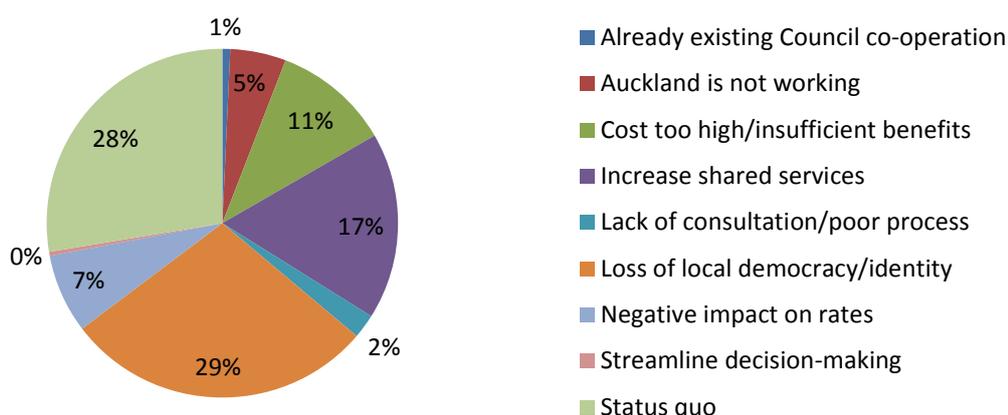
**Table 3 – Upper Hutt City: Suggested Changes/alternatives**

Suggested changes/alternatives	Number	%	Regional Comparison
No mergers - just more shared services	513	62%	31%
Merge Hutt Councils	124	15%	12%
Reduce number of Boards/Councils/councillors	38	5%	4%
Merge Wairarapa	36	4%	22%
Three unitary authorities	28	3%	7%
Increase regional/GWRC responsibilities	27	3%	9%
Improve representation/local responsiveness	21	3%	4%
Four unitary authorities	15	2%	3%
Merge Wellington Metro-Wellington/Hutt Valley/Porirua/Kapiti	13	2%	4%
Merge Western Councils	5	1%	1%
Two unitary authorities - Wellington/Wairarapa	3	0%	22%
Other	0	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>823</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### ***Key issues***

11. Upper Hutt submitters highlighted 2,352 key issues concerning the proposal. These key issues mainly tended to mirror the reasons why Upper Hutt submitters opposed the proposal, such as a concern around a loss of local democracy (29%), a strong preference for the status quo (28%).
12. 17% identified scope for the increased use of shared services. A further 11% identified their key issue as the costs of change being too high relative to benefits.

## Upper Hutt - Key issues concerning the proposal



### Submissions from community groups and business in the Upper Hutt

13. There were 11 submissions from community groups identified as based in Upper Hutt City – including both the “Like Upper Hutt Keep It Local” and “Better Hutt Valley” groups which were focused on opposing and supporting the proposal respectively. Of these 11 submissions only the “Better Hutt Valley” submission supported the proposal.
14. Only 3 submissions were identified as being made on behalf of businesses or business organisations based in or representing Upper Hutt City, and all opposed the proposal. The Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce opposed the proposal and reported a survey of its members showing a majority (58.7%) viewed the proposal negatively.

### Feedback from hearings held in Upper Hutt City

15. 2.5 days of hearings were held in Upper Hutt City in March and April 2015. 79 submitters requested a hearing and were invited to speak. 54 submitters accepted this invitation. This represented 2% of total Upper Hutt City submitters.
16. Submitters against the proposal cited the loss of local democracy, the potential for inheriting debt from other areas which could result in increased rates, and the potential for the needs of the Upper Hutt communities to be overlooked in favour of the larger Wellington City community. Many noted the differences in lifestyle between the disparate areas within the region and doubted the proposed structure in the proposal would be able to adequately represent all these different communities.
17. Submitters in favour of the draft proposal felt that there could be increased economic benefits and more cohesion through bulk purchasing of services and benefits to cost sharing for maintenance of infrastructure. Some submitters also felt that Upper Hutt could benefit from a cultural perspective with more international arts shows being spread through the region rather than being centred in Wellington City. The large number of commuters in the Hutt Valley was noted as indicating a wider community of interest.

### **Views of Upper Hutt City Council (UHCC)**

22. The UHCC submission argues that the establishment of a supercity fundamentally undermines the democratic principles of local government by reducing local communities' right to influence decision making. It suggests that local boards would have limited budgetary control and their ability to respond to the public is severely restricted by the nature of their powers.
  
23. It argues that better outcomes could be achieved by strengthening regional collaboration. It pointed to the Wellington Regional Economic Development Agency (WREDA), Wellington Water, and the Wellington Regional Waste Minimisation and Management Plan as successful examples of regional shared service delivery in core service/strategic areas. It suggests that legislative change is a viable option for mitigating issues around joint regional bodies without requiring an expensive amalgamation.
  
24. UHCC submitted that the Commission should take another look at the enhanced status quo model outlined in the Council's alternative application.

## Carterton District - Summary of Submissions

1. Set out below is a summary of the feedback received from Carterton District submitters on the draft Wellington re-organisation proposal. This includes a summary of feedback from submissions, Carterton District Council's view on the proposal and feedback received from hearings that were held in the Wairarapa.

### Feedback on proposal

2. 628 submissions were received from the Carterton district. 92% were against the proposal which is higher than the regional average of 89%. Only 8% were in favour of the proposal with no submissions that were neutral or unclear.

**Table 1 –Carterton District feedback on the proposal**

District/Region	Submissions	Against	%	For	%	Neutral Unclear/	%
Carterton	628	578	92%	50	8%	0	Under 1%
Wellington region	9,142	8,173	89%	928	10%	41	Under 1%

### Main Reason for opposing the proposal

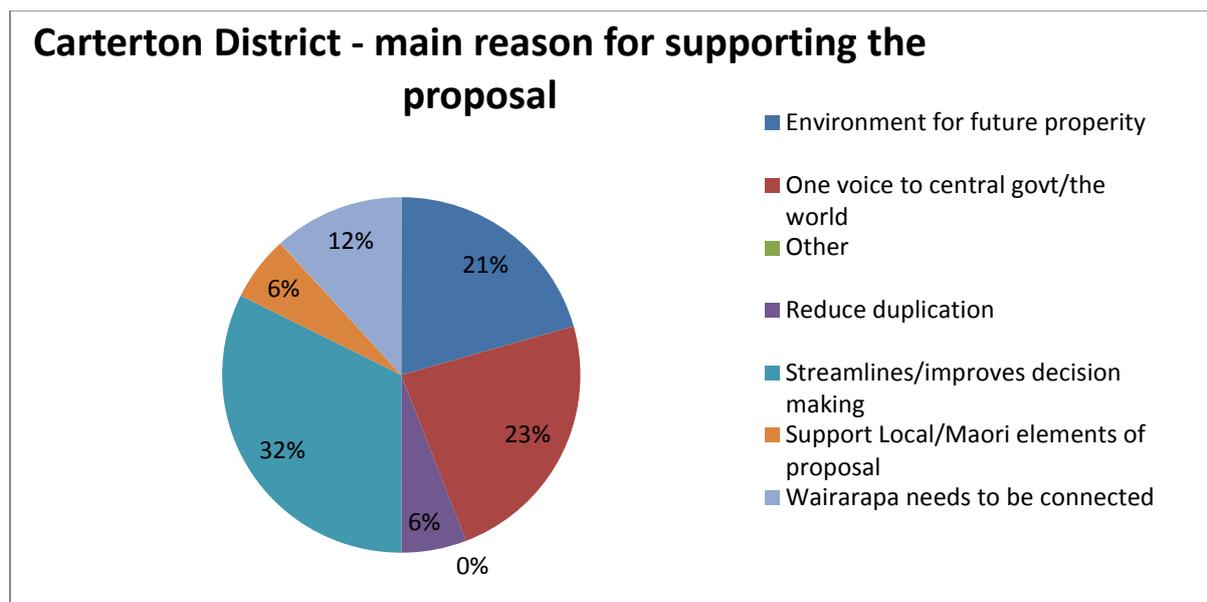
3. 82% of those Carterton district submitters (472 submitters) who opposed to the proposal provided a reason for their opposition.
4. Table 2 summarises the main reasons put forward by Carterton District submitters opposed the draft proposal. The “Carterton Voice” form submission comprised the largest group of submitters (40%). These submitters objected to the proposal because of concerns about the loss of local identity/local democracy, the Wairarapa being not part of Wellington, the potential negative impact on rates and because the cost of a larger bureaucracy would be too high.
5. A preference for the status quo (24%) and a lack of common interest with other communities (16%) were also significant reasons for opposing the proposal.

**Table 2 –Carterton District: Main reason for opposing the proposal**

Main Reason	Number	%	Regional Comparison
“Carterton Voice” form submission	189	40%	n/a
Prefer status quo	115	24%	28%
Lack common interests with other communities	77	16%	14%
Loss of local identity/democracy	51	11%	27%
Risk of change	28	6%	19%
Negative impact on rates	5	1%	6%
Auckland - e.g. it is not working	4	1%	6%
Other	3	1%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Main reason for supporting the proposal**

6. 8% of Carterton district submitters supported the proposal with 34 of these (or 5% of Carterton district submitters) setting out reasons for supporting the proposal.
7. The main reasons given for supporting the proposal were that it streamlines and improves decision making (32%) (e.g. in areas like spatial planning), provides one voice for central government (23%) and an environment for future prosperity (21%).



### **Changes/ improvement suggested**

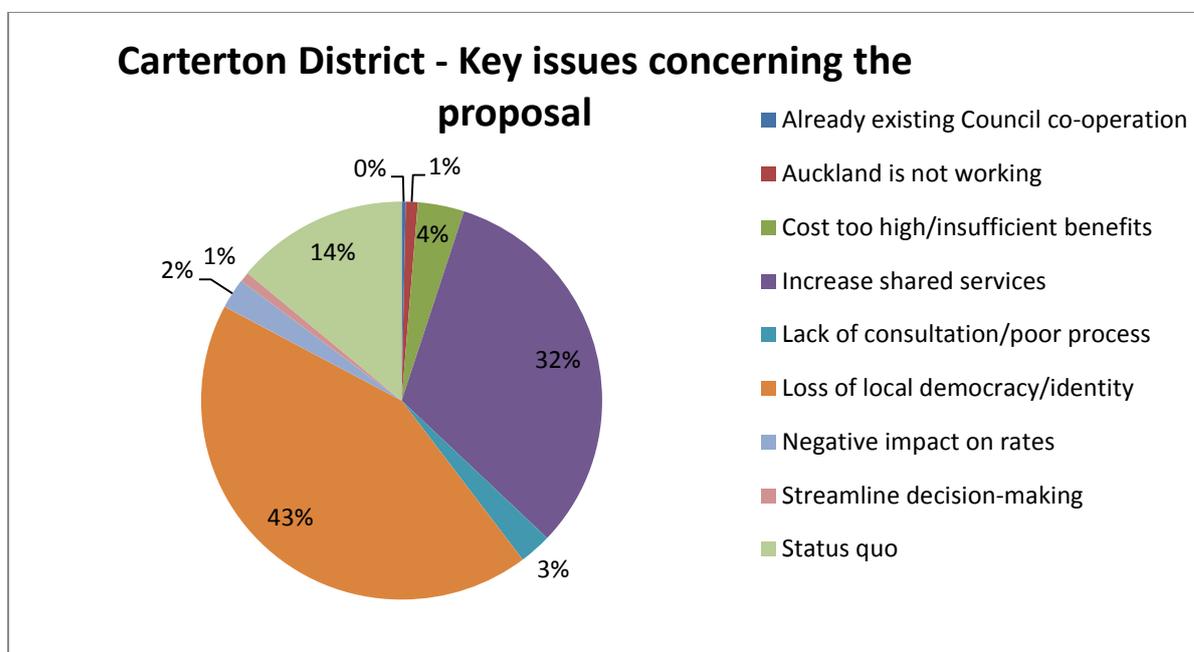
8. Carterton District submitters suggested 515 changes and/or alternatives to the proposal. Table 3 shows that 65% of the suggested changes/alternatives related to an alternative option for merging existing councils, with 57% proposing that the Wairarapa Councils be merged.
9. 27% of the suggested changes were to increase responsibilities of the regional council. This was well above the regional average for this sort of suggestion. Only 5% of Carterton district submitters who suggested changes proposed the option of no mergers and more shared services, compared to the regional average of 31%.

**Table 3 – Carterton District: Suggested changes/alternatives**

Suggested changes/alternatives	Number	%	Regional Comparison
Merge Wairarapa	292	57%	22%
Increase regional/GWRC responsibilities	138	27%	9%
No mergers - just more shared services	28	5%	31%
Improve representation/local responsiveness	15	3%	4%
Three unitary authorities	13	3%	7%
Merge Wellington/Hutt Valley/Porirua/Kapiti	11	2%	4%
Two unitary authorities - Wellington/Wairarapa	10	2%	2%
Reduce number of Boards/Councils/councillors	3	1%	4%
Four unitary authorities	3	1%	3%
Merge Hutt Councils	1	0%	12%
Merge Western Councils	1	0%	1%
Other	0	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Key issues**

10. Carterton District submitters highlighted 617 key issues concerning the proposal. These key issues mainly tended to mirror the reasons why Carterton District submitters opposed the proposal. These included a concern around the loss of local democracy (43%) and a preference for the status quo (14%). However, in addition 32% identified an increased use of shared services as a key issue.



**Submissions from community groups and business in the Carterton District**

11. The number of submission identified as coming from community groups and businesses based in or representing Carterton was very small. It included both the “Carterton Voice” and “Better Wairarapa” groups which were focused on opposing and supporting the

proposal respectively. Of this group only the “Better Wairarapa” submission supported the proposal.

### **Feedback from hearings held in the Wairarapa**

12. 5 days of hearings were held in Carterton and Masterton between March and April 2015 for submitters from South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton Districts. Feedback from the hearings from these communities is being summarised as “the Wairarapa” as submitters from all three districts spoke at the Carterton or Masterton hearings depending on the convenience of time and location.
13. 205 submitters across the three district council areas requested a hearing and were invited to speak. 167 accepted the invitation, which represented 10% of total Wairarapa submitters. The submitters represented a cross section of the community with submissions from the district councils, local iwi, local businesses and community groups, as well as individuals.
14. There was little support for the proposal in its current form but there was support for amalgamating the three district councils. Support for this type of change was split between those who favoured:
  - *Amalgamation of the three district councils with the retention of the GWRC* – because the rating base within the Wairarapa is small it may not be able to afford to maintain the existing environmental standards and manage transport without support from the wider Wellington region; and those who supported,
  - *Amalgamation of the three district councils into a Wairarapa unitary authority* because they felt this was a feasible option if the budget is managed carefully and savings made where possible. Many submitters made the comment that such a council could “*cut its cloth accordingly*”.
15. Speakers against the proposal felt that the change would mean a loss of local democracy, would negatively affect the unique character of the Wairarapa communities, and would be likely to mean increased rates. Many cited the differences between the rural lifestyle of the Wairarapa and other areas of the region such as Wellington City and Hutt City. They felt that the needs of the Wairarapa residents would not be adequately represented with only two councillors for the area on the governing body.
16. Submitters who spoke in favour of the proposal mentioned the potential economic benefits, greater cohesion of services, and improved regional transport and strong links across the region with a large number of Wairarapa residents commuting to Wellington City.

### **Views of Carterton District Council (CDC)**

17. CDC does not agree with the draft proposal. CDC’s submission is, in part, focused on the previous joint application by the three Wairarapa councils to the Commission around the benefits of a unitary authority for the Wairarapa. In the absence of the establishment of a unitary authority for the Wairarapa, CDC favours the status quo as continuing this in

the meantime will not rule out other more acceptable options for improvement in the future.

18. In signalling opposition to the proposal, CDC emphasises differences between the Wairarapa and Wellington, noting differing issues and priorities, and an emotional and geographical disconnect. CDC also expresses concern that a single region-wide unitary authority would be focused on metropolitan Wellington, issues that a Wairarapa local board would have too little influence relative to the governing body and that the Wairarapa would be under represented at the governing body.

19. The CDC submission was also critical of the Commission's process and analysis.

## Masterton District - Summary of Submissions

1. Set out below is a summary of the feedback received from Masterton District on the draft Wellington re-organisation proposal. This includes a summary of feedback from submissions, Masterton District Council's view on the proposal and feedback received from Hearings that were held in the Wairarapa.

### Feedback on proposal

2. 713 submissions were received from the Masterton District. 83% were against the proposal, which is a lower level of opposition than the regional average of 89%. 16% were in favour of the proposal which is the most support for the proposal in the Wairarapa. 2% of submissions were neutral or unclear.

**Table 1 – Masterton District feedback on the proposal**

District/Region	Submissions	Against	%	For	%	Neutral/ Unclear	%
Masterton	713	589	83%	118	17%	6	Under 1%
Wellington region	9,142	8,173	89%	928	10%	41	Under 1%

### Main reason for opposing the proposal

3. 78% of those Masterton district submitters (459 submitters) who opposed the proposal provided a reason for their opposition.
4. Table 2 summarises the main reasons submitters opposed the draft proposal. A lack of common interest with other communities (31%) was the most common reason given for opposing the proposal. This is a much more common reason for opposing the proposal in Masterton than across the region as a whole (14%).
5. A preference for the status quo (24%) and concern about loss of local democracy (22%) also were significant reasons why Masterton District submitters opposed the proposal.

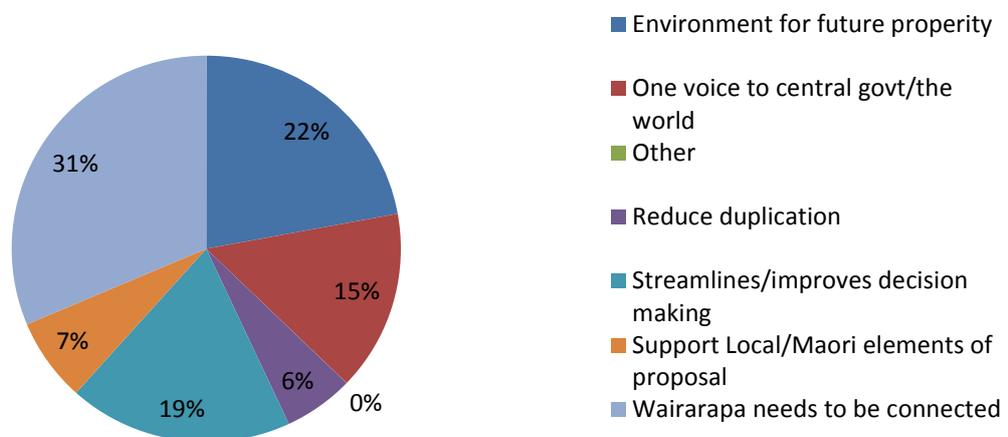
**Table 2 – Masterton District: Main reason for opposing the proposal**

Main reason	Number	%	Regional Comparison
Lack of common interests	141	31%	14%
Prefer status quo	111	24%	28%
Loss of local identity/democracy	102	22%	27%
Risk of change	42	9%	19%
Others	36	8%	1%
Negative impact on rates	16	3%	6%
Auckland - e.g. it is not working	11	2%	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>459</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Main reason for supporting the proposal**

6. 17% of Masterton district submitters supported the proposal, with 86 of these (or 12% of Masterton district submitters) setting out reasons for supporting the proposal.
7. The main reason for supporting the proposal is that the Wairarapa needs to be connected to be the bigger region (31%). Other leading reasons are that the proposal would streamline and improve decision making (19%) (e.g. in areas like spatial planning), provides an environment for future prosperity (22%) and one voice to central government and the world (15%).

### **Masterton District - Main reason for supporting the proposal**



### **Changes/ improvement suggested**

8. Masterton District submitters suggested 340 changes/alternatives to the proposal. Table 3 shows that 77% of the suggested changes/alternatives related to an alternative option for merging existing councils, with 59% proposing that the Wairarapa Councils be merged.
9. Only 8% of the suggested changes proposed no mergers but more shared services compared to the regional average of 31%.

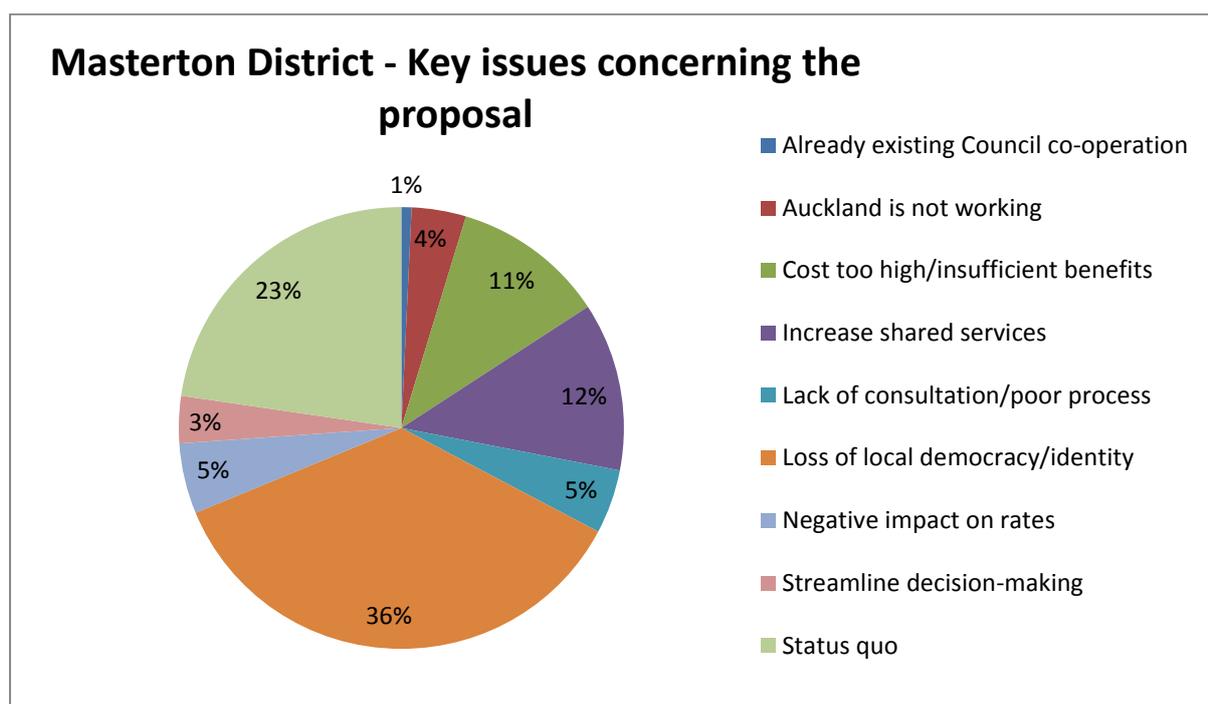
**Table 3 – Masterton district: Suggested changes/alternatives**

Suggested changes/alternatives	Number	%	Regional Comparison
Merge Wairarapa	202	59%	22%
No mergers - just more shared services	27	8%	31%
Increase regional/GWRC responsibilities	24	7%	9%
Three unitary authorities	23	7%	7%
Improve representation/local responsiveness	18	5%	4%
Two unitary authorities - Wellington/Wairarapa	16	5%	2%
Merge Wellington Metro-Wellington/Hutt Valley/Porirua/Kapiti	13	4%	4%
Reduce number of Boards/Councils/councillors	8	2%	4%
Four unitary authorities	4	1%	3%
Other	3	1%	0%
Merge Hutt Councils	2	1%	12%
Merge Western Councils	0	0%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Key issues**

10. Masterton District submitters highlighted 406 key issues concerning the proposal. These key issues mainly tended to mirror the reasons why Masterton district submitters opposed the proposal, such as or concern around a loss of local democracy (36%) and a preference for the status quo (23%).

11. 12% identified an increased use of shared services as a key issue and a further 11% identified their key issue as the costs of change being too high relative to its benefits.



## **Submissions from community groups and business in Masterton District**

12. There were very few submissions identified as coming from community groups and businesses based in or representing Masterton.

## **Feedback from hearings held in the Wairarapa**

13. 5 days of hearings were held in Carterton and Masterton between March and April 2015 for submitters from South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton Districts. Feedback from the hearings from these communities is being summarised as “the Wairarapa” as submitters from all three districts spoke at the Carterton or Masterton hearings depending on the convenience of time and location.
14. 205 submitters across the three district council areas requested a hearing and were invited to speak. 167 accepted the invitation, which represented 10% of total Wairarapa submitters. The submitters represented a cross section of the community with submissions from the district councils, local iwi, local businesses and community groups, as well as individuals.
15. There was little support for the proposal in its current form but there was support for amalgamating the three district councils. Support for this type of change was split between those who favoured:
  - *Amalgamation of the three district councils with the retention of a separate regional council* – because the rating base within the Wairarapa is small it may not be able to afford to maintain the existing environmental standards and manage transport without support from the wider Wellington region.
  - *Amalgamation of the three district councils into a Wairarapa unitary authority* because they felt this was a feasible option if the budget is managed carefully and savings made where possible with many submitters making the comment that such a council could “*cut its cloth accordingly*”.
16. Speakers against the proposal felt that the change would mean a loss of local democracy, would negatively affect the unique character of the Wairarapa communities, and would mean increased rates. Many cited the differences between the rural lifestyle of the Wairarapa and other areas of the region such as Wellington City and Hutt City. They felt that the needs the Wairarapa residents would not be adequately represented with only two councillors on the governing body for the area.
17. Submitters spoke in favour of the proposal because of the potential economic benefits, greater cohesion of services, and improved regional transport and strong links across the region with a large number of Wairarapa residents commuting to Wellington City.

## **Views of Masterton District Council (MDC)**

18. MDC opposes the draft proposal. It views Wellington and the Wairarapa as two distinctive regions and communities of interest. It does not accept the conclusions reached by the Commission in rejecting the proposal for a Wairarapa unitary authority, and does not see the one region-wide council as likely to prove a cost effective way of

delivering local government services, or as reducing costs, in the Wairarapa. It suggests that the proposal is not consistent with local democracy as there would be little budgetary control within the Wairarapa.

19. MDC continues to support the proposal for a Wairarapa unitary authority, but also suggests further consideration could be given to the option of combining the three Wairarapa territorial authorities, but retaining a separate regional council. It prefers the status quo to the draft proposal.

## South Wairarapa District - Summary of Submissions

1. Set out below is a summary of the feedback received from South Wairarapa District on the draft Wellington re-organisation proposal. This includes a summary of feedback from submissions, South Wairarapa District Council's view on the proposal and feedback received from South Wairarapa submitters at hearings that were held in the Wairarapa.

### Feedback on proposal

2. 400 submissions were received from the South Wairarapa district. 86% were against the proposal which is slightly below the regional average of 89%. 14% were in favour of the proposal and <1% of submissions were neutral or unclear.

**Table 1 – South Wairarapa feedback on the proposal**

District/Region	Submissions	Against	%	For	%	Neutral/ Unclear	%
South Wairarapa	400	343	86%	54	14%	3	Under 1%
Wellington region	9,142	8,173	89%	928	10%	41	Under 1%

### Main reason for opposing the proposal

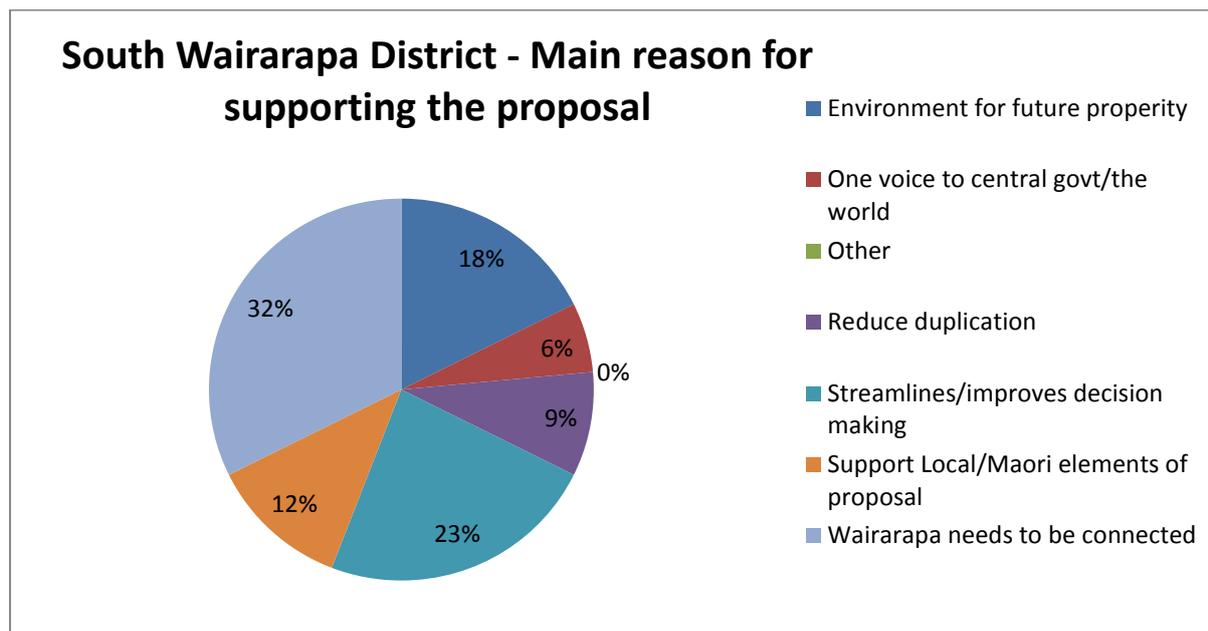
3. 83% of those South Wairarapa district submitters (285 submitters) who opposed the proposal provided a reason for their opposition.
4. Table 2 summarises the main reasons put forward by submitters opposed the draft proposal. A preference for the status quo (29%) was the most common reason given for opposing the proposal by South Wairarapa District submitters.
5. There was also concern about a perceived lack of common interest with other communities (24%), which is much more common as a reason for opposing the proposal than it was across the region as a whole (14%).

**Table 2 – South Wairarapa District: Main reason for opposing the proposal**

Main reason	Number	%	Regional Comparison
Prefer status quo	82	29%	28%
Lack of common interests	68	24%	14%
Loss of local identity/democracy	57	20%	27%
Risk of change	39	14%	19%
Others	27	9%	1%
Auckland - e.g. it is not working	8	3%	6%
Negative impact on rates	4	1%	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### ***Main reason for supporting the proposal***

6. 13% of South Wairarapa District submitters supported the proposal with 34 of them setting out reasons for supporting the proposal.
7. The main reason for supporting the proposal was that the Wairarapa needs to be connected (32%), that the proposed structure would streamline and improve decision making (23%) (e.g in areas like spatial planning) and that it would provide an environment for future prosperity (18%).



### ***Changes/ improvement suggested***

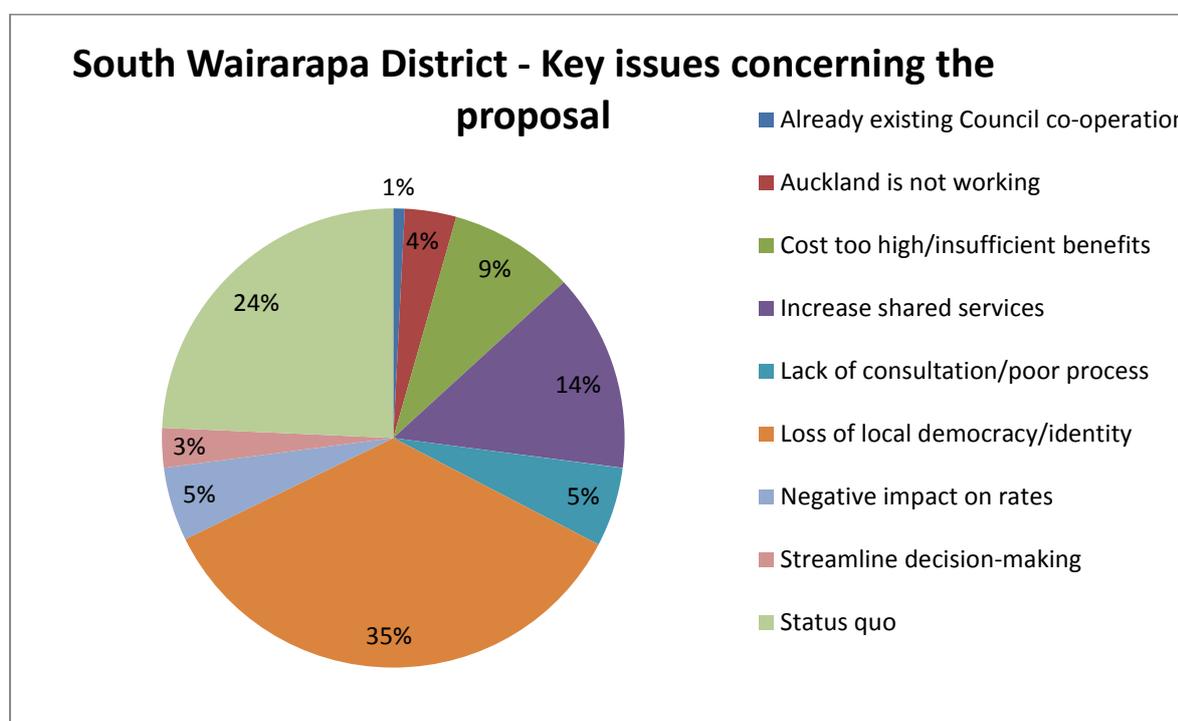
8. South Wairarapa District submitters suggested 194 changes and/or alternatives to the proposal. Table 3 shows that 74% of the suggested changes/alternatives related to an alternative option for merging existing councils, with 56% proposing that the Wairarapa Councils be merged.
9. Only 8% of the suggested changes favoured no mergers but more shared services, a lower figure than the average across the region of 31%.

**Table 3 – South Wairarapa: Suggested changes/alternatives**

Suggested changes/alternatives	Number	%	Regional Comparison
Merge Wairarapa	109	56%	22%
Increase regional/GWRC responsibilities	26	13%	9%
No mergers - just more shared services	16	8%	31%
Three unitary authorities	16	8%	7%
Two unitary authorities - Wellington/Wairarapa	7	4%	22%
Merge Wellington Metro-Wellington/Hutt Valley/Porirua/Kapiti	7	4%	4%
Improve representation/local responsiveness	6	3%	4%
Four unitary authorities	3	2%	3%
Merge Western Councils	2	1%	1%
Reduce number of Boards/Councils/councillors	1	<1%	4%
Merge Hutt Councils	1	<1%	12%
Other	0	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Key issues**

10. South Wairarapa District submitters highlighted 251 key issues concerning the proposal. These key issues mainly tended to mirror the reasons why South Wairarapa District submitters opposed the proposal, such as a concern around a loss of local democracy (35%), and a preference for the status quo (24%).



## **Submissions from Community Groups and Business in South Wairarapa District**

11. There were very few submission identified as coming from community groups and businesses based in or representing South Wairarapa.

### **Feedback from hearings held in the Wairarapa**

12. 5 days of hearings were held in Carterton and Masterton between March and April 2015 for submitters from South Wairarapa, Carterton and Masterton Districts. Feedback from the hearings from these communities is being summarised as “the Wairarapa” as submitters from all three districts spoke at the Carterton or Masterton hearings depending on the convenience of time and location.

13. 205 submitters across the three district council areas requested a hearing and were invited to speak. 167 accepted the invitation, which represented 10% of total Wairarapa submitters. The submitters represented a cross section of the community with submissions from the district councils, local iwi, local businesses and community groups, as well as individuals.

14. There was little support for the proposal in its current form but there was support for amalgamating the three district councils. Support for this type of change was split between those who favoured:

- *Amalgamation of the three district councils with the retention of the GWRC* – because the rating base within the Wairarapa is small it may not be able to afford to maintain the existing environmental standards and manage transport without support from the wider Wellington region.
- *Amalgamation of the three district councils into a Wairarapa Unitary authority* because they felt this was a feasible option if the budget is managed carefully and savings made where possible with many submitters making the comment that they would “*cut their cloth accordingly*”.

15. Speakers against the proposal felt that the change would mean a loss of local democracy, would negatively affect the unique character of the Wairarapa communities, and would mean increased rates. Many cited the differences between the rural lifestyle of the Wairarapa and other areas of the region such as Wellington City and Hutt City. They felt that the needs the Wairarapa residents would not be represented with proposed two councillors for the area.

16. Submitters spoke in favour of the proposal because of the potential economic benefits, greater cohesion of services, and improved regional transport and strong links across the region with a large number of Wairarapa residents commuting to Wellington City.

### **Views of South Wairarapa District Council (SWDC)**

17. SWDC opposes the draft proposal, and endorses the original Wairarapa Unitary Authority application (as submitted to the Commission in 2013), but expresses no view in relation to the remainder of the region. SWDC rejects the Commission’s conclusion that a Wairarapa Unitary Authority would not be viable.

18. The main areas of concern that the SWDC has highlighted are the loss of local representation (SWDC state representation would drop to less than one Councillor for the entire SWDC district which is a drastic reduction from current levels of elected representatives), the loss of local decision making, and the loss of local planning (it notes that the Wairarapa Combined District Plan currently works well).
19. SWDC submits it recognises the need for some change, but does not have a view on the structure of the wider Wellington region.

## Kapiti Coast District - Summary of Submissions

1. Set out below is a summary of the feedback received from Kapiti Coast District on the draft Wellington re-organisation proposal. This includes a summary of feedback from submissions, Kapiti Coast District Council's view on the proposal and feedback received from Kapiti district submitters at hearings.

### Feedback on proposal

2. 606 submissions were received from the Kapiti Coast district. 88% were against the proposal which is close to the regional average of 89%. 11% were in favour of the proposal and 1% of submissions were neutral or unclear.

**Table 1 – Kapiti Coast District feedback on the proposal**

District/region	Submissions	Against	%	For	%	Neutral/ Unclear	%
Kapiti Coast	606	535	88%	68	11%	3	Under 1%
Wellington region	9,142	8,173	89%	928	10%	41	Under 1%

### Main reason for opposing the proposal

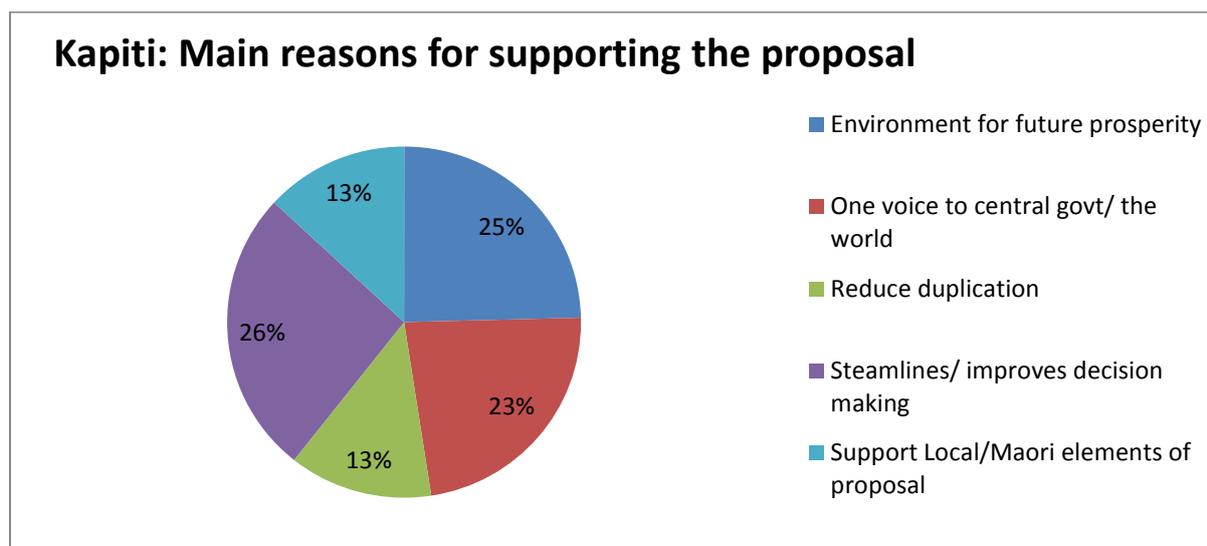
3. 89% of those Kapiti Coast district submitters (476 submitters) who opposed the proposal provided a reason for their opposition.
4. Table 2 summarises the main reasons submitters opposed the draft proposal. The Kapiti form submission was the largest group of submitters (36%). These submitters objected to the proposal because they were concerned that there were no benefits to the proposal.
5. A preference for the status quo (21%) and the loss of local identity/democracy (16%) were also significant reason for opposing the proposal.

**Table 2 – Kapiti Coast district: Main reason for opposing the proposal**

Main reason for opposing the proposal	Number	%	Regional Comparison
Kapiti form submission	173	36%	n/a
Prefer the current system/ status quo	102	21%	28%
Loss of local identity/democracy	77	16%	27%
Risk of change	49	10%	19%
Lack common interests with other communities	33	7%	14%
Auckland is not working	18	4%	6%
Negative impact on rates	14	3%	6%
Other	10	2%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Main reason for supporting the proposal**

6. 11% of Kapiti Coast district submitters supported the proposal with 61 of these (or 10% of Kapiti Coast district submitters) setting out reasons for supporting the proposal.
7. The main reason for supporting the proposal is that it streamlines and improves decision making (26%) (e.g. in areas like spatial planning), provides one voice for central government/ world (23%) and provides an environment for future prosperity (25%).



### **Changes/ alternative suggested**

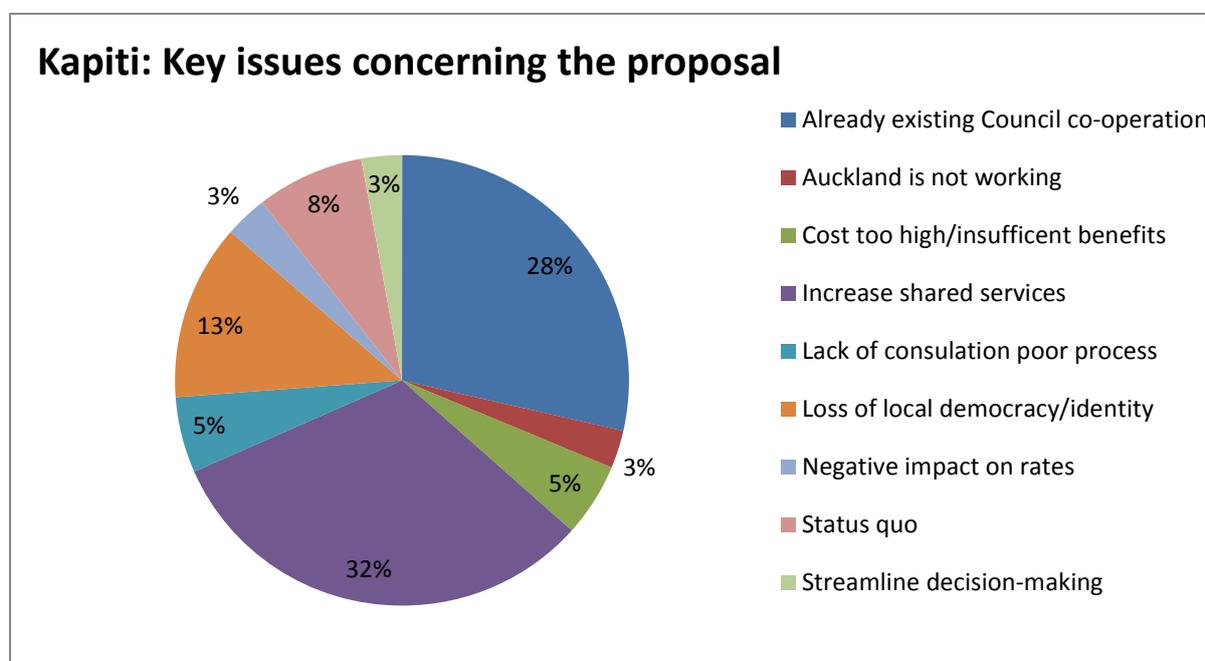
8. Kapiti Coast District submitters suggested 357 changes/alternatives to the proposal. Table 3 shows that 74% of the suggested changes/alternatives proposed the option of no mergers but more shared services as an alternative to the draft proposal. This is far higher than the regional average of 31%.
9. Only 16% of the Kapiti Coast District suggested changes proposed an alternative option for merging existing councils. This is far lower than the average across the region of 51%.

**Table 3 – Kapiti Coast District: Suggested changes/alternatives**

Suggested changes/alternatives	Number	%	Regional comparison
No mergers - just more shared services	264	74%	31%
Improve representation/local responsiveness	17	5%	4%
Merge Wairarapa	15	4%	22%
Merge Wellington Metro-Wellington/Hutt Valley/Porirua/ Kapiti	15	4%	4%
Reduce number of Boards/Councils/ councillors	11	3%	4%
Merge into three unitary authorities	9	3%	7%
Increase regional/GWRC responsibilities	8	2%	9%
Four unitary authorities	7	2%	4%
Merge Hutt Councils	6	2%	12%
Merge Western Councils-Wellington/Porirua/ Kapiti	3	1%	1%
Merge the western councils and the Wairarapa into two unitary authorities	1	0%	2%
Other	1	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Key issues**

10. Kapiti Coast district submitters highlighted 626 key issues concerning the proposal. These key issues reflect the strong preference in the Kapiti Coast area for an enhanced status quo approach with no mergers but an increase in shared services (32%) and building on existing co-operation between councils (28%).



## **Submissions from community Groups and business in Kapiti Coast District**

20. There were a relatively small number of submissions identified as coming from community groups and businesses based in or representing the Kapiti Coast District. Only the “Better Kapiti” groups submitted in support of the proposal, while those opposed included both the Otaki and Paraparaumu/Raumati Community Boards.
21. The Kapiti Chamber of Commerce did not take a position for or against the proposal but reported the results of a survey of its members. This showed 65% of its members in favour of some change to the structure of local government, but only 47.5% supporting the draft proposal.

## **Feedback from hearings held in Kapiti District**

11. A one day hearing was held in Paraparaumu for the Kapiti District. 48 submitters requested a hearing and were invited to speak. 35 submitters accepted this invitation. This represented 6% of total Kapiti District submitters.
12. The submitters represented a cross section of the community with submissions from the District Council, local businesses and community groups, as well as individuals.
13. Submitters against the proposal raised concerns about the loss of local democracy, the potential for rates increases that would be particularly difficult for the elderly population on fixed incomes and potentially negative effects on the character of the local communities.
22. Those in favour of the proposal cited the increased economic benefits to the area and improved transport network, especially with the large roading projects currently underway that will make access between the Kapiti Coast and Wellington City even easier. Submitters also noted that the large number of Kapiti residents that commute on a daily basis.

## **Views of the Kapiti Coast District Council (KCDC)**

23. KCDC has taken a neutral stance on the draft proposal. However, its submission outlines a number of benefits and disadvantages with the proposal, and expresses concerns about the reorganisation process, both in terms of timing and a lack of information and debate at a community level.
24. It sees advantages in linking regional infrastructure to regional spatial planning, creating a better voice for the regional in business and economic development matters, and more efficient regulatory systems bringing benefits both of scale and capability. It views a loss of local democracy and local voice as well as the cost of change as disadvantages, noting that the benefits of change will take more than a decade to outweigh the transitional costs. The Council also expressed opposition to the transfer of infrastructure assets to CCOs as it believes the public expects its elected representatives to have control and responsibility for these.

## Porirua City - Summary of Submissions

1. Set out below is a summary of the feedback received from Porirua City on the draft Wellington re-organisation proposal. This includes a summary of feedback from submissions, Porirua City Council's (PCC) view on the proposal and feedback received from Porirua City submitters at hearings.

### Feedback on proposal

2. 157 submissions were received from Porirua City. This accounted for 2% of total submissions and was the lowest number for any district in the region. Porirua City contains around 11% of the region's population.
3. 75% opposed the proposal, which is lower than regional average of 89%. 25% were in favour of the proposal and there were no submissions that were neutral or unclear.

**Table 1 – Porirua City feedback on the proposal**

District/region	Submissions	Against	%	For	%	Neutral unclear	%
Porirua City	157	118	75%	39	25%	0	0
Wellington region	9,142	8,173	89%	928	10%	41	<1%

### Main Reason for opposing the proposal

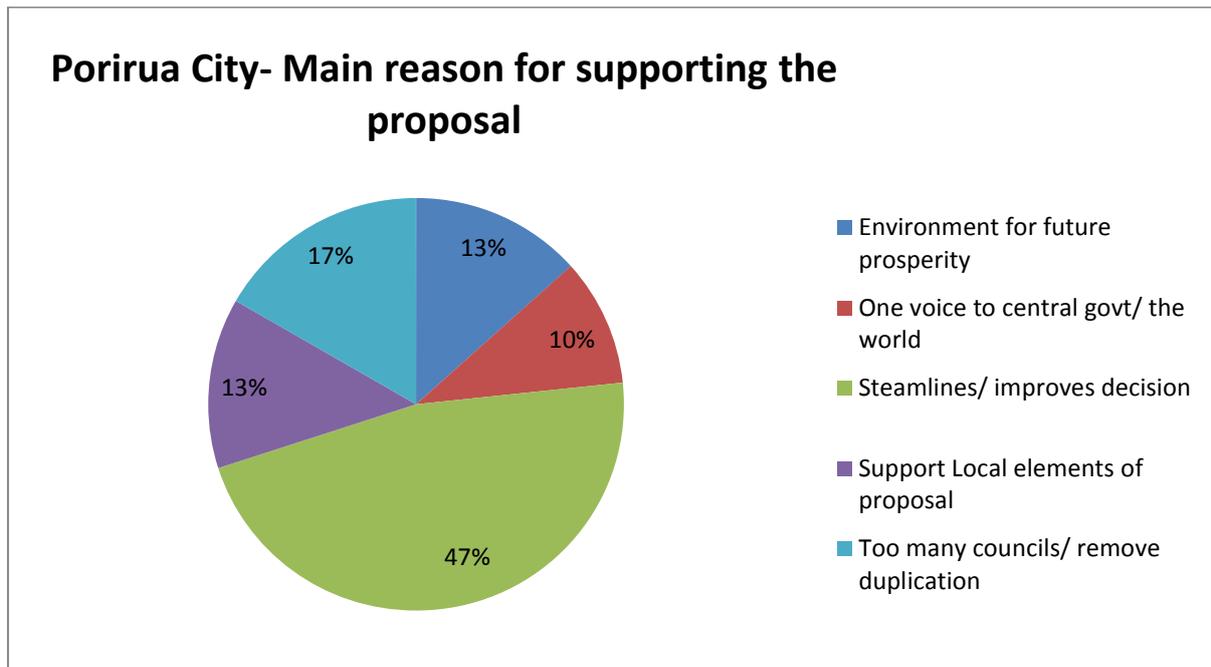
4. 96% of those Porirua City submitters (113 submitters) who opposed the proposal provided a reason for their opposition.
5. Table 2 summarises the main reasons submitters opposed the draft proposal. A preference for the status quo (26%) was the most common reason given for opposing the proposal by Porirua City submitters. The loss of local identity/democracy was the next most significant reason for opposing the proposal (24%).

**Table 2 – Porirua City: Main reason for opposing the proposal**

Main reason for opposing the proposal	Number	%	Regional comparison
Prefer the current system/ status quo	31	27%	6%
Loss of local identity/democracy	29	26%	27%
Risk of change	21	19%	14%
Lack common interests with other communities	18	16%	1%
Negative impact on rates	9	8%	28%
Auckland not working	4	4%	19%
Other	1	1%	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Main reason for supporting the proposal**

6. 25% of Porirua City submitters supported the proposal with 30 of these (or 19% of Porirua City submitters) setting out reasons for supporting the proposal.
7. The main reason for supporting the proposal is that it streamlines and improves decision making (47%) (e.g in areas like spatial planning). This is significantly above the regional average (30%). The second most popular reason given by Porirua City submitters for supporting the proposal was to remove duplication (17%).



### **Changes/ alternative suggested**

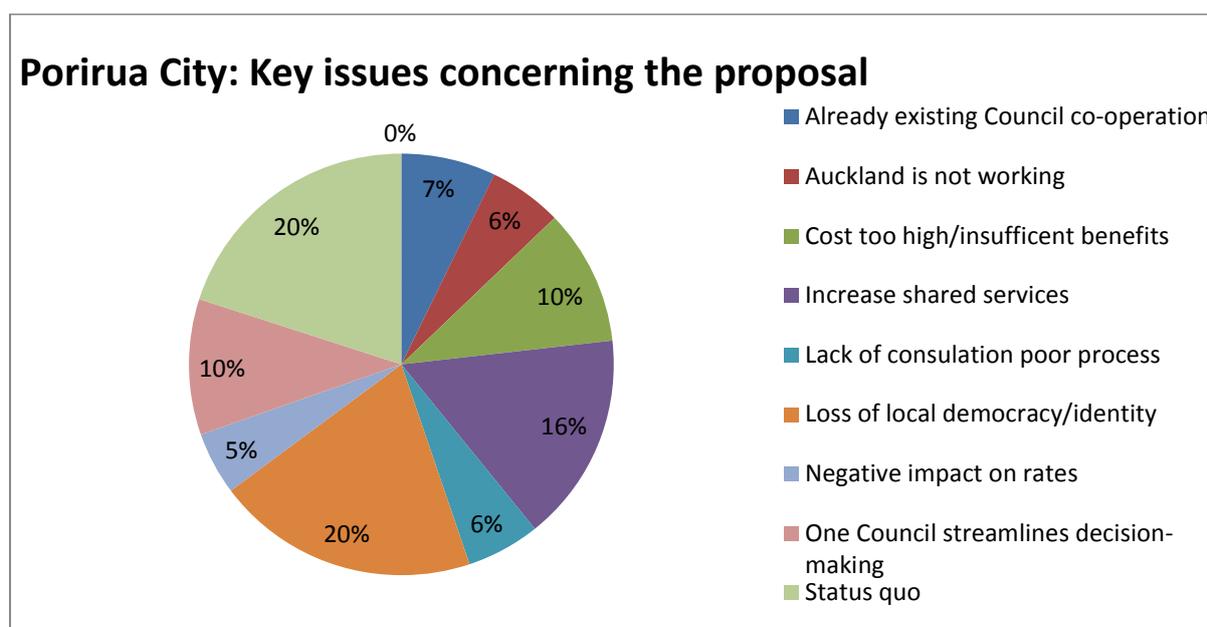
8. Porirua City submitters suggested 81 changes/alternatives to the proposal. Table 3 shows that 42% of the suggested changes/alternatives proposed an alternative option involving merging existing councils, with 12% proposing that there be a merger of Wellington, Hutt Valley, Porirua and Kapiti Coast councils.
9. 31% of the suggested changes highlighted the option of no mergers but more shared services.

**Table 3 – Porirua City: Suggested changes/alternatives**

Suggested changes/alternatives	Number	%	Regional comparison
No mergers - just more shared services	25	31%	31%
Increase regional/GWRC responsibilities	10	12%	9%
Merge Wellington/Hutt Valley/Porirua/ Kapiti	10	12%	4%
Merge Wairarapa	7	9%	22%
Reduce number of Boards/Councils/ councillors	7	9%	4%
Four unitary authorities	5	6%	4%
Improve representation/local responsiveness	5	6%	4%
Merge Hutt Councils	4	5%	12%
Merge Wairarapa/Hutt/Western councils into three unitary authorities	4	5%	7%
Merge Western councils-Wellington/Porirua/ Kapiti	3	4%	1%
Merge the western councils/ Wairarapa into two unitary authorities	1	1%	2%
Other		0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Key issues**

10. Porirua City submitters highlighted 125 key issues concerning the proposal. The key issues mainly tended to mirror the reasons why Porirua City submitters opposed the proposal. The main key issue in Porirua City is concern about the loss of local democracy (20%) followed by desire for more shared services (16%).



## **Submissions from community groups and business in Porirua City**

11. Only a very small number of submissions were identified as coming from community groups and businesses based in or representing the Porirua City. The Porirua Chamber of Commerce survey of its members showed that 75% favour some change to the structure of local government, but only 35% support the draft proposal, with 40% suggesting changes or improvements to it.

## **Feedback from hearings held in Porirua City**

12. A one day hearing was held in Porirua City on 26 March 2015. 21 submitters requested a hearing and were invited to speak. 14 submitters accepted this invitation. This represented 9% of total Porirua City submitters.
13. The submitters represented a cross section of the community with submissions from the Porirua City Council, local businesses and community groups, as well as individuals.
14. Porirua City Council and some submitters expressed support for the draft proposal citing potential economic benefits for Porirua City. Other submitters were concerned that the proposal would lead to a loss of local democracy, might negatively affect the unique character of each community, and might result in higher rates.

## **Views of Porirua City Council (PCC)**

15. PCC largely supports the proposal except in relation to the Wairarapa. It suggests that change is needed to address the lack of coherent spatial planning capability in the region, and the lack of a coherent consistent and agreed approach to regional economic development. It that processes to advance shared services over the past 10 years had been complex, slow and returned only modest benefits.
16. PCC believes that the proposal offers the best opportunity to achieve the priorities for the region including stronger and more effective regional leadership, simplified planning processes, and the delivery of effective and appropriate infrastructure. PCC acknowledged the complexity of issues facing the Wairarapa and asked that the Commission consider alternative funding models for the Wairarapa, noting that a metropolitan unitary authority without the Wairarapa is viable. PCC also wants to be more involved in a discussion around the proposed creation of a Porirua-Tawa ward and board.

## Wellington City - Summary of Submissions

1. Set out below is a summary of the feedback received from Wellington City on the draft Wellington re-organisation proposal. This includes a summary of feedback from submissions, Wellington City Council's (WCC) view on the proposal and feedback received from Wellington City submitters at hearings.

### Feedback on proposal

2. 834 submissions were received from Wellington City which was 9% of all submissions. This is a relatively low number of submissions considering that Wellington City contains around 41% of the region's population.
3. 67% of Wellington City submitters were opposed to the proposal and 33% were in favour. This is higher than the average level of support for the proposal across the region as a whole (10%). 1% of Wellington City submissions were neutral or unclear.

**Table 1 – Wellington City feedback on the proposal**

District	Total	Against	%	For	%	Neutral/Unclear	%
Wellington City	834	557	67%	270	33%	7	Under 1%
Wellington Region	9,142	8,173	89%	928	10%	41	Under 1%

### Main Reason for opposing the proposal

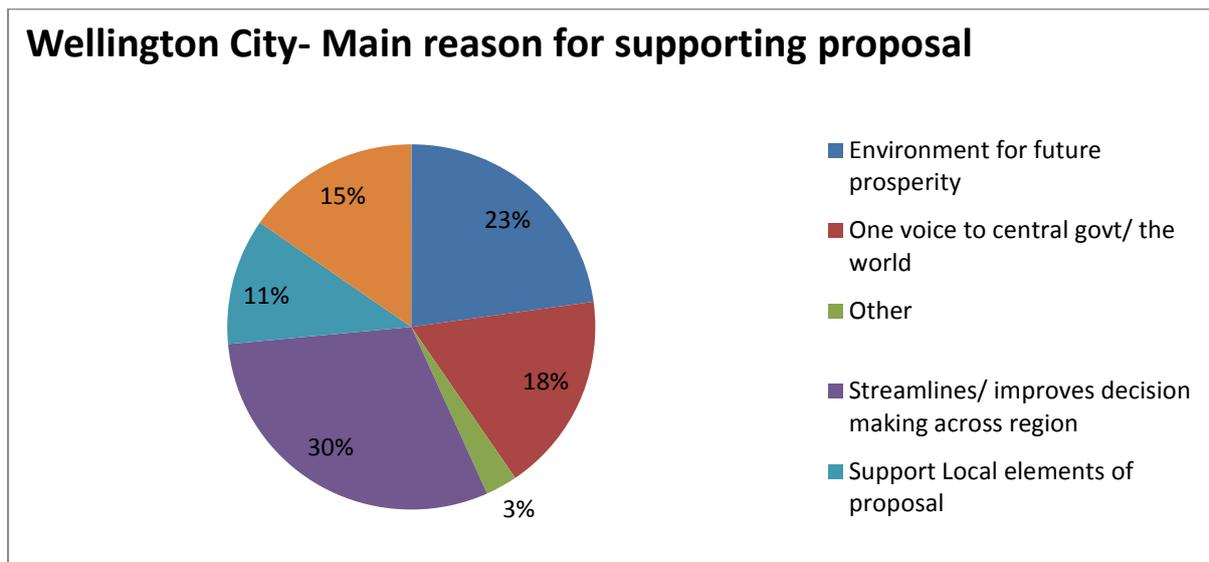
4. 93% of those Wellington City submitters (518 submitters) who opposed the proposal provided a reason for their opposition
5. Table 2 summarises the main reasons submitters opposed the draft proposal. A loss of local identity/democracy (28%) was most common reason given for opposing the proposal by Wellington City submitters. The next most significant reason for opposing the proposal (21%) was concern about the risk of change.

**Table 2 – Wellington City: Main reason for opposing the proposal**

Wellington City- Main reason for opposition	Number	%	Regional comparison
Loss of local identity/democracy	143	28%	27%
Risk of change	107	21%	19%
Lack common interests with other communities	99	19%	14%
Prefer the current system/ status quo	95	18%	28%
Auckland is not working	46	9%	6%
Other	12	2%	1%
Negative impact on rates	13	3%	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Main reason for supporting the proposal**

6. 33% of Wellington City submitters supported the proposal with 215 of these (or 26% of Wellington City submitters) setting out reasons for supporting the proposal.
7. The main reasons for supporting the proposal were that it streamlines and improves decision making (30%) (e.g in areas like spatial planning), provides an environment for future prosperity (23%) and provides one voice for dealing with central government and the wider world (18%).



### **Changes/alternatives suggested**

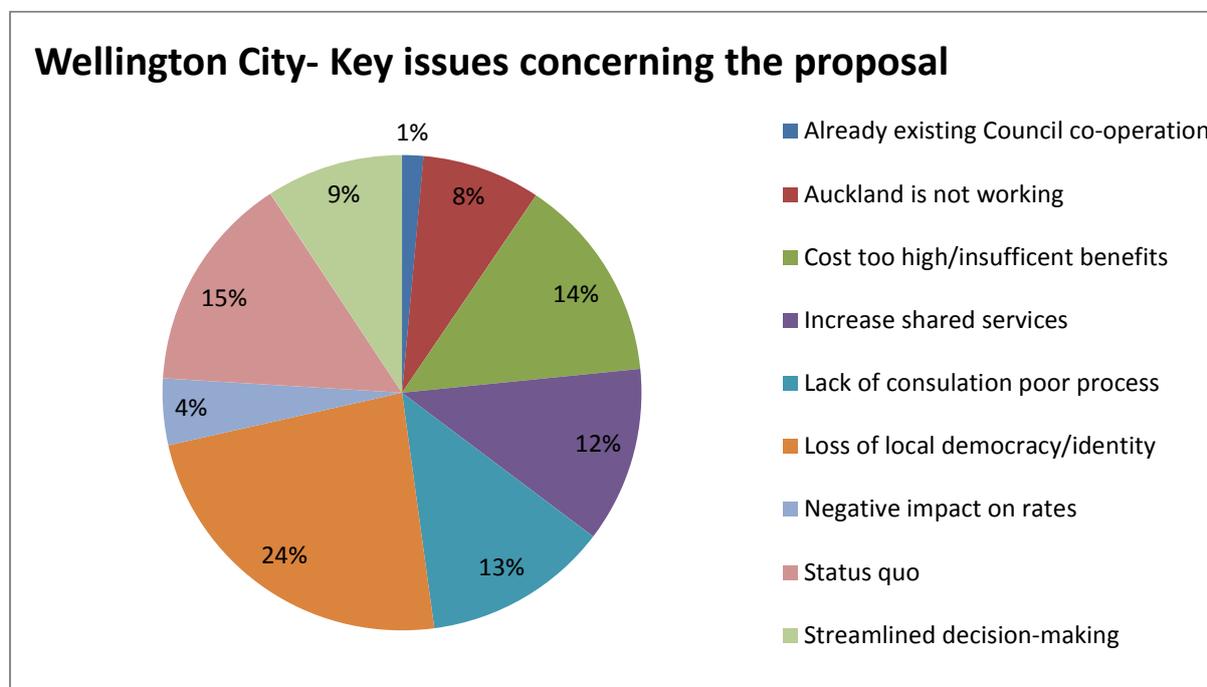
8. Wellington City submitters suggested 328 changes/alternatives to the proposal. Table 3 shows support a wider range of alternatives than were put forward by submitters from other districts. Various possible options for more local mergers of local authorities were suggested without any on its own attracting overwhelming support.
9. Only 14% of the suggested changes highlighted the option of no mergers but more shared services, which is much lower than the regional average of 31%.

**Table 3 – Wellington City: Suggested changes/alternatives**

Suggested changes/alternatives	Number	%	Regional comparison
No mergers - just more shared services	46	14%	31%
Three unitary authorities	45	14%	7%
Merge Wellington/Hutt Valley/Porirua/ Kapiti	41	13%	4%
Merge Wairarapa	39	12%	22%
Reduce number of Boards/Councils/ councillors	36	11%	4%
Improve representation/local responsiveness	30	9%	4%
Increase regional/GWRC responsibilities	25	8%	9%
Merge Hutt Councils	21	6%	12%
Two unitary authorities -Wellington/Wairarapa	21	6%	2%
Four unitary authorities	17	5%	3%
Merge Western Councils	5	2%	1%
Other	2	1%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Key issues**

10. Wellington City submitters highlighted 487 key issues concerning the proposal. The main key issue in Wellington City is concern about the loss of local democracy/identity (24%). Also featuring as key issues are a preference for the status quo (15%) and concern about the costs of change being too high (14%).



## **Submissions from community groups and business in Wellington City**

11. 16 submissions were identified as coming from community groups based in or representing Wellington City. Of these only 2, one of those the “Better Wellington” pro reorganisation group, supported the proposal.
12. 6 submissions were identified as coming from businesses or business groups based in or representing Wellington City. All supported the proposal. The Wellington Employers' Chamber of Commerce provided data from a survey of its membership showing that 62% of respondents wanted some form of change to the structure of local government, with 46% favouring a single council with local boards (as in the draft proposal), while 16% support change but based on a different model.

## **Feedback from hearings held in Wellington City**

13. 5.5 days of hearings were held in Wellington City between March and April 2015. 130 submitters requested a hearing and were invited to speak. 109 submitters accepted this invitation. This represented 13% of total Wellington City submitters.
14. The submitters represented a cross section of the community with submissions from the Wellington City Council, local businesses and community groups, as well as individuals.
15. Loss of local democracy, possible increased rates and loss of local community character were some of the reasons given against the proposal. Some submitters also felt that the Wairarapa was too geographically distant and too different in terms of needs to be included in an amalgamation.
16. Those in favour of the proposal cited potential economic benefits, greater cohesion of services, and improved regional transport as positives of the amalgamation. Some submitters noted that the amalgamation could better place the Wellington region on the global stage for tourism and trade.
17. Wellington City Council spoke against the proposal and offered an alternative proposal for the Commission to consider, which is set out below.

## **Views of Wellington City Council (WCC)**

18. WCC considered that there is a case for change to the structure of local government in the region. It suggests that the community wants to see improvements from councils in the region, but doesn't support the model that is being proposed. It suggests that the lack of broad community support is due to the limitations of the model.
19. In particular it was considered that the local board model is not appropriate because the division of responsibility between local boards and the governing body is not set in stone. It regards the boards as costly and cumbersome, and suggests that the shared governance model blurs accountability as the community may not know who is responsible for what. It also suggests the draft proposal overstated Wairarapa's interdependence with the rest of the region, and overstated doubts about the resources available in the Wairarapa.

20. The Wellington City Council recommended that Commission reconsiders its current proposal and considers and consults on an alternative which has a separate Wairarapa Council and one or more metropolitan Councils West of the Rimutakas.