

28 February 2023

Review Panel
Review into the Future for Local Government
futureforlg@dia.govt.nz

Tēnā koutou

Tasman District Council's Submission on *He mata whāriki, he matawhānui – Review into the Future for Local Government, draft report*

Tasman District Council (the Council) welcomes the opportunity to submit on the draft report (the Report) of the Review into the Future for Local Government.

The Council would like to acknowledge the importance of the Report and the recognition that significant change to local governance is needed. We thank the Review Panel (the Panel) and staff involved in preparing this document and appreciate the research and engagement with the local government sector that has informed the Panel's recommendations.

The Council's contact is John Ridd, Group Manager – Service and Strategy (john.ridd@tasman.govt.nz).

Our Tasman

Tasman is a great place to live, play, work and explore – more than 58,700 people call it home. It is considered a provincial district and covers 9,786 square kilometres with a mix of rural and township settlements. Tasman is known for its wide range of indigenous biodiversity and natural habitats, many of which are of national significance. The size of our district, its rate of growth, our exposure to natural hazards, and the geographical spread of our communities provide a range of challenges for the Council to manage.

Our vision is for **thriving, resilient Tasman communities**. We aim to work with others for a Tasman District with a healthy environment, strong economy and vibrant community. Local knowledge and voice are important to our communities, and it is time for the courage and confidence to make bold changes.

We live with and among the decisions we make as a Council. We are concerned that the pace of change and the size and scale of challenges our communities face is impacting their wellbeing and contributing to increasing disengagement with government and democratic processes.

The Council is a unitary authority at the top of the South, Te Tau Ihu. This governance model makes it easier for our community to interact and do business with us and enables better integration of all four wellbeings into our mahi. Coordinated, in-house discussions and governance provide better value for our community. Unclear or contradictory regional and territorial functions can make our unitary responsibilities challenging.

The current system and funding model no longer enables and supports the Council to do what is wanted and needed for our communities. The scale and pace of other local government reforms are adding to these pressures.

What we see as the future of Tasman – keeping local government, local

We want our role to continue to add value to our communities. We want to be recognised as engaging, inspiring, and collaborating with our communities to deliver local solutions to local challenges. The future system of local governance must ensure we are well-resourced to provide innovative solutions for our communities, with wellbeing at the centre of everything we do.

Our communities will be participants (active) and represented (passive), trusting in strong, place-based leadership where their voices will be heard. Varied voices within our communities will influence an inclusive local governance system that values diversity and strengthens social cohesion.

Local government and central government responsibilities will be appropriately allocated, resourced and supported by equitable funding mechanisms. Fewer layers of governance will make it easier to do our mahi and work more effectively with our partners and other agencies. The right public services will be delivered in the right places, improving wellbeing for everyone. The Council and iwi will use terms like ‘we’ and ‘our’ as active partners, making decisions together and encouraging community participation.

Comments on the Report

We want our communities to be better off, not worse off, from any reform. We support the general intent of the Report but expected greater ambition, detail and urgency from the recommendations. Many of the proposals are already supported by local government and have been discussed for years. It was good to see further development of the findings in the Panel’s Interim report, but we would like to see more detail and specificity in the final report.

The Council has commented below on some aspects of the Report. Our responses to the recommendations and questions posed by the Panel are **attached as Appendix One**.

Setting the path for the future of local governance

The Council wants to **emphasise** that a review of local governance is not just a review of local government – central government also needs to take a hard look at itself. Tweaks to local government alone won’t be sufficient to meet the challenges ahead. The relationship requires a reset and this is a valuable opportunity to enable genuine central/local government partnership with meaningful structural reform. We **support** a fundamental review of what should be delivered locally, rather than centrally, and by whom. We want to see central and local government agencies explore and embrace opportunities to partner to deliver a shared vision of wellbeing specific to local communities, including shared levels of service and agreed-upon outcomes.

The Council doesn’t want to duplicate existing services. Local government can and should provide real input into central government services that are delivered locally. We think local government has an opportunity to amplify the voices of our community in providing feedback to central agencies. It is also challenging for councils to work with and across the mismatched boundaries of

central government agencies. We **suggest** that central government boundaries align with regional boundaries to improve customer experiences and deliver more efficient services.

Tasman is a unitary authority, as are our neighbours in Nelson and Marlborough. This governance model works well in Tasman as we can achieve some economies of scope. Resourcing challenges, the complex operating environment and rigid legislative requirements limit our effectiveness and ability to collaborate with others, including our Council neighbours. The system of local government is stretched and, considering the other significant reforms, the unitary model may also need rethinking.

We have a close working relationship with Nelson City Council on various shared matters, including regional transport and jointly-owned CCOs at the governance level via Joint Committees. The combined authority model, such as in Greater Manchester, could work well in the Nelson Tasman region as an alternative to amalgamation. We **recommend** further consideration by the Panel on its applicability to Aotearoa New Zealand and more information on the model so we can understand how it could work for us. We note that iwi prefer working jointly with the three Te Tau Ihu mayors and a combined authority model could help us partner more effectively.

Working with iwi and our communities

The Council **strongly supports** the concept of subsidiarity as a key principle underpinning system design. We believe that local governance needs strong place-based leadership at the community level. Local government has a key role as a connector and facilitator of local-led initiatives and our partnerships with others to achieve community outcomes emphasise this. We recognise that local government may need to delegate decisionmaking and responsibility to a more local level for this to occur, but note that central government will also need to more effectively account for a community voice in locally-delivered services.

We **broadly support** the points raised in the *revitalising citizen-led democracy* and *replenishing and building on representative democracy* chapters, but with caution. We **support** a shift towards deliberative and participatory decisionmaking but understand that both models could be time-consuming and resource-intensive for both Councils and communities. These forms of decisionmaking may risk excluding people or groups that may not have the time to commit to a lengthy council process. We **emphasise** that Councils must be sufficiently resourced for these processes and have sound guidance from central government. We also note that while more empowered citizen-led decisionmaking is a positive step, it should be appropriately balanced with professional advice and expertise.

We recognise the need to reframe the local governance-Māori relationship. Eight iwi are tangata whenua in Te Tau Ihu and Tasman District also covers the northern-western part of the Ngāi Tahu takiwā. Our rohe has two marae and is home to two long-standing Māori entities representing customary Māori landowners. The Council is committed to growing and strengthening our relationships and level of engagement with iwi/Māori. This requires understanding, partnership, and trust.

The challenge facing iwi and the Council is that capacity and capability pressures constrain our abilities to partner effectively. We **emphasize** that models for working better with iwi/Māori must be bespoke to the local dynamics and should enable a role for hapū/iwi in local governance. We **strongly support** the recommendation to provide a transitional fund to support the development of capability and capacity.

Funding and financing

The Council **strongly supports** a review of the local governance funding system. A population-based funding model does not work well for our large district – we have a dispersed population and often more significant affordability issues. We **recommend** a more equitable approach to funding that considers population and density, as well as the access to and availability of services and infrastructure for our communities. Our district is large and it is a challenge for our small population to fund infrastructure and services (such as environmental management) over such a broad and diverse area. Larger and less populated districts should not have worse environmental outcomes because their size and population limit available funding.

We **support** the recognition by the Panel of unfunded mandates and **emphasise** that this approach needs to end. Any new responsibilities, requirements, or targets set by central government on local government **must** be backed by adequate resourcing and appropriate funding tools. The Council **supports** a review of the relevant legislation to introduce new funding mechanisms as the system has reached peak rates and a bigger, more flexible funding toolkit is needed. This review should also consider how best to reduce the complexity of the rating system while providing more factors that rates can be based on. Consistency in the rates funding approach on a regional basis could help address inequalities between neighbouring communities. We caution against a one-size-fits-all approach applied across the country. Co-investment for wellbeing is a crucial aspect of any future funding system, supported by funding approaches that enable decision-makers to make the best use of limited resources.

Remuneration is a key challenge to attracting people to stand for local government and we **strongly support** the recommendation of reviewing remuneration criteria. As a unitary authority, our councillors have the same responsibilities as a regional councillor and district councillor combined, yet are paid far less. Small districts have limited capacity to sufficiently remunerate elected members, which can attract fewer people and a less diverse range of people to the roles. Equity and consistency in the remuneration of elected members across districts must be a priority.

Concluding words

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit on this critical review into the future of local government in Aotearoa New Zealand. We strongly encourage the Government to continue to engage with local government, iwi and communities throughout this process; the voice of all New Zealanders should be heard.

The search for a perfect outcome should not negate embracing opportunities for a better system.

Na māua noa, nā



Tim King
Mayor, Tasman District Council
Te Koromatua o te tai o Aorere



Leonie Rae
CEO, Tasman District Council
Te Koromatua o te tai o Aorere

Appendix One: Response to consultation recommendations and questions

Chapter 2: Revitalising citizen-led democracy	
<p>1 What might we do more of to increase community understanding about the role of local government, and therefore lead to greater civic participation?</p> <p>2 That local government adopts greater use of deliberative and participatory democracy in local decisionmaking.</p>	<p>We recommend civics education is introduced in schools to increase understanding about the role of local government. This may be even more relevant if the voting age is lowered. There is also a role for civics education more broadly so that people understand what the Council does and what we can (or cannot) influence. We understand we need to get better at telling our story.</p> <p>The Council supports using a range of approaches to gain deeper insights into community views and support a shift towards deliberative and participatory democracy. The size of our communities can impact levels of engagement; some of our smallest communities in Tasman are highly engaged. We caution that these models could be time-consuming and resource-intensive for both Councils and communities and risk excluding people or groups that don't have the time to commit to a lengthy council process. Local government must be sufficiently resourced for these processes and supported by sound guidance. We question how underrepresented groups will be sufficiently empowered to engage in these decisionmaking models, noting that they are not empowered to engage in current processes either. These models must be a random selection of the population. We note that finding an appropriate selection of people with the time/capacity/interest to contribute to deliberative and participatory democratic processes in smaller districts will be very challenging and look forward to future detail on how this might work in practice.</p> <p>Further, we note that while more empowered citizen-led decisionmaking is a positive step, it should be appropriately balanced with professional advice and expertise. We want to see these forms of decisionmaking balanced with appropriate expert guidance (e.g. fiscal balance).</p>
<p>3 That local government, supported by central government, reviews the legislative provisions relating to engagement, consultation, and decisionmaking to ensure they provide a comprehensive, meaningful, and flexible platform for revitalising community participation and engagement.</p>	<p>We support this recommendation and finding new ways to ensure the voice of our communities can be heard is important to us. Varied, local voices should have influence in a local governance system in which citizens can be participants (active) and be represented (passive). The current consultation methods struggle to attract underrepresented groups and allowing for other methods beyond the special consultative procedure would be beneficial. Local government is complex and can be challenging for those outside the system to grasp. We recommend consideration of how local government can be supported to tell its story better.</p>
<p>4 That central government leads a comprehensive review of requirements for engaging with Māori across local government-related legislation, considering opportunities to streamline or align those requirements</p> <p>5 That councils develop and invest in their internal systems for managing and promoting good quality engagement with Māori.</p> <p>6 That central government provides a statutory obligation for councils to give due consideration to an agreed, local expression of tikanga whakahaere in their standing orders and engagement practices, and for chief executives to be required to promote the incorporation of tikanga in organisational systems.</p>	<p>We support these recommendations but any review must be a joint local-central government exercise. The Council already investing in internal systems to help us engage with Māori and it is not clear what the Panel is recommending here. We emphasize that there remains a need for non-digital ways of engagement, particularly for older and rural communities.</p>
Chapter 3: A Tiriti-based partnership between Māori and local government	
<p>7 That central government leads an inclusive process to develop a new legislative framework for Tiriti-related provisions in the Local Government Act that drives a genuine partnership in the exercise of kāwanatanga and rangatiratanga in a local context and explicitly recognises te ao Māori values and conceptions of wellbeing.</p>	<p>We support this recommendation but suggest this work should be jointly led by central government, local government and hapū/iwi. We support the acknowledgement that a national conversation on the place of Te Tiriti in the constitution of Aotearoa New Zealand needs to occur. This process must be sufficiently resourced, <i>highly</i> transparent and accompanied by strong communications.</p> <p>Our communities need to be with us on this journey— previous reforms and approaches have failed to achieve this. The challenge will be to drive a genuine partnership that will also ensure environmental wellbeing is protected and restored. We agree that the local government/Māori relationship needs to be reframed.</p>

<p>8 That councils develop with hapū/iwi and significant Māori organisations within a local authority area, a partnership framework that complements existing co-governance arrangements by ensuring all groups in a council area are involved in local governance in a meaningful way</p>	<p>We support the development of a partnership framework but note both Councils and iwi will need to be resourced to participate effectively. Arrangements should be bespoke to local communities and not be driven as a one-size-fits-all approach.</p>
<p>9 That central government introduces a statutory requirement for local government chief executives to develop and maintain the capacity and capability of council staff to grow understanding and knowledge of Te Tiriti, the whakapapa of local government, and te ao Māori values.</p> <p>10 That central government explores a stronger statutory requirement on councils to foster Māori capacity to participate in local government.</p> <p>11 That local government leads the development of coordinated organisational and workforce development plans to enhance the capability of local government to partner and engage with Māori.</p>	<p>The Council notes that any statutory requirements should be explored and developed with councils themselves rather than be required by central government. Central government funding for capability and capacity building will be necessary for transformative change.</p> <p>We support the recommendation that a joint central and local government workforce plan should be developed</p>
<p>12 That central government provides a transitional fund to subsidise the cost of building both Māori and council capability and capacity for a Tiriti-based partnership in local governance.</p>	<p>We strongly support this recommendation. Both Council and our iwi partners are constrained by capability and capacity pressures to partner effectively and require funding and resources to support genuine partnership.</p>
<p>Chapter 4: Allocating roles and functions in a way that enhances wellbeing</p>	
<p>13 What process would need to be created to support and agree on the allocation of roles and functions across central government, local government, and communities?</p> <p>14 What conditions will need to be in place to ensure the flexibility of the approach proposed does not create confusion or unnecessary uncertainty?</p> <p>15 What additional principles, if any, need to be considered?</p> <p>16 That central and local government note that the allocation of the roles and functions is not a binary decision between being delivered centrally or locally.</p> <p>17 That local and central government, in a Tiriti-consistent manner, review the future allocations of roles and functions by applying the proposed approach, which includes three core principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the concept of subsidiarity • local government’s capacity to influence the conditions for wellbeing is recognised and supported • te ao Māori values underpin decisionmaking. 	<p>We support a review of the allocation of roles and functions and the Panel’s approach to a framework that starts from “local first”. This review could be led by an independent body and examine the national, regional and local context. We strongly support the concept of subsidiarity but note that economies of scale are an often cited reason to increasingly centralise services. Central and local government need to <i>partner</i> to support wellbeing and strong place-based leadership is required. We acknowledge that local government needs to step up as connectors and facilitators.</p> <p>We recommend that a shared wellbeing plan between both central and local governance entities would be a useful way for our communities to understand what the public sector is and aims to do. These plans would be targeted to the local scale, ideally townships. There is a lack of focus on central government in this Chapter, particularly around shifting central government’s mindset in a way that benefits local communities in particular geographical areas. Central government agencies often do not provide flexibility for local dynamics and our communities can feel unrepresented and not heard as a result – local voice and local aspirations are lost. The Council does not want to duplicate or deliver services operated by central government but there should be a role for local government to provide input and feedback to inform their service delivery. This should not replicate services but enhance the voices of the community.</p> <p>It is challenging for councils to work with and across the mismatched boundaries of central government agencies. All of the recent reforms (Health NZ, Three Waters, RMA) have different boundaries, making it harder and more complicated for councils and their communities to provide input into central government services. There needs to be alignment between central and local government boundaries where possible and we recommend the development of shared goals that outline an all-of-government approach to a local area. We should all work towards locally determined outcomes beyond institutional boundaries.</p> <p>The Council recommends creating shared levels of services so that partner agencies are all moving in the same direction. We support standardising our systems and processes to improve efficiency, particularly in terms of data and digital services. Co-locating government services could improve cooperation and make it easier for our communities to engage with us.</p> <p>We emphasize the need for a comprehensive review of the scale at which services can be delivered – be that locally or more centralised. We agree that services should be implemented locally but recognise that this is a subjective process. Having a straightforward process to identify which services are implemented by whom would be beneficial. There should always be a role for local in the design or targeting of the service or function. Strong alignment with other local government reforms and statutory obligations is crucial.</p> <p>We note that it is not just about empowering others, but enabling and devolving authority where appropriate (e.g. to community boards).</p>

Chapter 5: Local government as champion and activator of wellbeing	
<p>18 What feedback do you have on the roles councils can play to enhance intergenerational wellbeing?</p> <p>19 What changes would support councils to utilise their existing assets, enablers, and levers to generate more local wellbeing?</p> <p>20 That local government, in partnership with central government, explores funding and resources that enable and encourage councils to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) lead, facilitate, and support innovation and experimentation in achieving greater social, economic, cultural, and environmental wellbeing outcomes b) build relational, partnering, innovation, and co-design capability and capacity across their whole organisation c) embed social/progressive procurement and supplier diversity as standard practice in local government with nationally supported organisational infrastructure and capability and capacity building d) review their levers and assets from an equity and wellbeing perspective and identify opportunities for strategic and transformational initiatives e) take on the anchor institution role, initially through demonstration initiatives with targeted resources and peer support f) share the learning and emerging practice from innovation and experimentation of their enhanced wellbeing role. 	<p>We strongly support the recommendation to explore funding and resourcing. Local government keep saying we want to be involved, but this often results in more layers get added. This review should explore areas where central government can let local government work by and for our communities, rather than be beholden to central government.</p>
Chapter 6: A stronger relationship between central and local government	
<p>21 To create a collaborative relationship between central and local government that builds on current strengths and resources, what are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the conditions for success and the barriers that are preventing strong relationships? b) the factors in place now that support genuine partnership? c) the elements needed to build and support a new system? d) the best options to get there? e) potential pathways to move in that direction and where to start? f) the opportunities to trial and innovate now? <p>22 How can central and local government explore options that empower and enable a role for hapū/iwi in local governance in partnership with local and central government? These options should recognise the contribution of hapū/iwi rangatiratanga, kaitiakitanga, and other roles.</p>	<p>The central and local government relationship requires a reset and this is a valuable opportunity to enable genuine central/local government partnership with meaningful structural reform. The concept of an integrated strategic plan for wellbeing is a clear gap and putting such a plan into practice will be challenging.</p> <p>Central government needs to support local government and iwi through funding and resourcing to build capacity and capability and support effective partnership.</p>
Chapter 7: Replenishing and building on representative democracy	
<p>23 How can local government enhance its capability to undertake representation reviews and, in particular, should the Local Government Commission play a more proactive role in leading or advising councils about representation reviews?</p>	<p>NA</p>
<p>24 To support a differentiated liberal citizenship, what are the essential key steps, parameters, and considerations that would enable both Tiriti- and capability-based appointments to be made to supplement elected members?</p>	<p>The Council supports a model allowing a mix of appointed and elected local decision-makers to “fill gaps” around the table. This is complex and we see value in both Tiriti- and capability-based appointments but note that the majority of decision-makers should be elected members.</p>

	<p>We support a system that is less prescriptive and more enabling for local government to make appointments. Our professional community (e.g. engineers, lawyers, accountants) have an important role in shaping change and their skills are often needed around the council table.</p>
<p>25 That the Electoral Commission be responsible for overseeing the administration of local body elections.</p>	<p>The Council has no view on the electoral commission running local elections.</p>
<p>26 That central government undertakes a review of the legislation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) adopt Single Transferrable Vote as the voting method for council elections b) lower the eligible voting age in local body elections to the age of 16 c) provide for a 4-year local electoral term d) amend the employment provisions of chief executives to match those in the wider public sector, and include mechanisms to assist in managing the employment relationship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Council has no view on STV. b) The Council has mixed views on lowering the voting age. Adding more numbers to the pool of eligible voters is not the same as engaging more people to vote, although it does engage people sooner and would support a right to choose their representative. The Council notes that there should be consistency across national and local elections regardless of age. We do not consider the voting age the most significant issue – the worst outcome of this process would be that nothing changes except the lowering of the voting age. Voting age is not a stand alone issue and must be considered within the package of reforms and new local governance system. c) The Council has no view on the electoral term. d) The Council has no view on CE employment provisions.
<p>27 That central and local government, in conjunction with the Remuneration Authority, review the criteria for setting elected member remuneration to recognise the increasing complexity of the role and enable a more diverse range of people to consider standing for election.</p>	<p>The Council supports this recommendation.</p> <p>Currently, remuneration for elected members is seen as an income top-up and accordingly attracts limited interest. We note that being a councillor has the same responsibilities and often the same workload regardless of the district and number of people represented. As a unitary authority, our councillors have the same responsibilities as a regional councillor and district councillor combined, and are paid far less than their counterparts in larger, urban areas. Small districts have limited capacity to sufficiently remunerate councillors and attract fewer people and a less diverse range of people to the role. There needs to be more equity and consistency in the remuneration of elected members across districts.</p> <p>We also note that remuneration and system design go hand in hand – it is hard to discuss appropriate remuneration when it is not clear what the role of councillors will be post-reform.</p> <p>Increased remuneration must come with increased accountability to funders and increased visibility of their performance. We note that measuring performance is highly subjective and there is no clear answer as to who does the measuring or their method of doing so (e.g. measuring council attendance is a poor method of measuring performance). The ability to make decisions needs to come with the responsibility for those decisions, including managing the funding and resourcing consequences.</p> <p>Lastly, we think that any increase in responsibility needs to be appropriately funded.</p>
<p>28 That local government develops a mandatory professional development and support programme for elected members; and local and central government develop a shared executive professional development and secondment programme to achieve greater integration across the two sectors.</p>	<p>The Council supports this recommendation.</p>
<p>29 That central and local government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) support and enable councils to undertake regular health checks of their democratic performance b) develop guidance and mechanisms to support councils resolving complaints under their code of conduct and explore a specific option for local government to refer complaints to an independent investigation process, conducted and led by a national organisation c) subject to the findings of current relevant ombudsman’s investigations, assess whether the provisions of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, and how it is being applied, support high standards of openness and transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Council notes that what is considered “good democratic performance” is highly subjective and will need to be bespoke to local dynamics. Who is doing the measuring and what is being measured are crucial to understanding performance in a meaningful, transparent way. b) The Council supports this recommendation. c) The Council supports this recommendation.

<p>30 That central government retain the Māori wards and constituencies mechanism (subject to amendment in current policy processes), but consider additional options that provide for a Tiriti-based partnership at the council table</p>	<p>The Council supports this recommendation.</p>
<p>Chapter 8: Building an equitable, sustainable funding and financing system</p>	
<p>31 What is the most appropriate basis and process for allocating central government funding to meet community priorities?</p>	<p>We agree with the Panel’s view that more money is needed in the system of local government. Nevertheless, we note that both central and local government funding comes from the same group of people – any increase in funding for local government must come from central government’s share of revenue rather than increasing how much our communities pay more generally.</p> <p>We do not support population-based funding models as we have a large district and dispersed population which costs more to provide service to. A funding model should account for both population and the cost of existing services.</p>
<p>32 That central government expands its regulatory impact statement assessments to include the impacts on local government; and that it undertakes an assessment of regulation currently in force that is likely to have significant future funding impacts for local government and makes funding provision to reflect the national public-good benefits that accrue from those regulations.</p>	<p>The Council strongly supports this recommendation and an end to unfunded mandates; central government cannot continue to make local government pay for nationally determined outcomes that our communities cannot afford.</p>
<p>33 That central and local government agree on arrangements and mechanisms for them to co-invest to meet community wellbeing priorities, and that central government makes funding provisions accordingly.</p> <p>34 That central government develops an intergenerational fund for climate change, with the application of the fund requiring appropriate regional and local decisionmaking input.</p>	<p>We support these recommendations and would like to continue to see coordinated, joined-up in-house discussions and governance at the local level. Note our earlier recommendation on shared wellbeing plans, levels of services, and outcomes.</p>
<p>35 That central government reviews relevant legislation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) enable councils to introduce new funding mechanisms b) retain rating as the principal mechanism for funding local government, while redesigning long-term planning and rating provisions to allow a more simplified streamlined process. 	<p>We strongly support this recommendation, but it needs to be a joint central and local government review. Local government can no longer generate enough funding to do what is needed and we have reached peak rates. Bold solutions are needed and should be supported by a bigger toolkit of funding mechanisms and a simpler rating system.</p>
<p>Chapter 9: Designing the local government system to enable the change we need</p>	
<p>36 What other design principles, if any, need to be considered?</p> <p>37 What feedback have you got on the structural examples presented in the report?</p>	<p>The Council emphasises that change is also required at the central government level. Central government’s role in the regions needs to better align with existing local government boundaries more effectively. We want to see consistency and agreement on the number of regions – they are different across agencies and even in recent reforms (e.g., Three Waters, 3W, education, health, resource management). We want to see one concept of regional boundaries and alignment across all agencies.</p> <p>The Council is a unitary authority and we support the unitary model. The unitary structure makes it easier for our community to interact and do business with us and more strongly integrates all four wellbeings into our work. However, this model may no longer be suitable depending on the scale of reforms and decisions on what services are delivered by local government.</p> <p>We recommend further consideration of the combined-representation model and how it might work in Aotearoa New Zealand. A model that enables councils to combine resources to address cross-boundary issues without requiring amalgamation could work well in the Nelson Tasman region. We already work very closely with Nelson City Council and have a combined committee for joint projects. We note that Te Tau Ihu’s eight iwi want to be talking to the three mayors as one local government body as the issues they are interested in are the same across Councils (and have other agencies/councils to deal with).</p> <p>In considering a combined authority model, the review also needs to consider how communities engage throughout the system – for example, through community boards and community associations. We do not want a system with endless layers of governance but note that the review has not considered the broader role of community boards and voluntary community associations.</p>

	There will likely be resistance to widespread system change from the public. Strong communications and a clear and transparent rationale for change must accompany any change.
38 That central and local government explore and agree to a new Tiriti-consistent structural and system design that will give effect to the design principles.	The Council supports this approach but notes that structure and system change are also needed at the central government level to enable a meaningful shift in local governance. This process will need to be highly transparent on its goals and outcomes and supported by consistent communications. We need to ensure that our communities are with us on this journey – previous approaches have failed to do this. We also caution that rapid change can lead to other problems.
39 That local government, supported by central government, invests in a programme that identifies and implements the opportunities for greater shared services collaboration. 40 That local government establishes a Local Government Digital Partnership to develop a digital transformation roadmap for local government.	We support these recommendations. We work closely with other councils and see the benefit of further cooperation.
Chapter 10: System stewardship and support	
41 How can system stewardship be reimagined so that it is led across local government, hapū/iwi, and central government? 42 How do we embed Te Tiriti in local government system stewardship?	The Council agrees there is a lack of system stewardship and sees a disconnect between responsibility, accountability, and control. System stewardship should be underpinned by a whole of governance/government (central and local) approach to wellbeing to support a strong partnership. There must be a nationally coordinated view of system performance and a clear accountability framework. We support the Panel's view that central government, local government and hapū/iwi need to jointly develop a stewardship model to ensure all are working towards the same outcomes for communities.
43 How should the roles and responsibilities of 'stewardship' organisations (including the Secretary of Local Government (Department of Internal Affairs), the Local Government Commission, LGNZ, and Taituarā) evolve and change?	NA
44 That central and local government considers the best model of stewardship and which entities are best placed to play system stewardship roles in a revised system of local government.	The Council supports this recommendation.