

## Response ID ANON-NK5U-BXGN-J

Submitted to Simplifying Local Government  
Submitted on 2026-02-16 12:34:01

### Summary

#### Tell us about yourself

Individual or organisation?

Organisation

Your name or your organisation's name

Your name or your organisation's name:  
Tasman District Council

What main perspective(s) are you bringing to this consultation?

Local government

Other perspective if applicable:  
N/A

Where in New Zealand do you usually live?

What region do you live in?:  
Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough

I live in a rural area

### Background

Do you agree there is a need to simplify local government?

Agree

What do you think of the proposed approach overall?

What do you think of the proposed approach overall?:

Tasman District Council agrees that there is a need to simplify Local Government which is becoming more complex given the increased legislative obligations being put onto Councils.

As a Unitary Authority, Tasman District Council sees the benefit in an amalgamation of regional and territorial functions. Within a Unitary organisation, decisions on land use, environmental regulation, and transport planning are made by a single body, avoiding the potential for fragmented approaches. However, that fact that regional and territorial functions are amalgamated within a unitary structure does not mean that there is always agreement within Council. The unitary council's regulatory arm still has a strong role in ensuring Council complies with relevant legislation.

As described in this consultation, 'simplification' suggests that greater opportunities to consolidate back-office services (such as legal, HR and IT and Governance) will emerge. Additionally, Regional Reorganisation Plans provide further opportunity to align systems, process, digital and human resources to provide a more efficient and effective service to residents and ratepayers across a broad region.

### Simplifying regional governance

Do you agree with replacing regional councillors with a CTB?

Neither agree nor disagree

What do you like or dislike about the proposal to replace regional councillors with a CTB?:

Tasman District Council is a Unitary Council, as are our neighbours Nelson City Council and Marlborough District Council. Consequently, the impact of a CTB is not relevant to our region. However, while there are benefits, and efficiencies, in a unitary model, a unitary approach is not proposed currently. Tasman District Council's concern is that the proposal seeks to establish something that is less than a 'halfway house' and one that does not extend beyond a single representative at the governance layer. Accordingly, many of the efficiencies of a unitary approach may not be realised through just establishing a CTB.

This proposal cements the presence of two different, and separate, council organisations, combined with two separate governance structures, this will create a busy, and perhaps conflicting, role for the mayors appointed to the CTB.

In a unitary model multiple workstreams and groups can report to a single Council or Committee meaning that the meeting time of the mayor is used effectively. Under the CTB model the whole machinery of Governance, for all Councils, will need to be revisited. Though administrative, the consequences of doing so as Long-Term-Plans are being prepared is significant.

Additional support will be required for mayors, and this will come at an additional cost to ratepayers.

Tasman District Council notes that, except for Unitary Councils, mayors were elected to lead a Territorial Authority, the skills and attributes that may make a mayor successful in that context may not be those that make a mayor successful in a regional context. Given the choice, the population may well have chosen different mayor knowing they were going to sit on a CTB. It is also noted that under the LGA 2002 (sch7 cl14) when elected mayors make a declaration to exercise their best skill in judgement in the interests of the district. Should this proposal proceed consideration should be given to a further declaration being made once appointed to a CTB and how individual mayors can resolve conflicts between the two declarations.

The establishment of CTB's may negatively impact some smaller regions, or regions with low population density. Considerations should be given to combine low-population areas, or regions with significant exposure to natural hazards into unitary authorities. For example, West Coast.

Tasman District Council does not consider that Crown involvement in regional decision making is required. However, it does see the benefit in a voting Crown Commissioner being appointed to the CTBs as an additional member. This Commissioner should be non-partisan and have expertise in business transformation and reorganisation to be able to provide advice and support during the development of a regional reorganisation plan.

The Resource Management Act (RMA) replacement and associated planning reforms require governors (councillors) with expertise in environmental law and regional planning. Shifting governance to CTBs risks, diluting technical expertise and a reduction in focus on regional issues critical to environmental outcomes

What level of Crown participation in regional decision-making do you prefer?

Crown Commissioner on CTB (non-voting)

## Allocating voting power

Do you agree that mayors on the CTB should have a proportional vote adjusted for effective representation?

Strongly agree

What do you like or dislike about the voting proposal for the CTB?

What do you like or dislike about the voting proposal for the CTB?:

The provision for voting based on population is likely to result in larger councils dominating CTB decision making, and that the needs and requirements of Territorial Authorities will receive a disproportionate priority based on the greater population associated with them. This consequence may be mitigated by appointing additional members and ensuring that the declaration made by the mayors act in the best interests of the entire region instead of their individual areas.

Tasman District Council believes that the approach taken by the Remuneration Authority to determine Elected Members remuneration provides a basis from which to consider an equitable allocation of votes.

Tasman District Council believes that using a balanced approach, like that used by the Remuneration Authority, that accounts for population and geographic area / geographic complexity will support the broader accountabilities associated with large catchments and / or areas of particularly complex land use or exposure to environmental impacts

## Cross boundary issues

What do you think about the ways that communities crossing regional boundaries could be represented?

What do you think about the ways that communities crossing regional boundaries could be represented?:

Tasman District Council supports isolated populations being adopted by the adjacent district

## Improving local government

Do you support the proposal to require CTBs to develop regional reorganisation plans?

Agree

What do you like or dislike about the proposal to require regional reorganisation plans?:

Tasman District Council is open to any proposals that simplify local government while still retaining local decision making on issues important to ratepayers. However, we do not see the benefit in existing unitary authorities being required to make formal reorganisation plans.

From our perspective we will continue to work closely with our neighbouring councils to deliver the best services for ratepayers across Te Tau ihu.

What do you think about the criteria proposed for assessing regional reorganisation plans?

What do you like or dislike about the criteria proposed for assessing regional reorganisation plans?:

Tasman District Council is broadly supportive of the criteria proposed. However, in terms of 'Affordable now and in the future' Our Council does not necessarily see that combining councils will lead to significant cost savings for ratepayers. The opportunity to rationalise some costs and overheads, together with the potential for a more efficient delivery of services does not always go hand in hand with a reduction in cost. Usually, the transition costs associated with such reorganisations increase costs in the short term. This consultation does not suggest that Council's will receive funding to support the implementation of RRP's. Accordingly, the increased costs of reorganisation are likely to fall on existing ratepayers at a time when operational pressures are a challenge for all councils and when the prospect of rates capping will further limit councils' ability to absorb transitional costs

## Treaty of Waitangi and Māori Representation

What do you think about how the proposal provides for iwi/Māori interests and Treaty arrangements?

What do you think about how the proposal provides for iwi/Māori interests and Treaty arrangements?:

Tasman District Council is concerned that the systemic cumulative changes extend across the entirety of Local Government, and regional governance. Further, the proposed changes have several, currently ill-defined, interactions and dependencies with other reform processes. Our Council's concern is that there is propensity, through the broad array of change, for the dilution and erosion of Māori participation and a cumulative erosion of Māori rights across legislative reform. Tasman District Council believes that customary decisions should sit with whānau, hapū and iwi. And that any removal of Māori constituencies is counter to the principles of Te Tiriti – partnership, protection and participation. Any reduction in participation for Māori in local government decision making has real potential to negatively impact iwi-council relationships.

## Upload a submission you have prepared in advance

Upload a document (optional)

Upload a document:  
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