



Report **06.401**
Date 13 August 2006
File E/01/04/05

Committee **Representation Review Subcommittee**
Author **Amy Norrish Manager - Secretariat**

Summary of submissions on proposed representation arrangements

1. Purpose

To provide an overview of the submissions Greater Wellington has received from the public on its proposed representation arrangements.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report do not trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

Greater Wellington has received 84 submissions on its proposed representation arrangements. This includes two petitions, one from Summerset at the Course Retirement Village, the other from Kapiti Coast Grey Power Association. All submissions have been compiled into a bound volume and circulated to Representation Review Subcommittee members. Ten submitters have also asked to be heard in support of their submission. Submissions will be heard and considered by the Representation Review Subcommittee on 21 August 2006.

4. Comment

4.1 Origin of submissions

Most of the 84 submissions Greater Wellington has received were from individuals in the region's community, with the majority coming from Upper Hutt residents. Eight submissions were from local government (Wellington City Council, Porirua City Council, Upper Hutt City Council, Kapiti Coast District Council, Hutt City Council, South Wairarapa City Council, Tawa Community Board and Otaki Community Board). Three were from local organisations (Wellington Local Labour Body Committee, Wairarapa Federated Farmers and Kapiti Coast Grey Power Association).

Submissions included two petitions, one from Summerset at the Course Retirement Village with 49 signatures, the other from Kapiti Coast Grey Power Association with 221 signatures.

Location of submitter	Number of submissions
Wellington	7
Lower Hutt	3
Upper Hutt	48 (one of which is a petition from Summerset at the Course Retirement Village)
Porirua	2
Kapiti	15 (one of which is a petition from Kapiti Coast Grey Power Association)
Wairarapa	2
Unknown	7

4.2 Key themes

Of the 84 submissions received by the Council, 81 opposed the Council's proposed representation arrangements. (The proposed arrangements are provided in **Attachment 1**). The majority of submissions discussed their opposition to the proposal to combine Porirua and Kapiti, and Upper Hutt and Lower Hutt.

4.2.1 Support for proposed arrangements

Three submissions (62, 73, 82) stated support for the Council's proposal, but two requested that the next review be carried out in 2009. They stated this was due to concerns around under-representation for Wellington constituents, particularly given the expected population growth and the regional rate income obtained from the Wellington constituency.

While submission 10 did not agree with the proposal in its entirety it did support for merging Porirua with Kapiti, and Upper Hutt with Lower Hutt, because it is aligned with the Council's core functions and most significant financial obligations, such as transport and flood protection.

4.2.2 Separate representative for Upper Hutt needed

Fifty-one submissions recorded their opposition to combining the current Upper Hutt and Lower Hutt constituencies to form one Hutt Valley constituency. Many submitters were concerned that this would result in Upper Hutt losing its voice on the regional council because Upper Hutt had a much smaller voting population (only 28% of the Hutt Valley according to one

submitter). A few submitters noted this was even more likely when using a First Past the Post electoral system.

Submitters argued that Upper Hutt should have its own representative for a variety of reasons, including:

- Upper Hutt is one of the largest cities in New Zealand in terms of land area.
- Upper Hutt has significant regional resources, many of which are important for the whole region e.g. water supply, forestry, regional parks, transport link between Wellington and Wairarapa.
- Upper Hutt is the only area in the region growing within all sectors.
- Lower Hutt representatives would be thinking of own needs and agendas and will not fully understand the concerns and vision of the Upper Hutt people. This was of particular concern to one submitter who said that Lower Hutt and Upper Hutt disagree in key matters of concern e.g. flood protection and transportation.
- No representative would dilute the opportunity for direct interaction and accountability to the public. For greater accountability communities expect contact and communication with elected members.
- To be effective a councillor must be connected to, and be part of, the community they represent.
- Aging population means Upper Hutt needs representatives who are accessible.
- Loss of a representative would lead to a rates rise.

Many submitters also noted the differences between the communities of Upper Hutt and Lower Hutt, which resulted in different needs. Submitters said that:

- Upper Hutt has large rural areas, a provincial character and civic pride.
- Lower Hutt has the sea and Upper Hutt is inland.
- Upper Hutt people identify with the facilities and services available within the community.

One submitter stated that the change was an attempt to fix a problem that did not exist.

Hutt City Council said that they supported the current arrangements for Upper Hutt and Lower Hutt, with 1 and 3 elected members respectively.

4.2.3 Keep Kapiti and Porirua separate

Eighteen submissions specifically recorded their opposition to combining Kapiti with Porirua to form one large constituency. Many submitters felt that Porirua's population base would result in no representative being elected from Kapiti. A few submitters noted this was a particular concern under a First Past the Post electoral system. One submitter cited the 2004 Capital and Coast District Health Board elections, which saw Kapiti lose a member on the Board.

Submitters were concerned that losing a direct representative in Kapiti would mean their views would not be accounted for on key work programmes, such as flood protection and transport, and that their unique problems would not get the required attention and action. Submitters doubted that a councillor living in Porirua would be interested in, or would pursue, Kapiti issues. They considered that someone elected from Kapiti would be naturally more interested in, or exposed to, issues arising from Kapiti.

One submitter commented that elected members would not be easily accessible. They considered that they were less likely to have face-to-face meetings, casual meetings and attend events because of the great deal of travel and diversity across a large area. Another submitter stated that the broader the representation, the more at large the voting, the less important the authority would seem to the constituency.

Many submitters felt very strongly that Porirua and Kapiti had separate communities of interest and noted the following reasons:

- Kapiti and Porirua are geographically separated between Pukerua Bay and Paekakariki. There will never be adjacent housing. The Transmission Gully road will result in further separation.
- The coastline between Kapiti and Porirua is contiguous, not shared.
- Kapiti sees its closest kinship with Horowhenua, not Porirua. Porirua links with Tawa, Wellington and Hutt Valley.
- Kapiti and Porirua have different interests and focuses on key issues of concern to Greater Wellington i.e. harbour management, water supply, separate water catchments, flood protection, environmental concerns, river and wetland management and transport. Kapiti and Porirua are differently affected by flooding and sea level rise. Kapiti suffers from inadequate rail infrastructure, poor internal connectivity and lack of rail passenger services up North.
- Porirua is city focused while Kapiti is more coastal and rural.
- Kapiti has a larger older population and Porirua has a higher number of Māori and Pacific Island people. This results in very different social and cultural issues.

- The two areas have separate schools, businesses and recreation centres which cater for different needs given different population make-up of each area.
- Kapiti is facing significant growth management issues.

Many submitters urged the Council to depart from the population formula in order to provide for effective representation of communities of interest. Two submitters stated that while there was a numerical basis to change the current set up, there was no proven electoral necessity. Kapiti Coast Grey Power said they are not aware of any approach being made to increase representation or complain about a lack of representation.

Many submitters felt it was important that they had a direct representative, given the current and projected growth in Kapiti over the next while. Some submitters said that eventually Kapiti would need more than one representative. Two submitters specifically said that they would rather Kapiti be under-represented with one representative than have no guarantee of a direct representative.

4.2.4 Fewer councillors from more constituencies

Five submissions (7, 10, 61, 37, 83) supported a reduction to ten councillors, elected from more than four constituencies. They said that the workload did not require more than ten representatives and that it this would save money. One submitter stated that many Council and committee meetings over the past few years had little business and that this was not surprising given that councillors' true business is the development and monitoring of the ten-year plan. The submitter also noted that when the Council moved from 14 to 13 councillors there was no sense of extra workload.

One submission supported any decrease in councillor numbers, while another proposed that the regional council be disestablished.

4.2.5 Against two councillors from the Wairarapa constituency

Four submitters (10, 13, 61 and 8) commented that they did not support having two representatives from the Wairarapa constituency. One submitter said that the Wairarapa issues that were relevant to Greater Wellington were covered by Greater Wellington's Masterton office and the Rural Services and Wairarapa Committee. Another said that effective representation could be achieved with one councillor and provided parliamentary electorates as an example of large areas covered by one representative. That submitter also noted that there was no requirement for members to attend river and catchment scheme meetings and that one of the current Wairarapa members of this Council had attended only four such meetings in the last 18 months.

Porirua City Council said that two members in the Wairarapa would create hugely disproportionate representation across the region in terms of the number of people per councillor.

4.2.6 Support for two councillors from the Wairarapa constituency

Four submitters (18, 21, 82 and 33) specifically stated their support for two representatives in the Wairarapa. Two submitters discussed that it was necessary to ensure effective representation, given the large land area (74% of the region) with scattered populations (40,000 people over 600,000 hectares) and the level of activity based on responsibilities undertaken by Greater Wellington. Two representatives would make it easier to attend meetings, functions and see constituents. Another submitter said they supported the proposal because of Wairarapa's near insular semi-isolation.

One submission commented that the population formula prescribed by the Local Electoral Act 2001 did not account for geographical size or corresponding rateable capital value and that it disadvantaged rural communities.

4.2.7 Wairarapa and Upper Hutt communities of interest

Three submissions (10, 56 and 49) commented that the Wairarapa and Upper Hutt had more in common than did Upper Hutt and Lower Hutt. One submitter suggested that Upper Hutt and the Wairarapa should be combined to form one constituency, arguing that they are joined by key road and rail routes and share a rural flavour.

4.2.8 Support for status quo

Four submissions (18, 48, 69, 81) requested that the Council retain the status quo. One submitter commented that this would ensure areas are not pushed further away from the governing body.

4.2.9 Other

One submission (11) commented on constituency names, saying that Kapiti-Mana constituency should be the Porirua-Kapiti constituency. The reasoning was that Mana is a small suburb of Porirua, and Porirua should be first as it is larger.

One submitter said that changes to representation should not be decided by councillors. It should be done through a referendum of those who are affected. Another submitter said that affected ratepayers should be asked their opinion in a questionnaire in the rates demand.

Other representation proposals suggested by submitters included:

- one member for Kapiti, one for Porirua and one at large (submissions 26 and 27)
- six constituencies with mix of separate and amalgamated representation (submission 64)

- councillors elected according to constituency then each constituency is divided into separate wards with a councillor allocated to each ward (submission 58).

5. Communication

Officers will write a paper for the Representation Review Subcommittee meeting on 1 September 2006. At that meeting, the Subcommittee will decide on its recommendation(s) to Council. Once the Council has made its decision on its final representation arrangements on 12 September 2006, a public notice will be placed in the region's main newspapers. There is also the option of putting something similar in the community newspapers. In addition, each submitter will be sent a letter from the Council Chairman which advises them of the Council's decision and the reasons for it. They will also be notified that they can lodge an appeal.

6. Recommendations

That the Subcommittee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*

Report prepared by:

Report approved by:

Amy Norrish
Manager - Secretariat

Jane Bradbury
Divisional Manager - Corporate and Strategy