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Report to the Constituency Review Subcommittee
from Lloyd Bezett, Policy Analyst

Determining Communities of Interest

1. Purpose

To consider the communities of interest that exist within the Wellington Region for the purposes of determining regional representation-

2. Background

As explained in Report 00.102, the first stage of a review of constituencies and membership is determine the communities of interest within the Region.

When determining communities of interest for purposes other than for regional constituencies a number of other factors traditionally have been used. These include where people work, shop, go to school or travel to for recreation. Natural physical boundaries created by rivers and ranges have also been considered.

In past Reviews conducted by the WRC it has been concluded that the most appropriate way to determine communities of interest for regional constituencies is in terms of the services and functions of the WRC. Those functions considered appropriate are:

- transport planning
- whole catchment management
- biosecurities
- conservation forestry/bulk water

This approach was not the subject of comment by the Local Government Commission when considered the appeals against the Councils determination in 1997 and therefore was implicitly endorsed.

3. Comment

The detailed analysis of the communities of interest within the region, using the four criteria above, is set out below.

3.1 Wairarapa

Transport - With the exception of Martinborough, the Wairarapa's towns are all on or close to the railway line and the same state highway (Greytown's station is 6km out of town). For planning purposes the Wairarapa forms a single commuter rail catchment.

Whole Catchment Management - There are several river catchments in the Wairarapa but the Ruamahanga River is a common and dominant feature of all the territorial districts. The exception is the small part of Tararua District that is in the Region. This area, consisting of six properties and nine residents, is too small to be considered a separate community of interest.

Noxious Plants and Pest Control - Because the Wairarapa is 74 percent of the region's land and predominantly rural in character, these two functions are major activities there. Possums and noxious plants don't recognise boundaries so for planning and operational purposes this area is taken as a single unit. The establishment of the Biosecurity Department based in Masterton, further underlines this.

Conservation Forestry/Bulk Water - As this area is outside the Wellington Regional Water Board area, territorial authorities have responsibility for water reticulation services. However the Wellington Regional Council does own some conservation forestry areas for soil conservation purposes (eg. Stoney Creek) which are managed by a separate Business Unit.

Discussion - *In spite of its size (land area) relative to the rest of the Region, the Wairarapa can be considered a single community of interest in terms of the provision of WRC services. The Council has long recognised the unique character of the Wairarapa and maintained a separate office in Masterton where policy and operation for this community of interest is managed. The Subcommittee may wish to discuss whether the rural area of the Wairarapa (ie. outside urban Masterton) is a separate community of interest.*

3.2 Kapiti Coast

Transport - All the urban areas on the Kapiti Coast are along the same highway network and railway line. While Waikanae and Otaki are not served by the urban rail system at present, commuters from these areas join the rail network at Paraparaumu or Otaki via the Wellington/Palmerston North express. The Kapiti Coast is the northern end of a number of commuter centres stretching south to Wellington. The future of State Highway 1 and the Transmission Gully is also an area of common interest with Porirua.

Whole Catchment Management - The district is dissected by two main of rivers, each with its own management plan. While each river is distinct they share similarities in that each must flow across the broad coastal plain to the sea. The problems related to these rivers, in terms of their flow and size, are quite different to the problems of river management in neighbouring Porirua.

Noxious Plants/Pest Control - As the region's second largest constituency in terms of land area and predominantly rural in character, the Council's Biosecurity Department is actively involved in Kapiti.

Conservation Forestry/Bulk Water - This area is outside the Wellington Regional Water Board area. The territorial authority has responsibility for the reticulated water supply. The Wellington Regional Council is however concerned with water quality and abstraction in the Kapiti district to the extent that a regional plan has been prepared for the area. There is also conservation forestry in the Maungakotukutuku Valley.

Discussion *It is interesting to note that for a number of services (Fire Service telephone and CHES) the Kapiti Coast is divided in the area of Mary Crest/Pekapeka Road with the area north of that line considered part of southern Horowhenua. Despite sharing an interest in transport planning issues with Porirua, Kapiti Coast might be regarded as a separate community of interest within the Wellington Region.*

3.3 Porirua

Transport – The mayor urban areas in Porirua city lie along the highway network and railway corridor that stretches from Wellington in the south to Otaki in the north. Porirua railway station is a major commuter hub (the second busiest in the region, after Wellington), with a number of feeder bus services connecting there.. The future of State Highway 1 and Transmission Gully is also an area of common interest with Kapiti Coast.

Whole Catchment Management – The Porirua Stream rises in the Northern Ward of Wellington City and flows through Tawa and Porirua. The Regional Council has been active in promoting a number of works to prevent flooding in the Porirua Stream, the main beneficiaries of which are the commercial/industrial sector of Porirua and, to a lesser extent, the residents of Tawa. There are no other major flood protection works in Porirua City.

Noxious Plants/Pest Control – Part of the wider region.

Conservation Forestry/Bulk Water – Part of the metropolitan water supply network.

Discussion While Porirua has a number of concerns in common with Kapiti Coast District, there are sufficient differences in terms of WRC services to consider Porirua a separate community of interest. The possible consideration of Porirua with the Tawa Community Board area of Wellington City is discussed elsewhere in this paper.

3.4 Lower Hutt

Transport - Lower Hutt shares common transport links for roads and rail with Upper Hutt.

Whole Catchment Management - The Hutt River is a common dominant feature of Lower Hutt and Upper Hutt. Wellington Regional Council has made a major investment in flood protection and river management on the Hutt River. The principle of whole catchment management means that management of the river is not influenced by territorial authority boundaries. While not a consideration in the Council's management of the river, the fact that Lower Hutt has a substantially bigger population and higher equalised capital value than Upper Hutt means that Lower Hutt receives more benefit from flood protection.

Noxious Plants/Pest Control - For water supply reasons the management of the headwaters of the Wainuiomata and Orongorongo Rivers require special pest control attention. Otherwise Lower Hutt is managed as part of the wider region.

Conservation Forestry/Bulk Water - While Lower Hutt is part of the metropolitan water supply network, its contribution of artesian water to that network makes it unique. The catchments in the Wainuiomata and Orongorongo valleys and the water treatment plant of Wainuiomata form part of the Wellington Metropolitan water supply network. The issues surrounding water supply in Petone also separate Lower Hutt from the rest of the network.

Discussion *While Lower Hutt shares a number of concerns with Upper Hutt, there are sufficient differences for Lower Hutt to be considered a separate community of interest.*

3.5 Upper Hutt

Transport - Upper Hutt shares common transport links for roads and rail with Lower Hutt.

Whole Catchment Management - The Hutt River is a common dominant feature of Upper Hutt and Lower Hutt. Wellington Regional Council has made a major investment in flood protection and river management on the Hutt River. The principle of whole catchment management means that management of the river is not influenced by territorial authority boundaries.

Noxious Plants/Pest Control - For water supply reasons the management of the headwaters of the Hutt, requires special pest control attention. Otherwise Upper Hutt is managed as part of the wider region.

Conservation Forestry/Bulk Water - As the headwaters of the Hutt River are within Upper Hutt, the management of this area is rightly a major concern of this Council. The Te Marua Water Treatment Plant and its accompanying storage lakes are major capital investments by the Wellington Regional Council and play a vital role in the metropolitan water supply.

Discussion *While Upper Hutt has some concerns in common with Lower Hutt, there are sufficient **differences** for Upper Hutt to be considered a separate community of interest.*

3.6 **Wellington**

Transport - In many ways Wellington City is the central hub of the urban rail, the motorway network. For geographic and historic reasons Wellington's bus services are significantly more developed than in other parts of the region. The Johnsonville railway line is the only one that runs wholly within a single constituent district.

Whole Catchment Management - The Porirua Stream rises **in** the Northern Ward of Wellington City and flows through Tawa and Porirua. The Regional Council has been active in promoting a number of works to prevent flooding in the Porirua Stream the main beneficiaries of which are the commercial/industrial sector of Porirua and, to a lesser extent, the residents of Tawa

Noxious Plants/Pest Control - Part of the wider region. The Council has conducted a programme of Old Man's Beard eradication within Wellington City. There are no operational areas of bovine Tb control in Wellington City.

Conservation Forestry/Bulk Water – While part of the metropolitan water supply network, the operation of the Facilities Management Contract with Wellington City Council.

Discussion *During the reorganisation of 1989, the Local Government Commission divided Wellington into two constituencies. There are **no regional** considerations for such a -division and therefore Wellington (**plus** or minus Tawa Ward) could be considered one community of interest. The case for the representation of Tawa Ward is discussed below.*

3.7 **Tawa Community Board Area (Wellington City)**

Transport - Traditionally the flow of commuters has been used as factor when determining common interest between areas. While there is a strong commuter flow from Tawa to the Wellington CBD via urban rail and motorway, there are equally strong links between the CBD and parts of Lower Hutt and Porirua. The Wellington CBD is effectively the CBD for the entire metropolitan area of the Region. In terms of the Wellington Regional Council function of regional transport planning, Tawa as the southern end of number of commuter areas stretching up to, and including the Kapiti Coast. Looked at like this, Tawa and Porirua have a strong common interest in urban rail and the Wellington urban motorway. In terms of urban rail, Tawa has relatively little common interest with the nearby Northern Ward of Wellington City.

Whole Catchment Management - The Porirua Stream rises in the Northern Ward of Wellington City and flows through Tawa and Porirua. The Regional Council has been active in promoting a number of works to prevent flooding in the Porirua Stream the main beneficiaries of which are the commercial/industrial sector of Porirua and, to a lesser extent, the residents of Tawa. This is the case even though

some of the works are sited in Wellington City's Northern Ward (ie. Stebbings and Belmont detention dams). As the flood mitigation works will allow further urban development in the upper part of the catchment (ie. the Northern Ward), these areas are also beneficiaries.

Noxious Plants/Pest Control - Part of the wider region.

Conservation Forestry/Bulk Water - Tawa is linked to metropolitan water supply network via Porirua and not Wellington City. The WRC has no conservation forestry in Tawa Ward.

Discussion *In terms of Regional Council functions **Tawa** does not form a separate "community of interest". Tawa possesses linkages to both Wellington and Porirua for **different** reasons. These reasons not only include those discussed above but include employment, recreation and shopping patterns, **Tawa** was part of the former Regional Council's Porirua **constituency from 1986 to 1989.***

*A case could be made for Tawa being included in a single constituency with Porirua City **and** the Committee should consider such a possibility.*

4 **Recommendation**

That the Subcommittee receive the Report as the basis for discussion.

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