

**By email**

4 September 2024

Hon Simeon Brown  
Minister of Local Government  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington  
**s.brown@ministers.govt.nz**

Dear Minister,

At its meeting on 27 August 2024, Greater Wellington Regional Council resolved that I should write to you, requesting your consideration of a law change that would enable Council's Wairarapa General Constituency to be represented by two elected members.

Matters relevant to this request are:

- Wairarapa is a large geographic area, comprising 75% of the area of the Wellington Region.
- Wairarapa is physically separated from the rest of the Wellington Region by the Remutaka Range.
- Wairarapa is diverse, with large rural areas (some of which are isolated), rural-service towns, and the urban area of Masterton.
- Wairarapa has three territorial authorities (Masterton District Council, Carterton District Council, and South Wairarapa District Council), and a small part of Tararua District, with whom the Wairarapa Constituency member needs to liaise.
- The Wairarapa territorial authorities have been consistent in their concern that the Wairarapa area should have two members elected to the regional council.
- In the period from 2017 to 2023 the population of the Wairarapa Constituency grew by 15.1 percent, compared with 7.1 for the Wellington Region as a whole as a result of this growth the Wairarapa Constituency is now statistically under-represented on the 13-member regional council.
- Greater Wellington has significant functions in the Wairarapa, including through Treaty settlement legislative provisions related to Lake Wairarapa, which place significant representation and governance demands on single Wairarapa Constituency member.

These matters place significant expectations and workload demands on the single Wairarapa Constituency member that are not evident to the same degree in the Council's other constituencies. However, the current framework of the Local Electoral Act 2001, with the population of each electoral area being a key determinant for the basis of election, does not enable two members to be elected for the Wairarapa Constituency.

Under the legislative local electoral framework that was in effect prior to the Local Electoral Act 2001 (the repealed section 101L of the Local Government Act 1974) factors in addition to population could be utilised to determine a local authority's representation arrangements. The additional factors were land area and rateable value. Through the application of these additional factors, from the first election of the Council in 1989 through to the 2004 local elections there were two Wairarapa Constituency members elected to the Council. The Wairarapa Constituency's membership was reduced to one member from the 2007 triennial local elections, following the Local Government Commission's determination under the Local Electoral Act 2001. This membership entitlement has been retained through subsequent Local Government Commission determinations issued for the 2013 and 2019 triennial local elections.

The Council requests your consideration of legislative options that would enable the Wairarapa Constituency to once again be represented by two members.

As this is a matter of relevance to the Local Government Commission and the Wairarapa territorial authorities I am copying this letter to the Commission's Chair and the Wairarapa mayors.

Ngā mihi



**Daran Ponter**  
Heamana | Chair

Cc:  
Brendan Duffy Chair, Local Government Commission  
Gary Caffell Mayor, Masterton District Council  
Hon. Ron Mark Mayor, Carterton District Council  
Martin Connelly Mayor, South Wairarapa District Council