

11 MAY 2018

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**Manawatu-Wanganui Regional Council - Representation Review 2018**

I **oppose** retaining the current constituencies and configuration of elected councillors, as proposed in Report 18-36 of 27 March 2018, for the following reasons;

1/ The Local Electoral Act 2001 clearly prioritises the criteria used to determine constituencies of Regional Councils as

A/ Population (in this case 18,015 – 22,018 persons per constituency)

B/ Communities of Interest

C/ District and Territorial boundaries, if possible.

Council is not placing enough emphasis on criteria A and B as the act requires.

2/ The Local Government Commission representation tables 2017 identify the constituencies of Ruapehu, Tararua and Wanganui as all failing to meet the required population/councillor ratio as specified in the LEA 2001. The tables are based on data as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and it can be expected that within the next 1 - 2 years the Palmerston North constituency will also fail to meet the standard, due to population growth.

Council is failing to anticipate known population trends and plan accordingly.

3/ Report 18-36 section 8 completely ignores any consideration to form constituencies around the towns of Levin and Feilding. These are both obvious "Communities of Interest" of 18,000 to 20,000 people deserving of a councillor to give them "Effective and Fair" representation. One councillor each from Horowhenua-Kairanga and Manawatu-Rangitikei constituencies would be made redundant, giving a total of 8 constituencies with 12 councillors. I note that none of the current councillors are from the towns of Levin or Feilding.

4/ Report 18-36 contains the following unsupported claims;

A/ A constituency of  $x$  sq. km is "unreasonable". Where does the LEA 2001 state this?

B/ A Wanganui constituency of 3 councillors would "disadvantage other communities of interest". Please explain who would be disadvantaged and how?

C/ Section 9.1 "The existing electoral arrangements....recognises the region's communities of interest". Please explain how the existing arrangement recognises the communities of interest called Levin and Feilding?

5/ Councillors are elected and remunerated on the basis that they each represent approx. 20,000 people. Of the 12 councillors, 8 of them should be representing towns and urban communities of interest within the region, as clearly recognised by the LEA 2001. Council's inability or unwillingness to reconfigure constituencies to achieve "Fair representation" has led to a serious and deteriorating state of affairs that undoubtedly disadvantages some citizens and ratepayers. Please explain Council's failure to implement the "Effective and Fair" principles of the LEA 2001 and maintain constituencies which are genuinely representative of the region's population?

I will not be speaking at the submission hearing.

Mark K Chilcott

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8<sup>th</sup> May 2018