

## **Horizons Regional Council – Representation Review 2021**

### **Second Discussion Document**

#### **Introduction**

The Council's decision to introduce Māori electoral constituencies for the 2022 Local Government elections triggered a requirement to undertake a Representation Review within a compressed timeframe. The Council is required to adopt a set of representation options as an Initial Proposal (target date 24 August 2021<sup>1</sup>), consult with the public and consider submissions, and adopt a final proposal for public notification (target date 27 October 2021).

In undertaking the Review to date, the Council held a workshop on 15 June and has considered an extensive discussion document containing a wide range of options and variations thereon. The workshop gave the Council the opportunity to be briefed on the issues to be considered in the Representation Review and to give broad direction on the matters that should be considered more closely within the review. The discussion document canvassed the legal framework, process and requirements for the Representation Review, various representation options, including considerations and options arising out of the introduction of Māori constituencies.

Key requirements in the Representation Review process include determining the number of Councillors required for the good governance of the Region, identifying/reviewing communities of interest, ensuring effective representation of those communities of interest and seeking to achieve fair representation between any constituencies established to represent those various communities of interest. The +/-10% 'rule' is an important guide in assessing fair representation.

Taking into account the key requirements of the Representation Review, the workshop resulted in staff and advisors being asked to prepare this second discussion document exploring seven main representation options in further detail, with variations for the total number of councillors and some constituency boundary alterations to provide for more effective representation. The workshop also resulted in near-consensus views being reached on a number of key representation issues.

#### **Representation Matters – Issues of Consensus**

Councillors have reached a reasonably high level of consensus on the following representation matters:

1. that 2 representatives be elected from 1 or 2 Māori constituencies. All the tables produced show a single Māori Constituency but they can be separated into two constituencies, with 1 representative each, without having any impact on the balance of the option for the general constituencies;
2. that the total number of councillors not exceed 12 and if the numbers can be made to work then a reduction in the total number of councillors would be preferred;
3. that, as far as possible, constituent territorial local authority boundaries be used as constituency boundaries but if that is not possible then whole wards of constituent territorial local authority boundaries be used; and
4. that, in order to provide both Ruapehu and Tararua with the most effective representation, that serious consideration again be given to both those constituencies being recognised as separate and distinct communities of interest and that interest, with the degree of isolation in both, is such that they should continue to have separate representation.

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<sup>1</sup> The LEA sets the deadline for adoption of the initial proposal at 31 August

## Representation Options to be Further Considered

Having considered a large number of options and variations for representation arrangements for the Council, Councillors have asked for seven representation options, to be further examined.

All options use the following population statistics prepared by Statistics NZ for the Local Government Commission in May 2021 (Constituency estimated General Electoral Population and Māori Electoral Population at 30 June 2020, Boundaries at 1 Jan 2020):

<b>Manawatū-Whanganui region</b>	<b>Ruapehu constituency</b>	<b>3,860</b>	<b>9,130</b>
	<b>Whanganui constituency</b>	<b>8,390</b>	<b>39,700</b>
	<b>Manawatū-Rangitikei constituency</b>	<b>6,030</b>	<b>41,800</b>
	<b>Palmerston North constituency</b>	<b>9,650</b>	<b>80,700</b>
	<b>Horowhenua constituency</b>	<b>5,050</b>	<b>31,000</b>
	<b>Tararua constituency</b>	<b>2,860</b>	<b>16,000</b>
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>35,840</b>	<b>218,330</b>

The options presented are not ranked in any order of preference at this time.

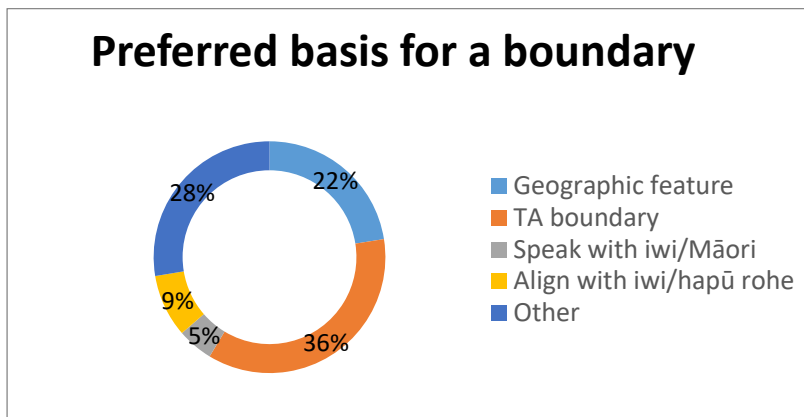
The options are:

- **Option 1** - Status Quo +: 6 general constituencies, 12 general constituency councillors + 1 Māori constituency, 2 Māori councillors
- **Option 1A** - Status Quo +: 6 general constituencies, 12 general constituency councillors + 2 Māori constituencies, Raki (Ruapehu, Whanganui, Manawatū and Rangitikei) and Tonga (Palmerston North, Horowhenua and Tararua), 2 Māori constituency councillors.
- **Option 2** – 4 general constituencies combining Whanganui with Ruapehu, Rangitikei with Manawatū and Horowhenua with Tararua with a total of 9 general councillors and 1 Māori constituency, 2 Māori councillors
- **Option 3** – 3 general constituencies: North (Ruapehu, Whanganui and Rangitikei), Palmerston North, and South (Manawatū, Horowhenua and Tararua), 9 general councillors, 1 Māori constituency, 2 Māori councillors
- **Option 4** – Separate general constituencies for Ruapehu and Tararua, other general constituencies geographically based on territorial authority boundaries where possible with a total of 9 general councillors and 1 Māori constituency, 2 Māori councillors, 6 general constituencies with Manawatū and Rangitikei combined.
- **Option 5** – Separate general constituencies for Ruapehu and Tararua, other general constituencies geographically based on territorial authority boundaries where possible with a total of 9 general councillors and 1 Māori constituency, 2 Māori councillors, 5 general constituencies with Whanganui and Rangitikei, and Manawatū and Horowhenua combined.

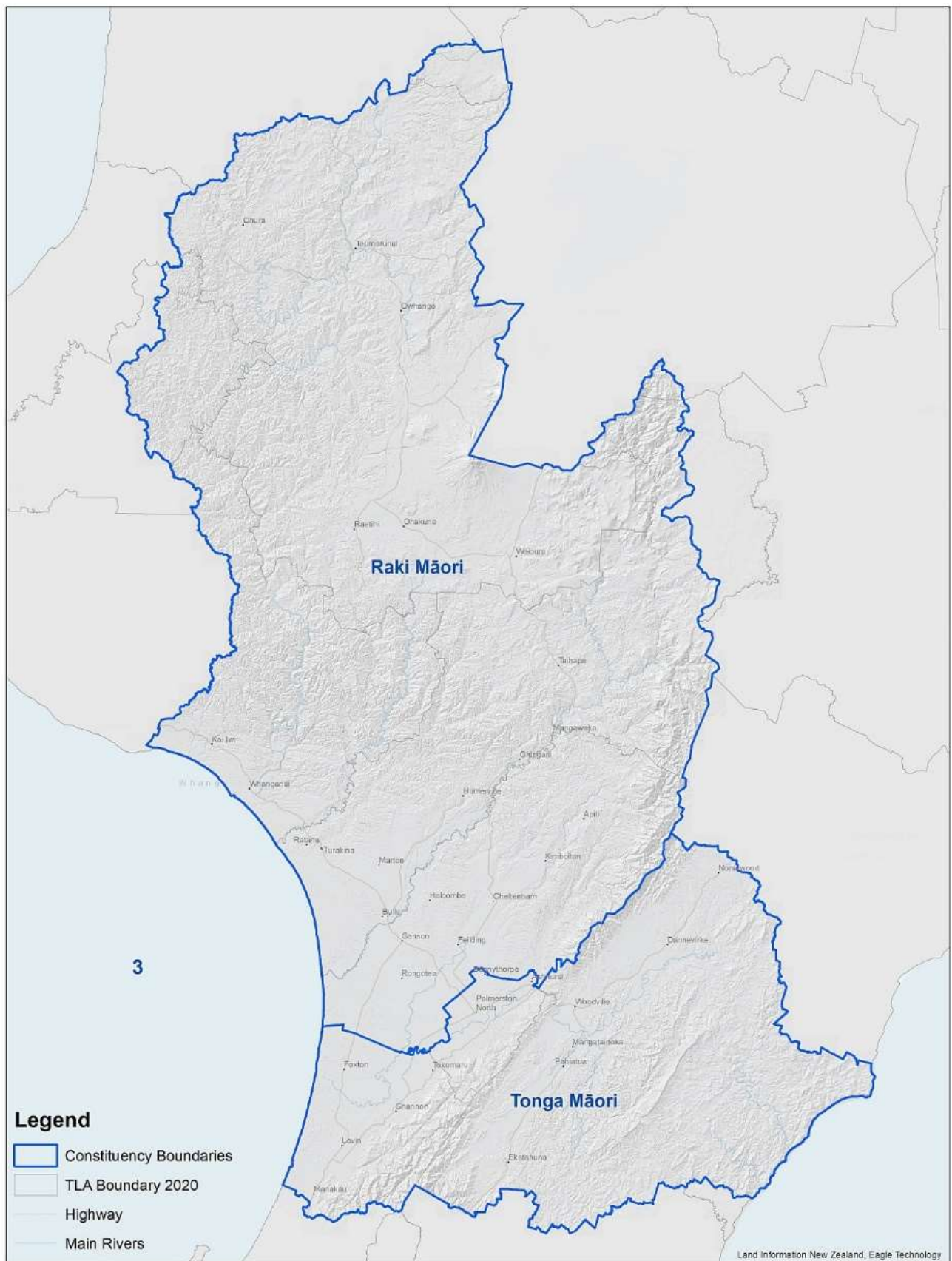
- **Option 6** – All general constituencies geographically based on territorial authority boundaries where possible (TLA ward boundaries) with a total of 9 general councillors and 1 Māori constituency, 2 Māori councillors, 4 general constituencies: Ruapehu/ Manawatū and the Northern and Central Wards of Rangitīkei; Whanganui and the Southern Ward of Rangitīkei; Palmerston North; and, Horowhenua/Tararua.
- **Option 7** – 4 general constituencies combining Ruapehu with Rangitīkei, Whanganui with Manawatū and Horowhenua with Tararua with a total of 9 general councillors and 1 Māori constituency, 2 Māori councillors

Notes:

- 1 Smaller numbers of councillors and retaining multiple constituencies is a combination that makes it hard for the region to get near compliance. Explanation and justification to the community, and subsequently the Local Government Commission, also becomes more difficult because the most significant component is the community of interest. Attached, as an appendix, is the most recent community of interest analysis based on existing constituencies. Councillors are encouraged to add to or update this analysis and should consider the shortlisted options with this key factor in mind.
- 2 A single Māori constituency covers the whole of the region. All options work with a single Māori constituency with 2 representatives. The Council surveyed those on the Māori Roll in Horizons Region about whether there should be 1 or 2 Māori constituencies. The survey indicated just over 54% for all respondents and just fewer than 54% for Māori respondents in favour a single constituency. The following graph shows support for options a 2 constituency arrangement could be based on, for those who responded to this question.

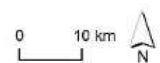


For there to be two Māori constituencies, they are based on constituent territorial local authority boundaries with Ruapehu, Whanganui, Manawatū and Rangitīkei combined in the north (Raki) and Palmerston North, Horowhenua and Tararua combined in the south (Tonga). Any of the options may provide for 2 Māori constituencies each with 1 councillor. In each option, both of the Māori constituencies, Raki and Tonga, will be fully compliant in that they are within the 10% margin of each other.



2021 Representation Review

Māori Constituencies - Potential Boundary



**Option 1: Status Quo +: 6 general constituencies with 12 general constituency councillors + 1 Māori constituency, and 2 Māori constituency councillors**

<b>Constituencies</b>	<b>Population*</b>	<b>Number of councillors per constituency</b>	<b>Population per councillor</b>	<b>Deviation from region average population per councillor</b>	<b>% deviation from region average population per councillor</b>
<b>Ruapehu</b>	<b>9,130</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9,130</b>	<b>-9,064</b>	<b>-49.82</b>
<b>Whanganui</b>	<b>39,700</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>19,850</b>	<b>1,656</b>	<b>9.10</b>
<b>Manawatū-Rangitikei</b>	<b>41,800</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20,900</b>	<b>2,706</b>	<b>14.87</b>
<b>Palmerston North</b>	<b>80,700</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>20,175</b>	<b>1,981</b>	<b>10.89</b>
<b>Horowhenua</b>	<b>31,000</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15,500</b>	<b>-2,694</b>	<b>-14.81</b>
<b>Tararua</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>-2,194</b>	<b>-12.06</b>
<b>Total General</b>	<b>218,330</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18,194</b>		
<b>Māori Constituency</b>	<b>35,840</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17,920</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>254,170</b>	<b>14</b>			

This option is essentially the status quo with 12 general councillors elected from 6 constituencies, plus the addition of 1 Māori constituency represented by 2 councillors. The general constituencies are based on constituent territorial local authority boundaries and Manawatū and Rangitikei are combined.

In this option Ruapehu and Tararua remain as separate constituencies. Both are over represented Ruapehu at -49.82% and Tararua at -12.06%. Horowhenua is also over-represented at -14.81%. Manawatū-Rangitikei is under-represented at 14.87% and Palmerston North is also just over the legislated recommended margin at 10.89%. Whanganui is the only general constituency that complies with the +/- 10% margin. The total number of councillors is 14 – above Councillors’ preference not to exceed 12.

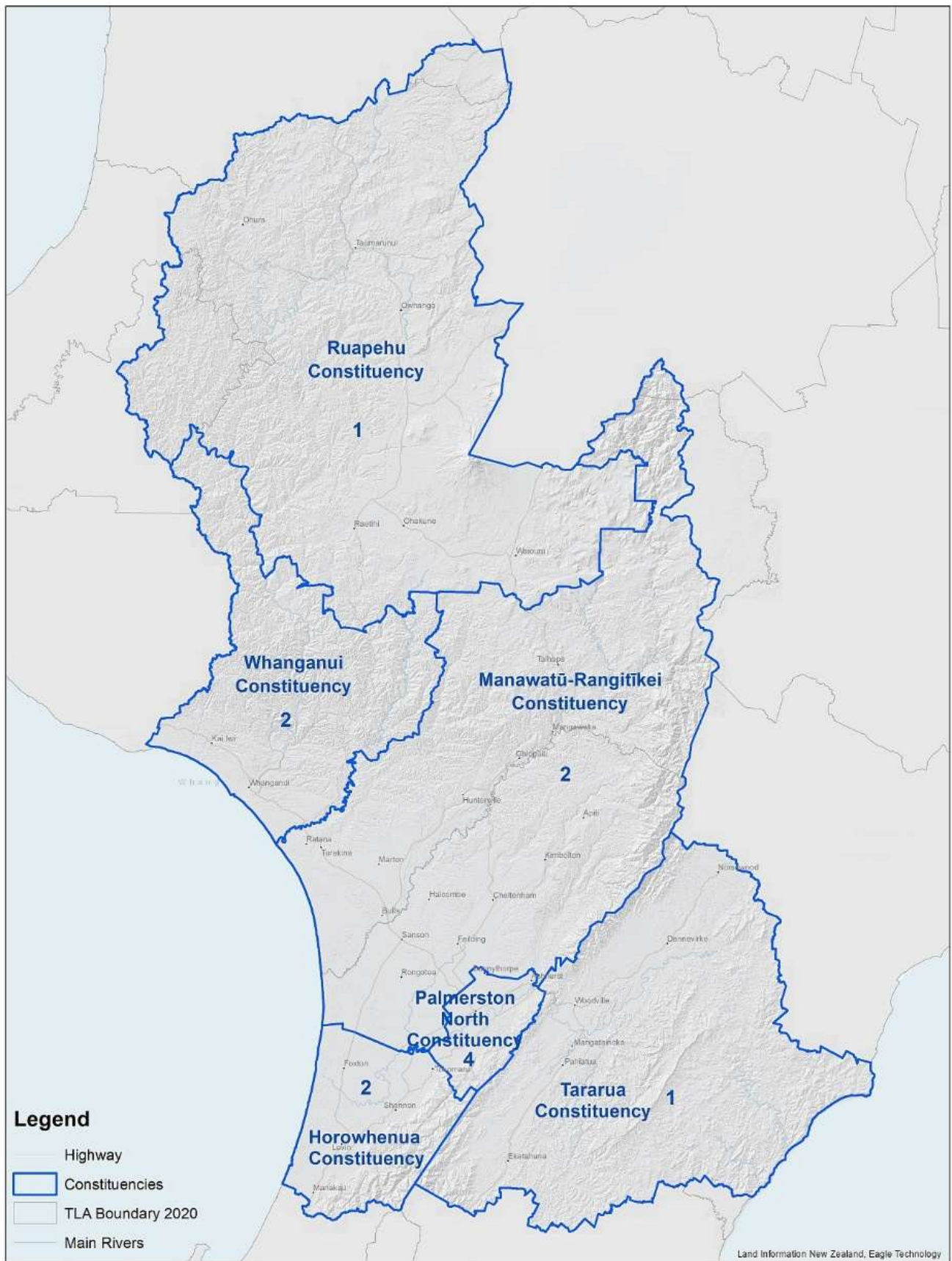
Should the council opt to have 2 Māori constituencies with 1 councillor in each then the fairness requirements will apply and the population in each of the Māori constituencies will need to be approximately equal. As an example, if the region was divided north/south into 2 constituencies with the north including Ruapehu, Whanganui, Manawatū and Rangitikei and the south including Palmerston North, Horowhenua and Tararua the Māori electoral population in the north would be 18,280 and in the south 17,560. In table form option 1 with 2 Māori constituencies would look like this:

**Option 1A: Status Quo +: 6 general constituencies, 12 general constituency councillors + 2 Māori constituencies, Raki (Ruapehu, Whanganui, Manawatū and Rangitikei) and Tonga (Palmerston North, Horowhenua and Taranui), 2 Māori constituency councillors**

Constituencies	Population*	Number of councillors per constituency	Population per councillor	Deviation from region average population per councillor	% deviation from region average population per councillor
Ruapehu	9,130	1	9,130	-9,064	-49.82
Whanganui	39,700	2	19,850	1,656	9.10
Manawatū-Rangitikei	41,800	2	20,900	2,706	14.87
Palmerston North	80,700	4	20,175	1,981	10.89
Horowhenua	31,000	2	15,500	-2,694	-14.81
Taranui	16,000	1	16,000	-2,194	-12.06
<b>Total General</b>	<b>218,330</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18,194</b>		
Raki Māori Constituency (Ruapehu, Whanganui, Manawatū and Rangitikei)	18,280	1	18,280	360	2.01
Tonga Māori Constituency (Palmerston North, Horowhenua and Taranui)	17,560	1	17,560	-360	-2.01
<b>Total Māori</b>	<b>35,840</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17,920</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>254,170</b>	<b>14</b>			

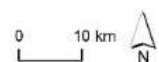
The same commentary as above in option 1 applies to the general constituencies in option 1A. The two Māori constituencies must also comply with the +/- 10% margin and with this division into Raki and Tonga Māori constituencies, they do comply. This same configuration for the Māori constituencies can be included in any of the options without impacting on any other aspect of the option. Whilst it is not a legislative requirement, it is also noted that both Raki and Tonga Māori constituencies have representation of population per councillor close to that applying to the general population.





## 2021 Representation Review

Option 1  
(14 Members)



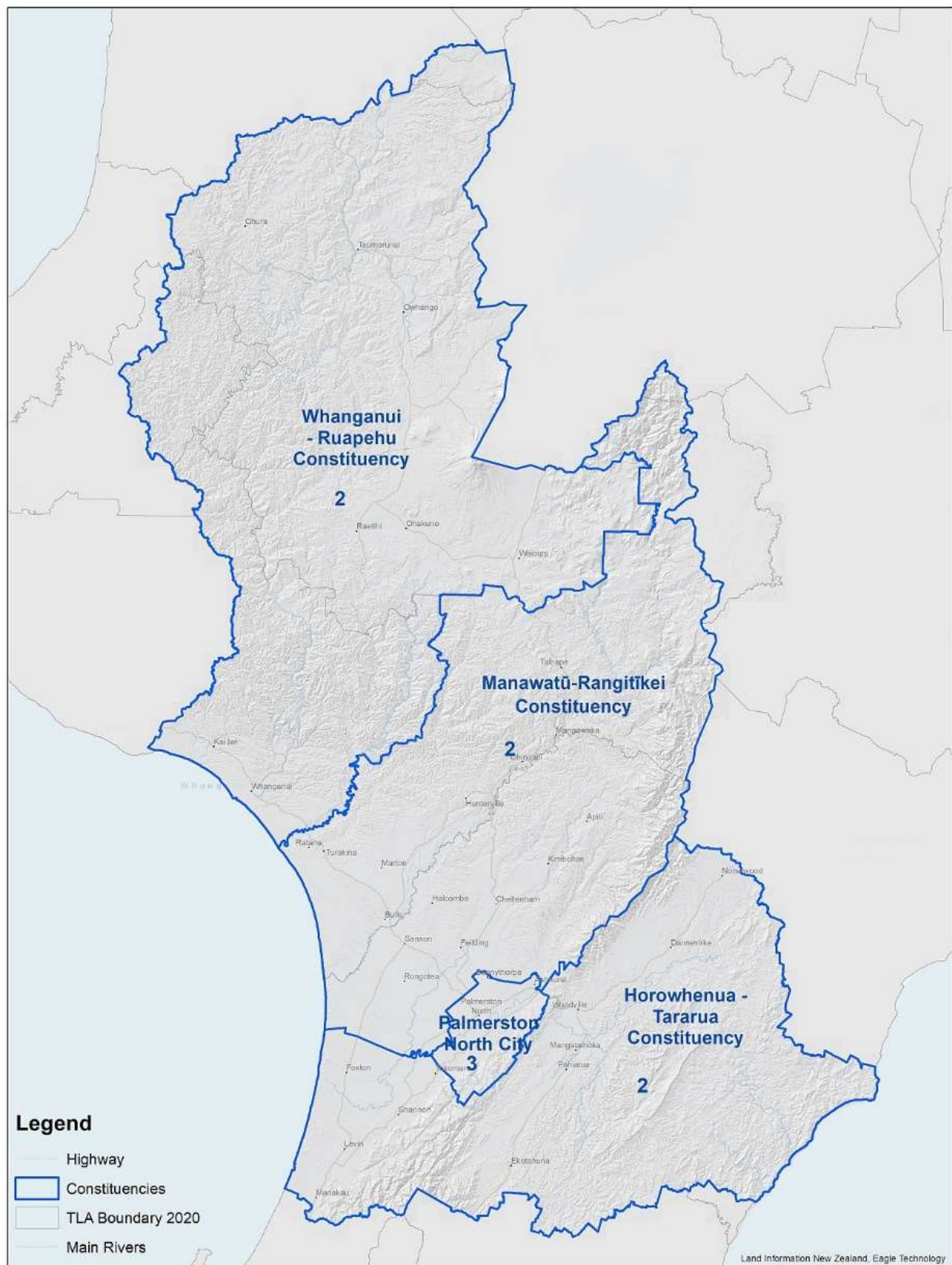
**Option 2 – 4 general constituencies combining Whanganui with Ruapehu, Rangitīkei with Manawatū and Horowhenua with Tararua with a total of 9 general councillors and 1 Māori constituency, 2 Māori constituency councillors.**

<b>Constituencies</b>	<b>Population*</b>	<b>Number of councillors per constituency</b>	<b>Population per councillor</b>	<b>Deviation from region average population per councillor</b>	<b>% deviation from region average population per councillor</b>
<b>Whanganui-Ruapehu</b>	<b>48,830</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>24,415</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>0.64</b>
<b>Manawatū-Rangitīkei</b>	<b>41,800</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20,900</b>	<b>-3,359</b>	<b>-13.85</b>
<b>Palmerston North</b>	<b>80,700</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>26,900</b>	<b>2,641</b>	<b>10.89</b>
<b>Horowhenua-Tararua</b>	<b>47,000</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23,500</b>	<b>-759</b>	<b>-3.13</b>
<b>Total General</b>	<b>218,330</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>24,259</b>		
<b>Māori Constituency</b>	<b>35,840</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17,920</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>254,170</b>	<b>11</b>			

In option 2 Manawatū-Rangitīkei is over-represented at -13.85% and Palmerston North is slightly under-represented at 10.89%. All other constituencies comply with the +/- 10% rule.

The total number of councillors is 11 – within the preference not to exceed 12.





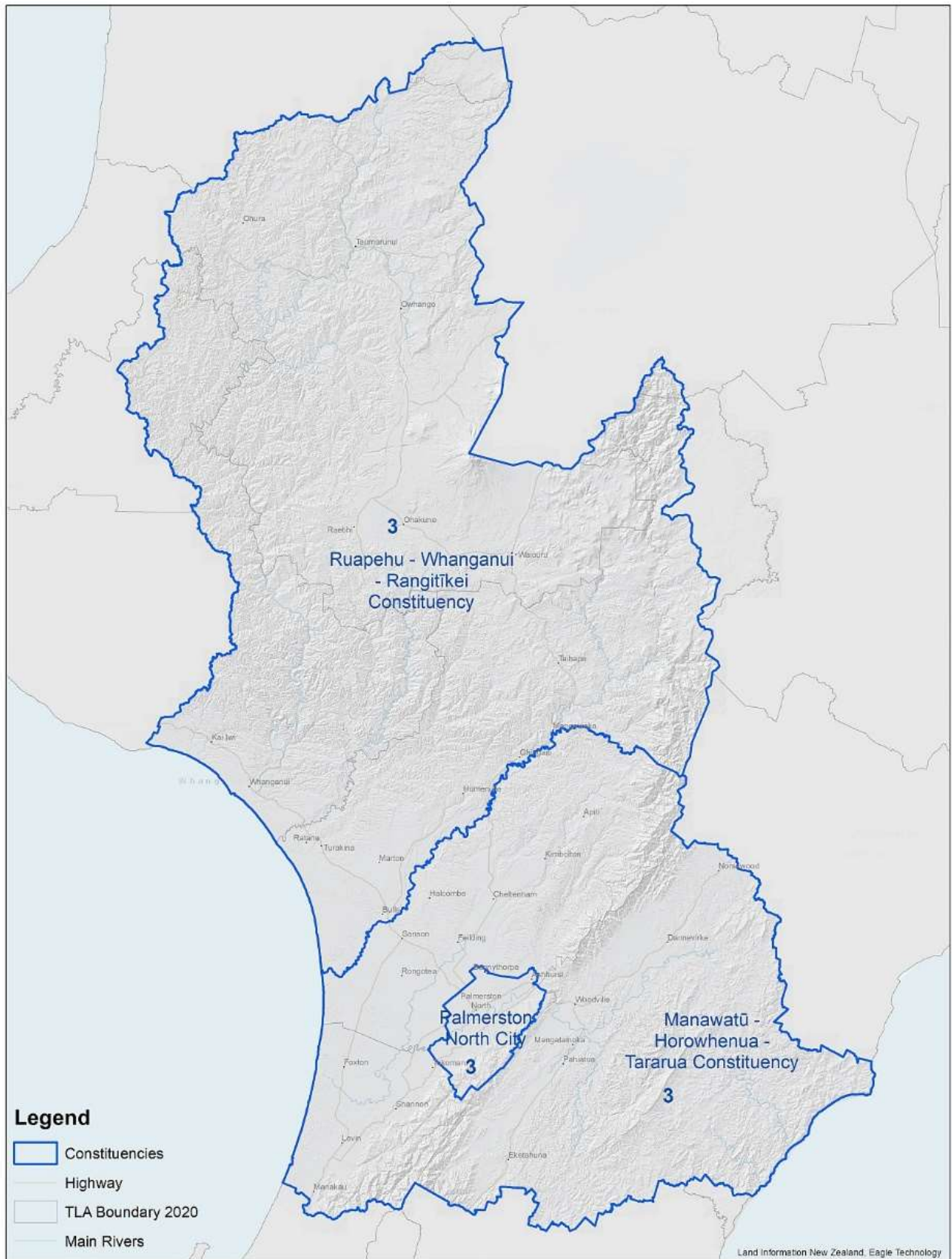
2021 Representation Review  
Option 2  
(11 Members)

**Option 3 – Three general constituencies: North (Ruapehu, Whanganui and Rangitikei), Palmerston North, and South (Manawatū, Horowhenua and Taranaki), 9 general councillors, 1 Māori constituency, 2 Māori constituency councillors**

Constituencies	Population*	Number of councillors per constituency	Population per councillor	Deviation from region average population per councillor	% deviation from region average population per councillor
North: Ruapehu-Whanganui-Rangitikei	61,580	3	20,527	-3,732	-15.38
Palmerston North	80,700	3	26,900	2,641	10.89
South: Manawatū-Horowhenua-Taranaki	76,050	3	25,350	1,091	4.50
<b>Total General</b>	<b>218,330</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>24,259</b>		
<b>Māori</b>	<b>35,840</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17,920</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>254,170</b>	<b>11</b>			

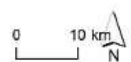
In this option Ruapehu and Taranaki are not retained as separate constituencies. The North Constituency (covering all of Ruapehu, Whanganui and Rangitikei Districts) is over represented at - 15.38%. Palmerston North Constituency is slightly under-represented at 10.89%. The South Constituency (covering all of Manawatū, Horowhenua and Taranaki Districts) is fully compliant.

The total number of councillors is 11 – within the preference not to exceed 12.



## 2021 Representation Review

Option 3  
(11 Members)



**Option 4 – Separate general constituencies for Ruapehu and Tararua, other general constituencies geographically based on territorial authority boundaries where possible with a total of 9 general councillors and 1 Māori constituency, 2 Māori constituency councillors. 6 constituencies with Manawatū and Rangitīkei combined.**

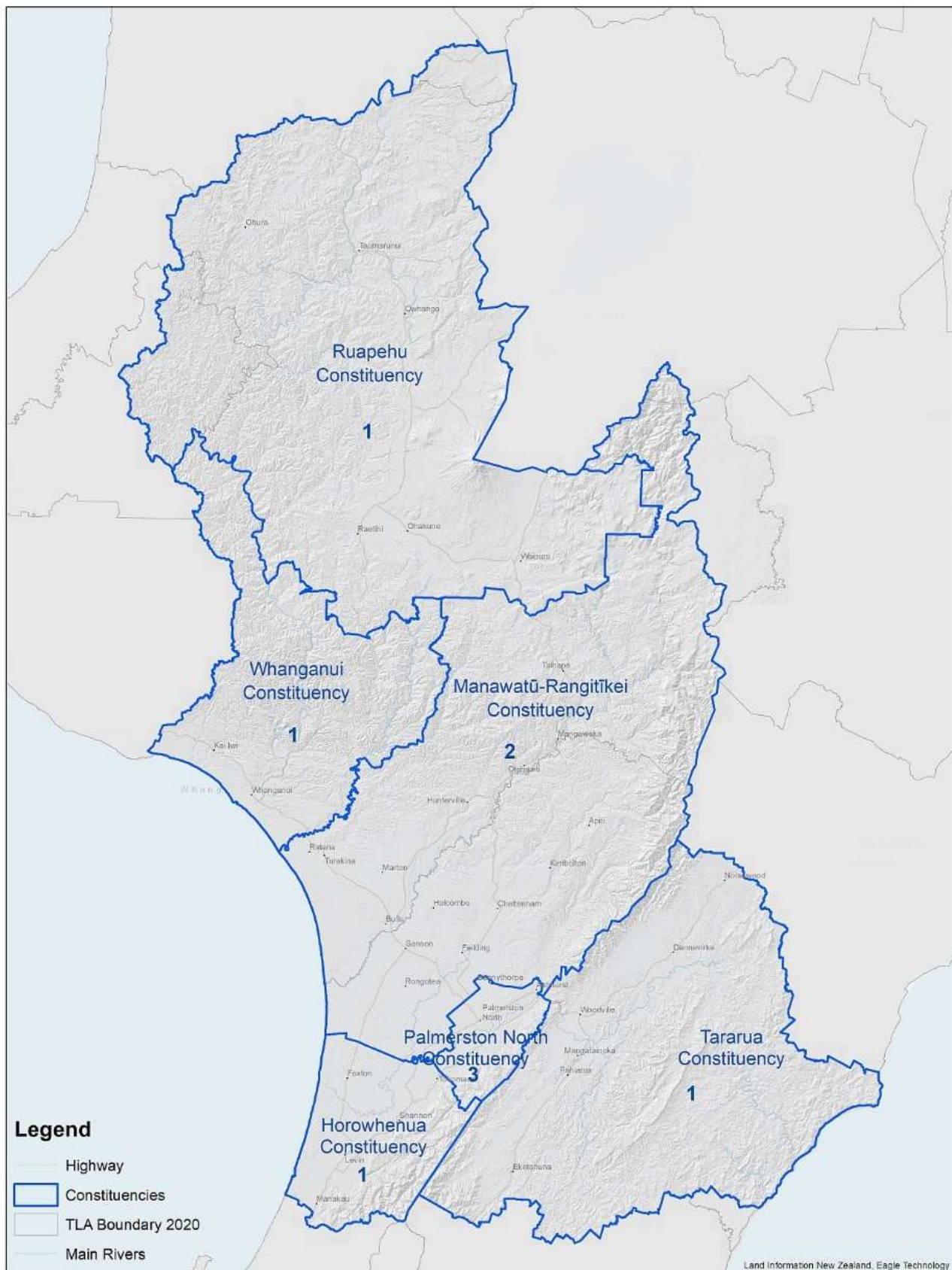
Option 4 is our current boundary configuration with one less representative in the Palmerston North Constituency.

<b>Constituencies</b>	<b>Population*</b>	<b>Number of councillors per constituency</b>	<b>Population per councillor</b>	<b>Deviation from region average population per councillor</b>	<b>% deviation from region average population per councillor</b>
<b>Ruapehu</b>	<b>9,130</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9,130</b>	<b>-15,129</b>	<b>-62.36</b>
<b>Whanganui</b>	<b>39,700</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>39,700</b>	<b>15,441</b>	<b>63.65</b>
<b>Manawatū-Rangitīkei</b>	<b>41,800</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20,900</b>	<b>-3,359</b>	<b>-13.85</b>
<b>Palmerston North</b>	<b>80,700</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>26,900</b>	<b>2,641</b>	<b>10.89</b>
<b>Horowhenua</b>	<b>31,000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>31,000</b>	<b>6,741</b>	<b>27.79</b>
<b>Tararua</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>-8,259</b>	<b>-34.05</b>
<b>Total General</b>	<b>218,330</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>24,259</b>		
<b>Māori Constituency</b>	<b>35,840</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17,920</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>254,170</b>	<b>11</b>			

In this option Ruapehu and Tararua remain as separate constituencies. Both are over-represented Ruapehu at -62.36% and Tararua at -34.05% and Manawatū-Rangitīkei is over-represented too at -13.85%. Whanganui is under-represented at 63.65% as is Palmerston North at 10.89% and Horowhenua at 27.79%. That is, there are no general constituencies that comply with the +/- 10% margin.

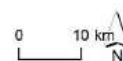
The total number of councillors is 11 – within the preference not to exceed 12.





## 2021 Representation Review

Option 4  
(11 Members)



The issues created with a smaller number of councillors and retention of 6 constituencies is exemplified in this option. Increasing the number of general constituency councillors to 10 will mean that Whanganui would gain one and that would make that constituency comply at just under the 10% margin. Ruapehu and Tararua would drop to -58.18% and -26.72% respectively. Horowhenua would increase to 41.99% (under-represented) and Palmerston North would increase to 23.21% (under-represented). Manawatū-Rangitīkei would become compliant. Keeping Ruapehu and Tararua separate and the total number of councillors below 12, does not provide many options to combine whole TLAs or wards of TLAs to get a workable, compliant model. The changes are better illustrated in the following table:

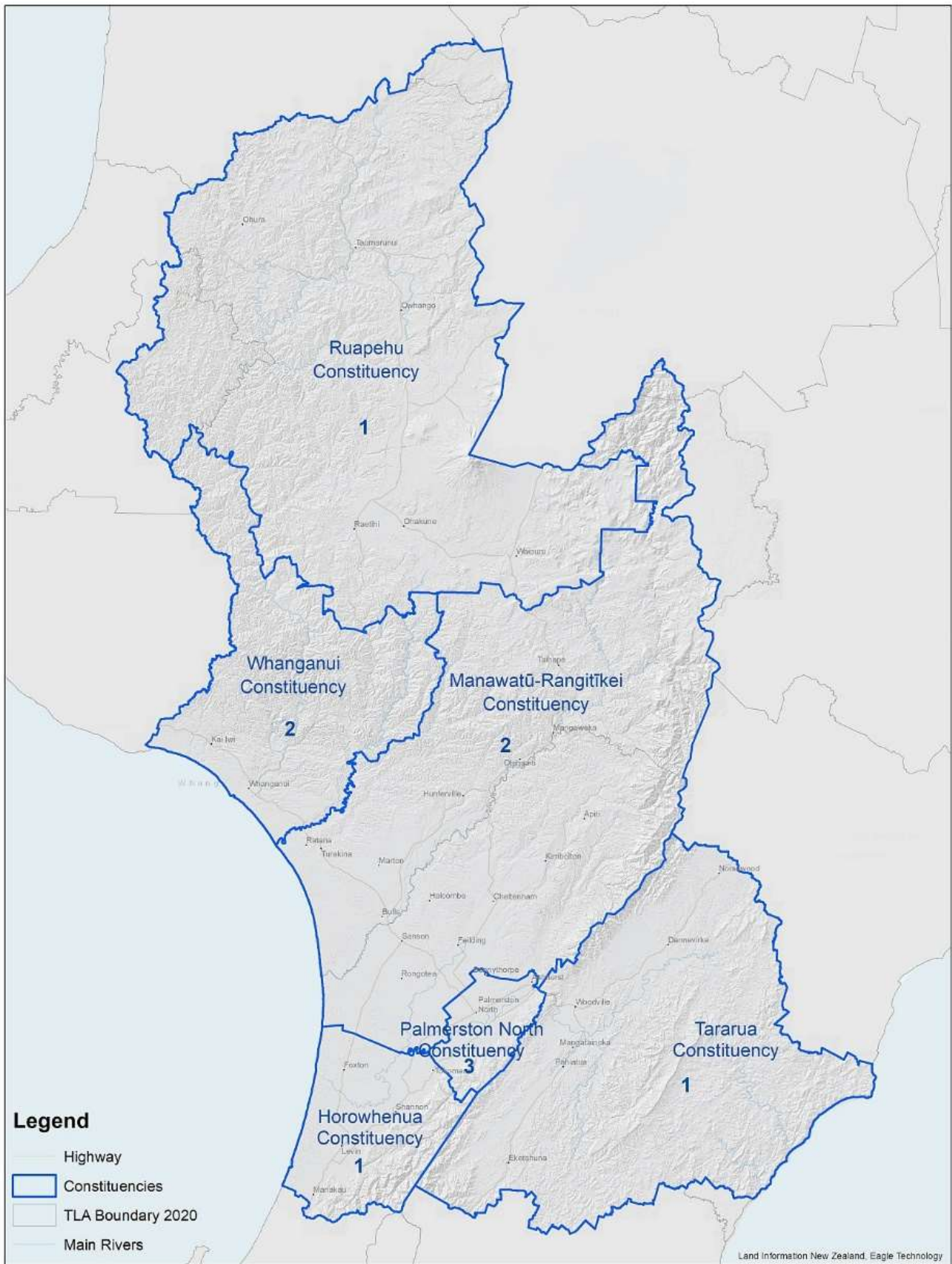
Option 4A is our current boundary configuration with two less representatives, one in the Palmerston North Constituency and one in the Horowhenua Constituency.

**Option 4A – Option 4 with 10 general constituency councillors**

Constituencies	Population*	Number of councillors per constituency	Population per councillor	Deviation from region average population per councillor	% deviation from region average population per councillor
Ruapehu	9,130	1	9,130	-12,703	-58.18
Whanganui	39,700	2	19,850	-1,983	-9.08
Manawatū-Rangitīkei	41,800	2	20,900	-933	-4.27
Palmerston North	80,700	3	26,900	5,067	23.21
Horowhenua	31,000	1	31,000	9,167	41.99
Tararua	16,000	1	16,000	-5,833	-26.72
<b>Total General</b>	<b>218,330</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>21,833</b>		
<b>Māori Constituency</b>	<b>35,840</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17,920</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>254,170</b>	<b>12</b>			

The total number of councillors is 12 – within the preference not to exceed 12.



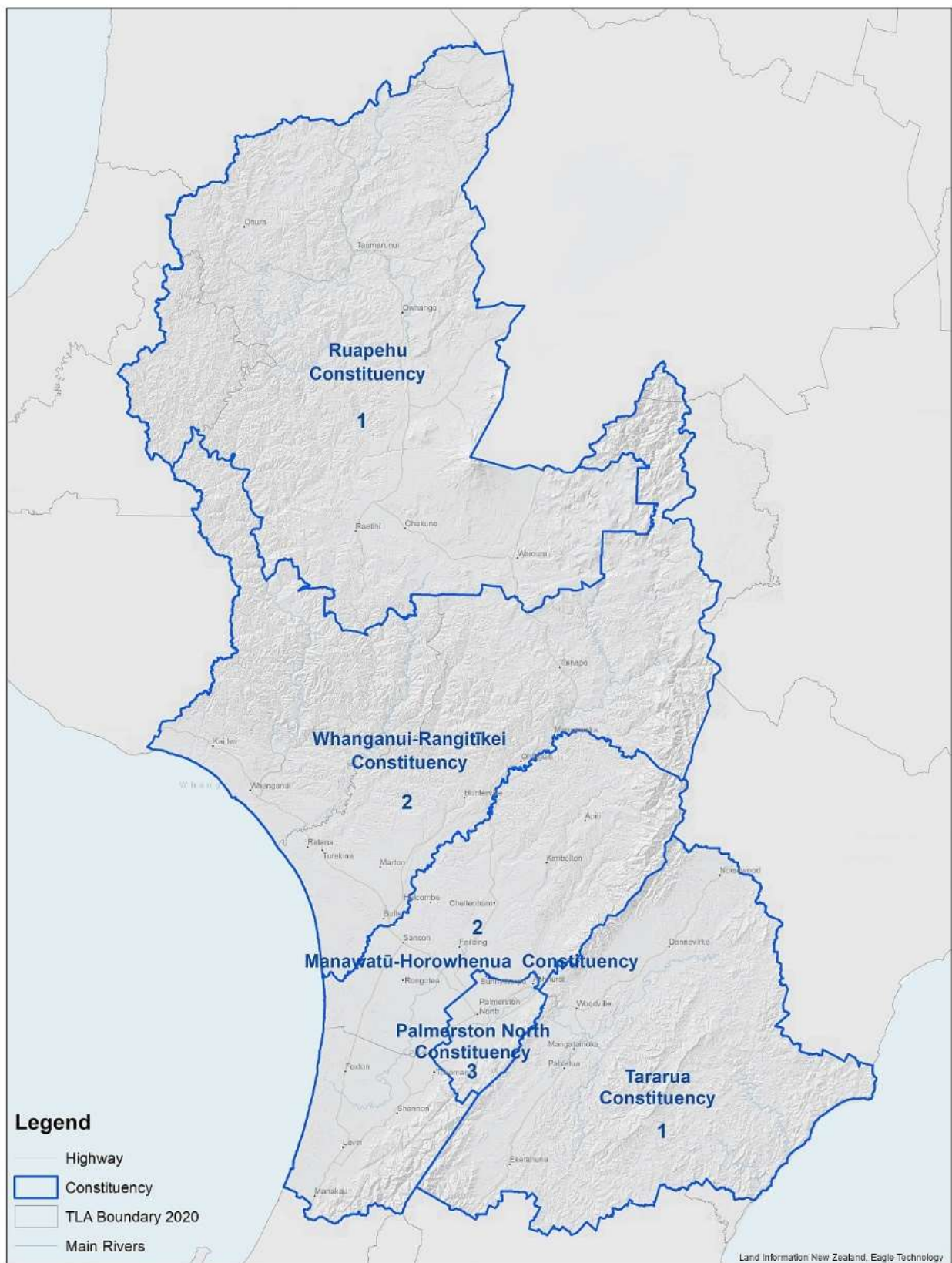


**Option 5 – Separate general constituencies for Ruapehu and Tararua, other general constituencies geographically based on territorial authority boundaries where possible with a total of 9 general councillors and 1 Māori constituency, 2 Māori constituency councillors. 5 constituencies with Whanganui and Rangitīkei, and Manawatū and Horowhenua combined.**

<b>Constituencies</b>	<b>Population*</b>	<b>Number of councillors per constituency</b>	<b>Population per councillor</b>	<b>Deviation from region average population per councillor</b>	<b>% deviation from region average population per councillor</b>
<b>Ruapehu</b>	<b>9,130</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9,130</b>	<b>-15,129</b>	<b>-62.36</b>
<b>Whanganui-Rangitīkei</b>	<b>52,450</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>26,225</b>	<b>1,966</b>	<b>8.10</b>
<b>Palmerston North</b>	<b>80,700</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>26,900</b>	<b>2,641</b>	<b>10.89</b>
<b>Manawatū - Horowhenua</b>	<b>60,050</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>30,025</b>	<b>5,766</b>	<b>23.77</b>
<b>Tararua</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16,000</b>	<b>-8,259</b>	<b>-34.05</b>
<b>Total General</b>	<b>218,330</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>24,259</b>		
<b>Māori Constituency</b>	<b>35,840</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17,920</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>254,170</b>	<b>11</b>			

In this option Ruapehu and Tararua remain as separate constituencies. Both are over-represented, Ruapehu at -62.36% and Tararua at -34.05%. Manawatū-Horowhenua is under-represented at 23.77%. Palmerston North at 10.89% is outside the margin. Whanganui-Rangitīkei complies with the +/- 10% rule.

The total number of councillors is 11 – within the preference not to exceed 12.



2021 Representation Review  
Option 5  
(11 Members)

**Option 6 – All general constituencies geographically based on territorial authority boundaries where possible (TLA ward boundaries) with a total of 9 general councillors and 1 Māori constituency, 2 Māori constituency councillors. 4 general constituencies: Ruapehu/ Manawatū and the Northern and Central Wards of Rangitikei; Whanganui and the Southern Ward of Rangitikei; Palmerston North; and, Horowhenua/Tararua**

<b>Constituencies</b>	<b>Population*</b>	<b>Number of councillors per constituency</b>	<b>Population per councillor</b>	<b>Deviation from region average population per councillor</b>	<b>% deviation from region average population per councillor</b>
<b>Ruapehu-Northern and Central Rangitikei-Manawatū</b>	<b>47,590</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23,795</b>	<b>-464</b>	<b>-1.91</b>
<b>Whanganui-South Rangitikei</b>	<b>43,040</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>21,520</b>	<b>-2,739</b>	<b>-11.29</b>
<b>Palmerston North</b>	<b>80,700</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>26,900</b>	<b>2,641</b>	<b>10.89</b>
<b>Horowhenua-Tararua</b>	<b>47,000</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23,500</b>	<b>-759</b>	<b>-3.13</b>
<b>Total General</b>	<b>218,330</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>24,259</b>		
<b>Māori Constituency</b>	<b>35,840</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17,920</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>254,170</b>	<b>11</b>			

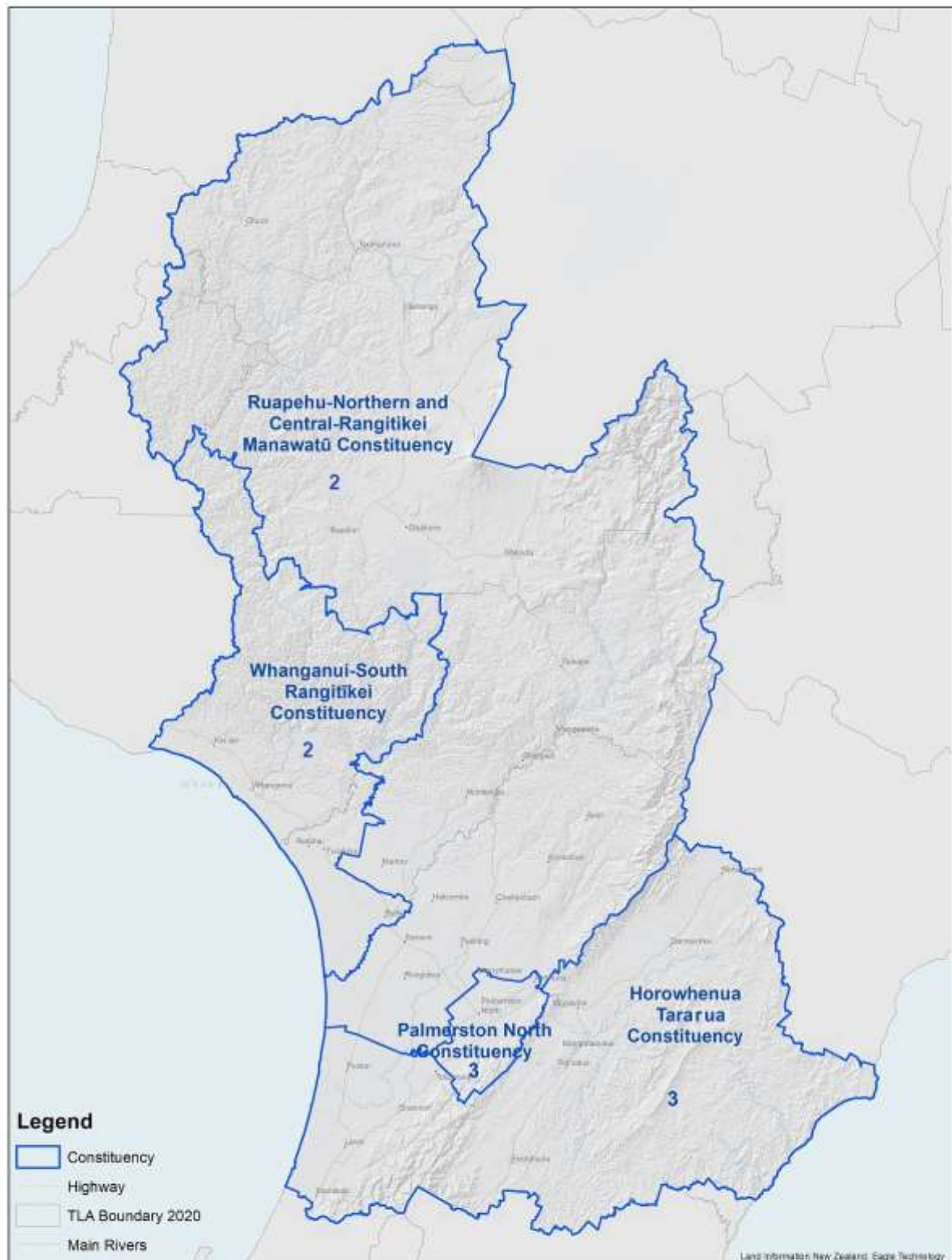
Option 6 creates 4 constituencies using constituent territorial local authority boundaries as constituency boundaries except splitting Rangitikei so that the Southern Ward is included with Whanganui and the Central and Northern Wards are included with Ruapehu and Manawatū. These 4 constituencies have populations in approximate multiples of 24,259 so that Horizons ends up with 9 members elected from 4 general constituencies with variances from the average as much as possible within the +/- 10% margin. For 9 councillors the range is 21,833 - 24,259 - 26,685.

In this option, Whanganui-South Rangitikei is slightly over-represented at -11.29% and Palmerston North is slightly under-represented at 10.89%. The other two general constituencies comply.

Note that Rangitikei is also conducting a representation review and that may include consideration of their ward arrangements.

The total number of councillors is 11 – within the preference not to exceed 12





2021 Representation Review

Option 6  
(11 Members)



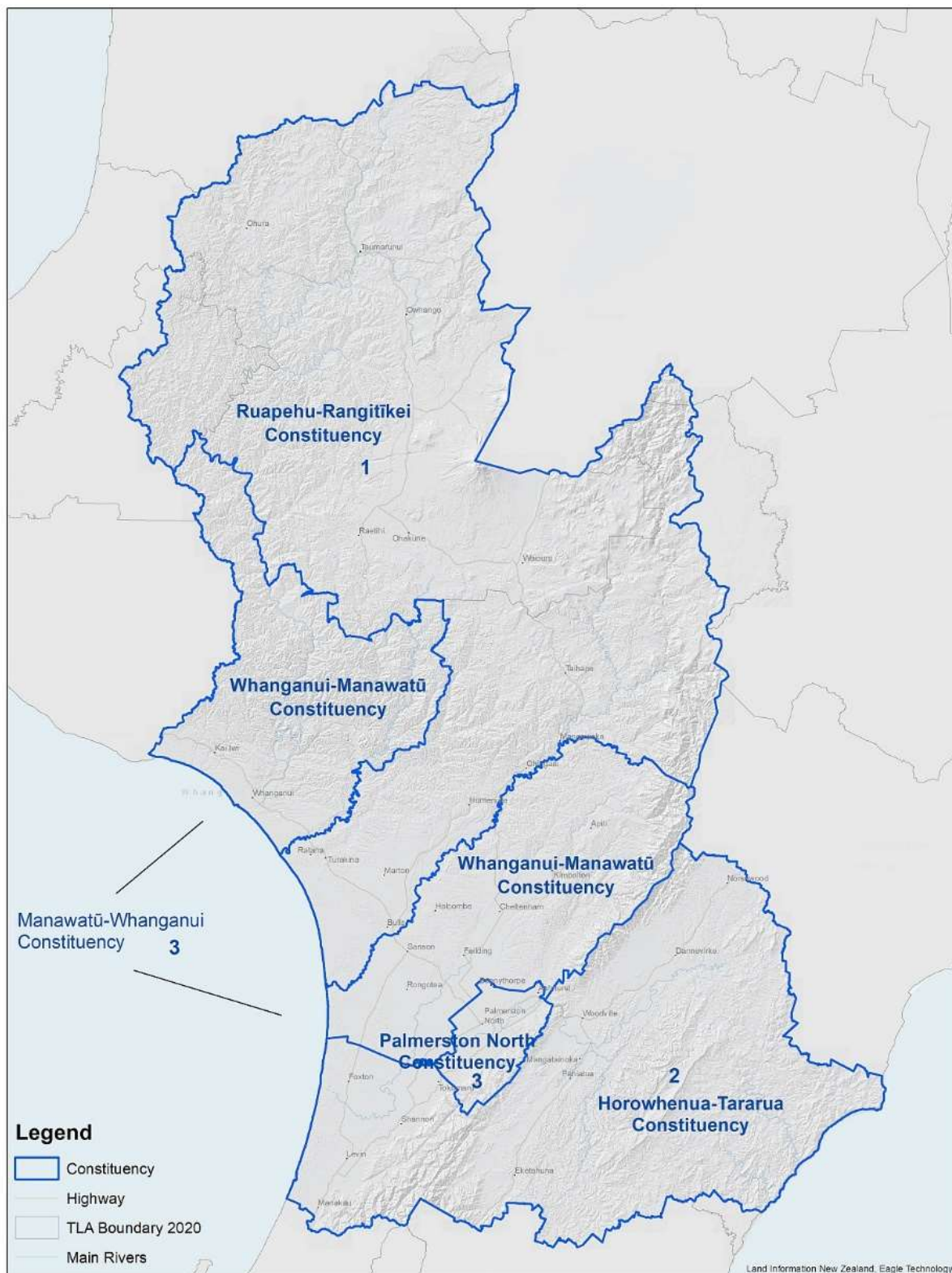
**Option 7 – 4 general constituencies combining Ruapehu with Rangitīkei, Whanganui with Manawatū and Horowhenua with Tararua with a total of 9 general councillors and 1 Māori constituency, 2 Māori constituency councillors.**

<b>Constituencies</b>	<b>Population*</b>	<b>Number of councillors per constituency</b>	<b>Population per councillor</b>	<b>Deviation from region average population per councillor</b>	<b>% deviation from region average population per councillor</b>
<b>Ruapehu-Rangitīkei</b>	<b>21,880</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21,880</b>	<b>-2,379</b>	<b>-9.81</b>
<b>Whanganui-Manawatū</b>	<b>68,750</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>22,917</b>	<b>-1,342</b>	<b>-5.53</b>
<b>Palmerston North</b>	<b>80,700</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>26,900</b>	<b>2,641</b>	<b>10.89</b>
<b>Horowhenua-Tararua</b>	<b>47,000</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23,500</b>	<b>-759</b>	<b>-3.13</b>
<b>Total General</b>	<b>218,330</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>24,259</b>		
<b>Māori Constituency</b>	<b>35,840</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17,920</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>254,170</b>	<b>11</b>			

This option is an example that getting the figures close to the +/- 10% margin is possible by making combinations proportionate. In option 7 Ruapehu and Rangitīkei are combined, as are Whanganui and Manawatū and Horowhenua and Tararua. However, Whanganui and Manawatu are not contiguous and it may be very difficult to represent the communities of interest effectively. Only the Palmerston North Constituency is outside the +/- 10% margin being slightly under-represented at 10.89%. The other 3 constituencies comply with the +/- 10% rule.

The total number of councillors is 11 – within the preference not to exceed 12.





## Analysis and Commentary

Any movement that brings the options closer to the fair representation guidelines may make it easier for the regional community and the Commission to agree to such a set of arrangements. A note of caution: the numbers used here are indicative only. They are still to be finalised and certified.

Options 2, 3, 6 and 7 seem to be best in this respect. All of those options have 11 councillors in total. However option 7 does include the non-contiguous constituency made up of Whanganui and Manawatū and will probably prove difficult to support.

A key question would be whether the level of deviation in a preferred option would be considered by the Commission to be too great a level of under or over representation. It may well be the case, although that is not certain. The Commission has stated “that the ‘+/-10% rule’ is not an absolute rule. It is a standard that councils and the Commission should do their best to achieve. However, if it is not possible to do so without limiting effective representation of communities of interest than non-compliance is permissible”. For regions there has always been a little more flexibility in meeting the fairness rule.

A key issue with respect to the options that join constituent territorial local authorities to form the constituencies of the region is whether that arrangement provides for the most effective representation of communities of interests. For example, in option 2 there are the following combinations of territorial local authorities to form constituencies: Whanganui-Ruapehu, Manawatū-Rangitikei, and Horowhenua-Tararua. Put another way; are the district areas so different from each other that they require separate representation to have their differing interests and voices effectively heard? Whether a single constituency based on each TLA would provide effective representation and focus on the communities of interest and their issues, should be carefully considered. In the more populous combined constituencies the electors have a choice of more than 1 councillor (e.g. options 2, 3 and 6). Councillors may have differing views on this matter. It is noted there is absolutely no requirement for candidates to live in the constituency they seek to represent.

Another area of critique relates to overall councillor numbers and good governance. Most Councillors, at the workshop, expressed views to the effect that a total of not more than 12 councillors was the optimal number for the good governance of the region.

While the Council expressed a general preference for 2 rather than 1 Māori councillors in order to achieve effective representation, there was no consensus on whether to have 1 Māori constituency with 2 councillors or 2 Māori constituencies each with 1 councillor.

The Council requested that, as far as possible, constituent territorial local authority boundaries are used as constituency boundaries but if that is not possible then whole wards of constituent territorial local authority boundaries be used. Only option 6 uses territorial local authority wards as constituency boundaries. All the other options contain the whole of the district in a constituency.

The Council also preferred that, in order to provide both Ruapehu and Tararua with the most effective representation, that serious consideration again be given to both those constituencies being recognised as separate and distinct communities of interest and that interest, with the degree of isolation in both being such that they should continue to have separate representation. Options 1, 4, 4A and 5 have both Ruapehu and Tararua as separate constituencies with a representative. All have constituencies well outside the +/- 10% margin.

## Summary

The above analysis provides further 'food for thought' on the options that Councillors indicated they wished to consider more closely at their workshop. None of the options identified for further assessment at the workshop strictly comply with the +/-10% fair representation requirement. Options 2, 3 and 6 are the closest to complying with the fairness requirement, if option 7 is discounted because it joins the non-contiguous areas of Whanganui and Manawatū.

There are arguments than can be made in support of some over-representation for the more isolated constituencies with smaller numbers of councillors.

If Councillors, on reflection, are not happy adopting one of the short-listed proposals they must turn their minds back to the broader pool of options that may involve less than ideal combinations of communities of interest (that diminish effective representation), make adjustments to the constituency structure, or review the optimum number of councillors.

We end this discussion document with an important thought. When considering representation, where councillors are elected from and who by is, in a legal sense, only important from an electoral perspective. Once councillors get to the council table, they have a duty to represent and work in the best interests of the whole region regardless of their electoral constituency. Guidance from Councillors, as staff prepare a report and a draft proposal for consideration, is sought.

Darryl Griffin, [electionz.com](http://electionz.com)