

Date:	Tuesday, 28 May 2024
Time:	1.00pm
Location:	Council Chamber 107 Te Heuheu Street Taupō

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

MEMBERSHIP

Chairperson Mayor David Trewavas

Deputy Chairperson Cr Kevin Taylor

Members

- Cr Duncan Campbell
- Cr Karam Fletcher
- Cr Sandra Greenslade
- Cr Kylie Leonard
- Cr Danny Loughlin
- Cr Anna Park
- Cr Christine Rankin
- Cr Rachel Shepherd
- Cr Kirsty Trueman
- Cr Yvonne Westerman
- Cr John Williamson

Quorum 7

Julie Gardyne
Chief Executive

Order Of Business

5 **Ngā Kaupapa Here Me Ngā Whakataunga | Policy and Decision Making**

- 5.6 Submission to the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill Select Committee3

5.6 SUBMISSION TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ELECTORAL LEGISLATION AND MĀORI WARDS AND MĀORI CONSTITUENCIES) AMENDMENT BILL SELECT COMMITTEE

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Authorised by: Nick Carroll, Policy Manager

TE PŪTAKE | PURPOSE

This report seeks Council's approval for a submission to be made to the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill Select Committee. It will be tabled with the draft submission as a late agenda item at the Council meeting to be held on 28 May.

Both Taituarā and Local Government New Zealand are preparing submissions on behalf of the sector which officers recommend be endorsed as part of Taupō District Council's submission.

NGĀ TŪTOHUNGA | RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Council approves the submission on the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill.

Or

That Council approves the submission on the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill with amendments.

NGĀ TĀPIRIHANGA | ATTACHMENTS

1. Submission to the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill Select Committee [↓](#)

**GREAT LAKE TAUPŌ**

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27 May 2024

Submission on the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill

Dear Sir / Madam

This letter represents a submission from the Taupō District Council on the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill, published 24 May 2024.

The Government's publicity and politicising of this bill means that many may believe that they are voting in support of democracy, and fair and proportionate representation – when in fact they are voting against it.

Māori make up a significant proportion of the population in Taupō District

Taupō district has a population of around 42,000 people, of whom around 30% are Māori. Around 19% of the voting population are on the Māori electoral roll.¹ Māori are significant landowners and ratepayers in the district.

All that is allowed for Māori is proportionate representation

We are aware that some individuals in the community disagree with the idea of Māori wards, in principle. We believe that most of the community support the ideas of:

- Democracy and equal voting rights
- Proportionate representation
- The value of having a diversity of opinions contributing to decision-making (on behalf of a diverse community).

Indeed, this is the exact purpose of our Māori ward. It ensures there are 2 Māori representatives out of 12 at the decision-making table (17 %), to represent the 19% of registered voters of the Māori electoral role. This is simply a proportionate level of representation – and these numbers are set out in the Electoral Act 2001.

Through public consultation we have seen that opposition stems from a common misconception that proportionate representation can be achieved democratically through equal voting rights without a Māori ward.

¹ Local Government Commission, November 2023, *Māori Electoral Population (MEP) and the General Electoral Population (GEP) for each region and territorial authority district as at 30 June 2023*.

This is categorically not the case. While that may be true in a one person = one vote scenario, where each person votes for a single person to represent them (akin to the party vote system for central government) – this is not the voting system set out for local government by statute.

For local government, "voters may cast as many votes as there are positions to be filled."² As an example, we have a ward that has seven elected members which enables voters in that ward to vote for seven different people. This is not a one person, one vote scenario. The majority is able to elect all Councillors by outvoting any minority for each vacancy. It leaves little opportunity for any minority community (whether it be a minority issue, or people, or geographic community) to achieve fair representation. This is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Illustrating the difference caused by multiple votes.

	One person, 1 vote, for 7 vacancies	One person, 7 votes each
	15% of votes guarantees a councillor (i.e. >1/7)	Most votes determines each councillor
Vacancy 1	A 70% majority community might expect to determine 5 councillors	70% majority community determines this councillor
Vacancy 2		70% majority community determines this councillor
Vacancy 3		70% majority community determines this councillor
Vacancy 4		70% majority community determines this councillor
Vacancy 5		70% majority community determines this councillor
Vacancy 6	A 30% minority community might expect to determine 2 councillors	70% majority community determines this councillor
Vacancy 7		70% majority community determines this councillor
		A 30% minority community is unlikely to get any representation.

This is exact reason why geographical wards are required. Without wards, even large and significant communities would not be able to achieve representation. Even a segment of the community as large as 30% such as Māori in Taupō District, struggle to achieve any representation (let alone proportionate representation) against a majority who is allowed to vote for each vacancy.

This all but ensures low representation, as empirically proven, rather than any unwillingness to participate in democracy by minority communities.

² Section 5A of the Electoral Act 2001.

A majority should not be allowed to veto proportionate representation for a minority

Allowing a binding poll to determine whether or not there are Māori wards, allows a majority to veto the proportionate representation of a significant, but minority group.

Our community is already grappling with the increased cost of living. Reintroducing poll provisions at the expense of our ratepayers would exacerbate these problems, reignite divisive debates, and perpetuate discrimination, negatively impacting our Māori community. Are we to use Council's meagre budgets to try and inform and educate the public so that they can be fully informed?

This bill is anti-democratic. We should not undermine facts or democracy for ideology. If you cannot disprove the statements in this letter, you cannot in good conscience support this bill.

Taupō District has had a positive experience with our new Māori ward

Council introduced a Māori ward for the 2022 local election as a method among other recommendations to increase and enhance Māori representation and participation in our local government decision-making processes. Iwi/Māori throughout the District expressed that while achieving genuine partnership is the ultimate goal, the creation of Māori wards was seen as a necessary advancement towards genuine partnership.

Our two elected Māori ward councillors have provided invaluable contributions at the decision-making table enhancing the Council's comprehension of the significance of integrating Iwi/hapū aspirations into our strategic and operational delivery frameworks. Furthermore, reflecting the views of their constituents, they have been instrumental in overseeing the stewardship of our community's natural resources and taonga from a Te Ao Māori perspective.

They represent 2 out of 12 councillors, providing proportionate representation for our large Māori community. They contribute to decision-making and represent their constituents as well as consider the wider needs of the District just the same as the other (geographical) ward councillors.

Taupō District Council is committed to working in partnership with Iwi/Māori

Taupō District Council's Māori engagement strategy, long-term plan, significance and engagement policy, and district plan collectively underscore the Council's dedication to fulfilling its responsibilities to Iwi/Māori and facilitating avenues for them to pursue their aspirations as partners under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Moreover, we acknowledge their significant contributions to our district, and that fostering robust relationships with Iwi/Māori empowers us to achieve outcomes that benefit the broader community and environment beyond what we could achieve independently.

This partnership approach is supported by our Māori ward Councillors who provide valuable insights and knowledge on the range of issues Council deals with. Without a seat at the table much of this partnership work would be more difficult, as Māori may feel they are having to work against the system rather than in partnership with leaders who understand them and their views.

'Kua tawhiti kē tō haerenga mai, kia kore e haere tonu. He nui rawa ō mahi kia kore e mahi tōnu' – 'We have come too far not to go further. We have done too much not to do more' [Sir Hemi Henare]

Yours sincerely

Mayor David Trewavas
Taupō District Council