

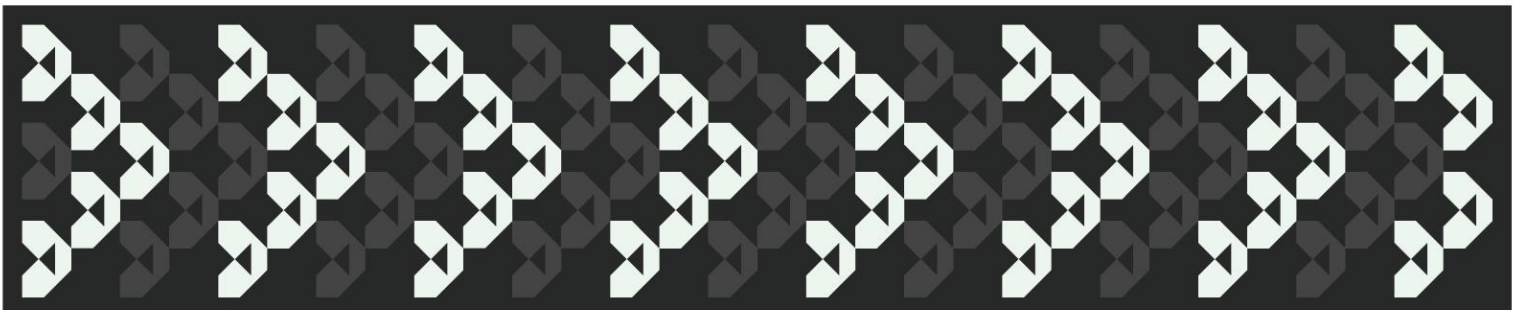


**Te Arotake i te Anamata
mō Ngā Kaunihera**
Review into the Future for
Local Government

December 2022

Engagement summary

Getting to the draft report



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Background and context

Te Arotake i te Anamata mō Ngā Kaunihera – the Review into the Future for Local Government, led by an independent panel, has engaged with communities and organisations around Aotearoa New Zealand to consider how local government might maximise wellbeing and prosperity in the future.

The review process is taking place in three phases. It involves engagement with local and central government, hapū/iwi, Māori, the business sector, community organisations, young people, and the wider public. This report gives an overview of the engagement that informed the draft report, *He mata whāriki, he matawhānui*.

So far, the Review has engaged with:

- representatives from 88 organisations
- all 78 local authorities, plus 9 local government organisations
- 17 central government agencies
- political parties
- 55 iwi and 20 hapū or pan-iwi and hapū groupings, and Māori special interest rōpū
- over 5000 members of the public.

Principles of engagement

- **Purposefulness:** We respect people's time and only take what we need.
- **Reciprocity:** We aim to give something back to those who engage with us, model the spirit of partnership, and share outputs.
- **Authenticity:** We are open to all ideas, listen with intent, anyone who wants to have a say, can; we don't prejudge the value of their input.
- **Bravery:** We are not afraid of hard conversations or being challenged.
- **Openness:** We share outputs from engagements with others.

Our engagement approach

We have actively sought a diverse range of views to develop our recommendations for the future for local government, governance, and democracy. We wanted to understand the issues and hear a diverse range of perspectives that stretch our thinking about what is possible.

Our engagement programme

Our engagement programme encouraged widespread participation through online and in-person workshops and wānanga, webinars, online surveys, stakeholder conversations, and local government meetings.

Our programme required flexibility to manage the challenges of changing COVID-19 alert levels. We used digital channels, worked with existing networks, and drew on the innovative engagement approaches of others.

Engagement phases

Phase 1: Scoping and soundings

May–August 2021

The Panel focused on scoping the current state and known issues; work programme planning; soundings and conversations with a selection of local and central government stakeholders, iwi and Māori, businesses, special interest groups, and community stakeholders. Our engagement with iwi and Māori concentrated on building relationships and determining the most appropriate form of engagement during the Review. We also had introductory discussions with representatives from all parties, with the exception of the Māori Party. COVID-19 impacted the scheduling of some conversations.

Phase 2: Research, analysis, and broader engagement for the draft report

October 2021–September 2022

In Phase 2 the Review undertook a broad series of engagements on issues identified in our interim report, *Ārewa ake te Kaupapa*, to develop and test solutions for formal consultation through the draft report. This work addressed the priority questions (discussed in more detail later in this document) and reflected our Terms of Reference.

Phase 3: Formal submissions and final report

October 2022–April 2023

This final phase will seek formal submissions from stakeholders and the public on the recommendations in the draft report. Submissions will be accepted through an online portal.

Engagement topics

Soundings

We began engagement with mainly local government organisations and iwi to help take a future-focused look at the local governance system and identify priority questions and lines of inquiry. This engagement (which we called soundings) included a series of workshops held with local government elected members and council staff, at which questions were posed and resulting ideas were captured by the Panel.

Focus of soundings

Several Panel members attended each sounding. The soundings began with introductions and setting the scene by outlining the Review's Terms of Reference and intended process. Participants were then asked to work in small groups, each with large sheets of paper. We asked for views on two questions (with minor phrasing variations).

1. What have we got now that we don't want to lose? (What are our existing strengths and successes?)
2. What opportunities should local government focus on that will help support the wellbeing of communities in both the immediate (next few years) and longer terms (up to 30 years)?

Priority questions

Following the publication of the interim report, the Panel socialised their early thinking. The Review developed an online survey to support this engagement and streamline feedback from the public. It was based on the five priority questions from the interim report.

1. How should the system of local governance be reshaped so it can adapt to future challenges and enable communities to thrive?
2. What are the future functions, roles, and essential features of New Zealand's system of local government?
3. How might a system of local governance embody authentic partnership under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, creating conditions for shared prosperity and wellbeing?
4. What needs to change so local government and its leaders can best reflect and respond to the communities they serve?
5. What should change in local governance funding and financing to ensure viability and sustainability, fairness and equity, and maximum wellbeing?

These priority questions were intended to open conversations about the future system of local governance, and how it might most effectively create the conditions in which New Zealand communities can thrive even while addressing the significant changes and challenges of the future.

Five key shifts

In our interim report we outlined our priority questions. In researching and discussing these questions, we identified five key shifts that we believe will be required for the system to meet the needs of Aotearoa New Zealand.

- 1. Strengthened local democracy**

From low public trust and participation in local government to renewal of local democracy that builds a foundation for the future of a strengthened and inclusive local democracy.

2. Stronger focus on wellbeing

From traditional focus on infrastructure service delivery to a focus on the complex wellbeing challenges of the 21st century, including economic and social equity and climate change action.

3. Authentic relationships with iwi/hapū/ Māori

From relationships that are variable in understanding and commitment to an authentic relationship that enables self-determination, shared authority, and prosperity.

4. Genuine partnership between central and local government

From low trust and confidence in each other to genuine partners able to deliver wellbeing outcomes locally.

5. More equitable funding

From beneficiary-based funding principles to a funding system that equitably supports communities to thrive.

While engaging with councils, organisations, and the public, we asked them to consider the following questions.

- What else should the Panel consider to advance these key shifts?
- What local context and critical issues should the Panel take into account when considering the design of the future system?
- Given the direction of the key shifts what subsequent structural/organisational/system changes should occur?

Engagement process

Soundings

Overview of findings

The soundings produced several broad themes, reflected in the comments we received. This section provides an overview of these comments and associated themes.

Representation and governance

Local decision-makers are best placed to make certain decisions, as they will understand issues better and have stronger local links with community and local service providers and organisations. This understanding comes from elected members being proactively accessible, visible, approachable, and responsive to the community, as well as living locally and being part of the community.

Having knowledge of local people, environments, issues, and service providers means local government can respond more quickly than central government to issues raised by individuals or communities, or in response to emergency or civil defence events (for which it is particularly important). We heard comments about the success of the local government response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There was interest in increasing levels of engagement and participation with local government, particularly by young people and those from diverse backgrounds. Some considered that lowering the voting age would help stimulate the interest of younger people. Many thought that increasing the amount that elected members get paid would make these roles more attractive and feasible for younger people and those from diverse backgrounds. Several suggested that a turnover in representation was healthy and suggested term limits for elected members. Some considered that there should be fewer elected members and more members appointed based on relevant expertise.

There were two streams of thought about consultation. One related to avoiding consultation fatigue and only consulting on those things of interest to people (for example, on projects rather than on business-as-usual topics). The other stream was to use digital technologies and social media platforms to allow the public to provide feedback or raise issues more widely.

The local government system, co-governance, and partnerships

Retaining, if not expanding, the local government system is important. During engagement, there were references to localism (citizens having more influence in the decisions that affect their day-to-day lives and the way their community develops) and to subsidiarity (where central government only undertakes activities that cannot be feasibly undertaken on a regional or local basis).

The planning cycle and associated audit processes featured throughout, with suggestions that these could be simplified and made less onerous. There were also suggestions that the election cycle could be lengthened to every four or five years rather than three.

We received suggestions for more education and ongoing professional development for elected members about their role and strengthening existing codes of conduct. Similarly, we saw comments recommending wider public education about the role of local government, for example through civics education in schools.

Many wanted a commitment to co-governance with Māori, mana whenua, and hapū/iwi. Some regions felt they already had well-established relationships, while other regions saw this as an area of priority. Some sought a model for co-governance or provided examples of arrangements or projects involving co-governance.

There is scope for improving relationships and trust between central and local government. Suggestions for strengthening the relationship included:

- secondments or other exchanges between local and central government
- sharing office space in the regions
- central government agencies appointing regional leads
- devolution of funding and delivery to regions.

There were varied views on amalgamation and the value of unitary councils – some preferred a focus on greater coordination through shared services (such as information technology and procurement systems) or coordinating on projects that cross several regional boundaries rather than a formal amalgamation. The term ‘one size does not fit all’ was heard on various occasions.

Roles and functions

Local government undertakes a diverse range of roles and functions, despite limited funding, and is adept at juggling and prioritising these.

Central government mandates new roles and functions for local government. Local government wants to retain roles and functions relating to infrastructure (for example, Three Waters, roading, transport etc), and to broaden into providing social infrastructure. Local government performs these roles and functions well because it is familiar with the environment, service providers, and community needs.

Local government is committed to improving the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of communities. Some comments suggested it should have an expanded role in housing and public health, if not broader social services and funding. This could be an oversight and governance role or direct provision of services. Since the environment and responding to climate change are important parts of wellbeing, participants felt that local government should continue to play a role in these areas.

Funding and finance

Generally, participants felt that local government needs more funding, and that relying on rates paid on properties and petrol tax is not sustainable, nor are the rules regarding debt. There is a need for a broader funding base involving the devolution of central government funds, with most suggesting that the GST collected on rates in a region be diverted for local use.

Some expressed a low level of trust between central and local government and that local people were more likely to trust local decision-makers. Local government was seen as more responsive (particularly in emergency situations) and better networked (in terms of service and infrastructure providers and contractors).

Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) Conferences

The Panel presented the kaupapa of the Review at the LGNZ Conference in 2021.

In July 2022, the Panel gave a plenary address and held a two-hour workshop to explore some of the key themes they planned to address in the draft report.

Online surveys

Between October 2021 and June 2022, the Review received 285 survey completions across 3 online surveys, discussing both the priority questions and the five key shifts.

We received 240 responses to the priority questions survey from October 2021 to 30 June 2022. Of those who completed the survey:

- the largest industry/stakeholder group was local government (32%) followed by the public (28%)
- the largest proportion of respondents were from Christchurch (12%) followed by Auckland (11%), Wellington (9%), and Tauranga (8%).

Key themes from the online surveys

Council capability	Increase education and training for iwi, council, and the public on government, the economy, history, and culture.
Te Tiriti partnership	An authentic partnership should look at a formal constitutional role, te ao Māori, and what partnership and co-governance is. Tikanga Māori and te ao Māori values should be at the centre of all recruitment and retention strategies.
Funding	More diverse funding models are needed to develop a wellbeing narrative. Specific interrogation of the rates funding model was noted as a necessary step, in particular, the removal of GST from rates was mentioned multiple times. Reference to current financial concerns given the rising cost of living appeared in more recent responses.
Representation	Councils should reflect communities to increase diversity and give voice to the voiceless. Requests for more Māori/iwi, disabled, immigrant, and youth representation featured throughout the responses.
Climate change	We need to adopt more aggressive measures to reduce fossil fuel emissions and combat the effects of climate change on communities.
Engagement	Improve consultation and involve communities more in local government, including through deliberative processes and engagement practices, and by improving transparency of communication.

Community workshops

In late 2021 and early 2022, we held nine workshops where 55 representative organisations and individuals meet with the Panel to share the views of their communities. We held workshops for the following groups:

- rainbow community
- disabled community
- Pacific elected members

- former refugees
- former migrants
- Asian New Zealanders
- rural community
- environmental NGOs
- Wellington City Mission.

The community workshops focused on two key questions:

- What does wellbeing (e.g., physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social) look like 30 years from now for the community you represent in New Zealand?
- What are the most important features of a future local governance system?

The key themes from the discussions were:

- the digital divide
- accessible engagement
- listening to the iwi/Māori voice
- embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- increasing capability and capacity of council staff
- protecting our diverse communities
- role of local government.

Other workshops

In April, May, and June of 2022, we held three workshops for specific organisations, attended by approximately 100 representatives. The workshops focused on the five key shifts from the perspectives of their industries. The organisations who attended the workshops were:

- Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA)
- Public Libraries of New Zealand (PLNZ)
- Museums Aotearoa
- Volunteer New Zealand.

The key themes which emerged from the discussions were:

- roles and position
- engagement
- wellbeing
- funding
- partnership with iwi/Māori
- cultural competency
- working with local and central government.

Focus Groups

Business Reference Group

In June 2021, selected business representatives were invited to join the Business Reference Group to be the voice of the business sector into the Review. During Phase 2, the Review met with the Business Reference Group three times, with discussions including feedback on the interim report and the five key shifts.

Māori Thought Leaders Rōpū

In June 2021, selected representatives were invited to join the Māori Thought Leaders Rōpū to provide Māori perspectives to the review. During Phase 2, the Review met three times with the rōpū.

These meetings have covered the Panel's thinking at the time with a focus on Te Tiriti and the Māori perspective.

Webinars

Local government webinars

The Review hosted two local government webinars about the interim report, which were attended by 278 individuals.

Webinars	Attendees
14 October 2021	154
15 October 2021	124

During the webinars, the Panel presented and responded to attendees' questions.

General public webinars

The Review hosted one public webinar in 2021 attended by 18 individuals.

Webinars	Attendees
21 October 2021	18

This webinar discussed the interim report. During the webinar, the Panel presented and responded to attendees' questions.

Public webinars

The Review hosted two public webinars in 2022, attended by 115 individuals. All those who have interacted with the Review were invited to join.

Webinars	Attendees
17 June 2022	85

 20 June 2022

30

These webinars discussed the five key shifts. During the webinars, the Panel presented and responded to attendees' questions.

Council roadshow

During March and April 2022, the Panel went on a council roadshow to meet with all 78 local authorities. The majority of meetings were attended by elected members and staff from each council, along with community boards and iwi in some cases.

The council roadshows focused on the five key shifts from the perspective of their local authorities and communities.

The key themes from the discussions were:

Key Shift	Themes
Strengthened local democracy	Public understanding of local government Voting and elections Public consultation & engagement Māori representation Elected members Constitutional protection
Stronger focus on wellbeing	Definition of wellbeing Local role in wellbeing (communities and local government) Ability to undertake roles Working with central government on wellbeing
Authentic relationships with hapū/iwi/Māori	Local government and hapū/iwi and Māori working effectively together Creating/moving towards co-governance Causes/symptoms of relationship tensions
Genuine partnership between central and local government	Central government/local regional presence There is a need for alignment on outcomes/processes There is a need for understanding, respect, and trust Relationships and interactions with ministers/mayors/MPs
More equitable funding	There is a need for more sustainable/reliable funding There are current funding constraints Need for more flexible funding

There is a need for more joined-up agreement/approach with central government

Kōrero with hapū and iwi

Between May and July 2022, we spoke with many representatives from iwi and hapū across the motu. The kōrero focused on the five key shifts.

In meeting with representatives and leaders from hapū and iwi we were told that a future system of local government and governance should have authentic and mutually beneficial relationships. The relationship between iwi, hapū, and local government must actively embody Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

During these hui, the Panel heard that whilst there are some good examples where relationships between local government and hapū and iwi are getting stronger, there is still far to go. It was clear that there are ad hoc approaches from local government in how it engages and works with hapū and iwi across Aotearoa. The mātauranga that was shared, and emergent themes, have provided a rich and broad perspective on the issues and opportunities for change. From the kōrero, some key principles emerged. These will underpin and inform the work ahead in the Review and any future reform.

Key principle

Te Tiriti and genuine partnerships must be at the heart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be led by te ao Māori, tikanga and values Know the iwi in the local context Build trust in the relationships with shared experience and open, honest dialogue Continue to work with iwi and Māori in developing place-based solutions Support increased cultural competency across the system Enable resourcing for participation
Te Tiriti and decision-making must be at the heart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased diversity and representation of hapū and iwi in the decision-making processes for areas of shared interest. Ability to exercise rangatiratanga Be whānau-centric and located at the community level
Acknowledge the progress made	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not undo the existing progress made in agreed and formal arrangements resulting from Treaty settlements Learn from them and build on the foundations
Plan intergenerationally and holistically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate te ao Māori models of wellbeing Ensure decision-making reflects good process and decisions for generations to come

Cross-party engagement

Throughout the Review, we've engaged or reached out to representatives from political parties:

- Green Party
- National Party
- Act Party
- Te Pāti Māori.

Big conversations

We explored the 'big conversations' related to the complex challenges of the kaupapa of the Review. To do so, we invited international and New Zealand-based experts to help further our thinking about:

- te ao Māori and local governance
- democracy and local governance
- wellbeing and local governance
- the purpose of local government in the future.

Get Vocal in Your Local

Between the launch in April and the end of June 2022, nearly 5,000 people used our digital engagement tool, Get Vocal in Your Local (GVIYL), to get loud about the future for local government. Due to GVIYL's focus on educating and informing, those people also learned about the upcoming local elections and some key facts about their territorial authority.

GVIYL targeted rangatahi and the demographics of those who responded matched that – the three age groups with the largest number of responses were 21- to 30-year-olds, 16- to 20-year-olds, and those 15 years and under. Responses came from around the motu, with the most responses from people in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch.

Users were asked to identify a vision ('Your dream') for their place in 2050, related to a wellbeing area. 'Sustainable' was the most popular response at 31%, followed by 'safe for everyone' (24%) and 'economically thriving' (19%).

Rank	"Your dream"	Percentage
1	Sustainable	31%
2	Safe for everyone	24%
3	Economically thriving	19%
4	Welcoming to all	9%
5	Easy to get around	9%

6

Culturally rich

8%

When it came to voting age, 54% of respondents wanted it lowered from 18 to 16 years. 32% were not in favour of lowering the voting age, and 13% were unsure.

16- and 17-year-olds were the group that were most in favour (62.8%), followed by 18- to 24-year-olds (57.8%). Other groups under 45 were also largely in favour, with 56.5% of 25- to 34-year-olds and 55.8% of 35- to 44-year-olds in favour. Those over 45 were least in favour of lowering the voting age (45%).

It should be noted that GVIYL's findings are much higher than a 2021 University of Otago study, where only 19.2% of the sample (all 18- to 24-year-olds) supported reducing the voting age to 16 years.

The GVIYL responses also showed that people want to be more involved in decision-making. 62% of people said they wanted to be 'very' or 'extremely' involved when people in power were making decisions about the issue that mattered most to them, but only 26% said they currently felt 'very' or 'extremely' involved.

There is an appetite for more participatory and deliberative approaches. 69% agreed or strongly agreed that everyday people could resolve differences through kōrero and make the right decision for their communities together (for example, in a citizens' assembly). There was also support for communities having more say in how decisions were made and how money was spent.

Engagement participants

We engaged with many individuals and organisations from across Aotearoa New Zealand as we researched and prepared our draft report. This section provides an overview of these groups.

Local government

Councils		
Ashburton District Council	Buller District Council	Central Otago District Council
Auckland Council	Bay of Plenty Regional Council	Carterton District Council
Central Hawke's Bay District Council	Far North District Council	Gisborne District Council
Chatham Islands Council	Christchurch City Council	Clutha District Council
Dunedin City Council	Environment Canterbury	Environment Southland
Gore District Council	Grey District Council	Hurunui District Council
Greater Wellington Regional Council	Hamilton City Council	Hastings District Council
Hauraki District Council	Hawke's Bay Regional Council	Horizons Regional Council
Horowhenua District Council	Hutt City Council	Kaipara City Council
Invercargill City Council	Kaikōura District Council	Mackenzie District Council
Kāpiti Coast District Council	Kawerau District Council	Manawatu District Council
Marlborough District Council	Nelson City Council	Otago Regional Council
Masterton District Council	Matamata Piako District Council	Napier City Council
New Plymouth District Council	Northland Regional Council	Ōpōtiki District Council

Ōtorohanga District Council	Palmerston North City Council	Porirua City Council
Queenstown Lakes District Council	Selwyn District Council	Southland District Council
Rangitīkei District Council	Rotorua Lakes Council	Ruapehu District Council
South Taranaki District Council	South Waikato District Council	South Wairarapa District Council
Stratford District Council	Taranaki Regional Council	Tararua District Council
Tasman District Council	Timaru District Council	Waimakariri District Council
Taupō District Council	Tauranga City Council	Thames-Coromandel District Council
Timaru District Council	Upper Hutt City Council	Waikato District Council
Waikato Regional Council	Waipa District Council	Wairoa District Council
Waimate District Council	Waitaki District Council	West Coast Regional Council
Waitomo District Council	Whanganui District Council	Wellington City Council
Western Bay of Plenty District Council	Whakatāne District Council	Whangarei District Council
Westland District Council		

Other local government organisations

- Local Government New Zealand
 - National Council
 - Te Maruata
 - Young Elected Members
 - LGNZ staff
- Taituarā
- Association of Local Government Information Management
- Ngā Kairapu – Māori practitioners in regional councils
- Te Papa Pounamu – Māori planners and kaitiaki practitioners, a special interest group of the NZ Planning Institute

Iwi/Māori

Representatives from 55 iwi and 20 hapū and pan-tribal collectives across Aotearoa

Members from Māori rūpū and organisations:

- Te Tai Kaha including representatives from Kāhui Wai Māori, New Zealand Māori Council and Federation of Māori Authorities
- Iwi Chairs Forum
- Papa Pounamu

Central government

Throughout the Review, we've engaged with Minister of Local Government and representatives from 17 central government agencies and commissions, including:

- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Electoral Commission
- Hon. Grant Robertson, Minister of Finance
- Hon. James Shaw, Minister for Climate Change
- Hon. Kieran McAnulty, Associate Minister of Local Government
- Infrastructure Commission
- Kāinga Ora
- Local Government Commission
- Ministry for Pacific Peoples
- National Emergency Management Agency
- Office of the Auditor-General
- Productivity Commission
- Public Service Commission
- Royal Commission on Auckland Governance
- Te Arawhiti
- Te Puni Kōkiri
- Waka Kotahi.

Rangatahi

We received 5,000 submissions to Get Vocal in Your Local, with the largest number of responses from rangatahi 30 years and under (see more in the section on engagement processes).

We also engaged with:

- Tokona te Raki
- Auckland Youth Advisory Panel
- UN Youth

- Make It 16
- Rangatahi user workshops for the Digital Tool:
 - Wellington High School Year 10-12 students
 - Tawa College Rangatahi Māori
 - Auckland Co-design Lab
 - The Southern Initiative.
- Spotswood College students.

Community workshops

Community	Attendees
Rainbow	Inside Out Body Positive F'Ine Pasifika Safe Space Alliance Qtopia
Disability	NZ Federation of Disability Sector Sub-regional Disability Committee and Tāngata Whaikaha Roopu Blind Citizens NZ Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Care Action Network
Pacific elected members	7 Pacific people in local government
Former refugees	Red Cross Belong Aotearoa Refugees as Survivors NZ (Youth Team)
Former migrant	Multicultural NZ Communities Action Trust
Asian New Zealanders	Asia New Zealand Foundation National Chinese Association and Auckland Branch of NZ Chinese Association Supreme Sikh Society of NZ
Rural	Rural Women NZ

	Rural General Practice Network Rural Support Trust Horticulture New Zealand
Environmental NGOs	Environmental Defence Society Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society Inc. Fish & Game New Zealand Greenpeace Aotearoa Generation Zero
Wellington City Mission	General Manager Community Programmes General Manager Brand & Communications Chief Financial Officer

Organisations

Organisations		
ACENZ - Association of Consulting and Engineering	Auckland Ratepayers Alliance	Auckland Unlimited
Child Poverty Action Group	Construction Sector Accord	Datacom
Economic Development New Zealand	Federated Farmers	Fonterra
Infrastructure NZ	Inspiring Communities	Library and Information Advisory Commission
Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa	Local Government Business Forum	Museums Aotearoa
The newDemocracy Foundation	New Zealand Taxpayers Union	NZ Construction Sector

NZ Council of Christian
Social Services

Property Council

Public Libraries of New
Zealand

Regional Sports Trust

Sports NZ

Sustainable Business Council

Tokona te Raki

University of Auckland

Volunteer New Zealand

Wellington Chamber of
Commerce



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Review into the Future for
Local Government

You can share your thoughts on our recommendations and the future for local government by [participating in our consultation](#).

Submissions close 28 February 2023.

To hear more about the draft report, please check the [Review into the Future for Local Government website](#) for details of upcoming engagement opportunities and [sign up for our newsletter](#).

Stay connected with the review by joining the conversation on social media.

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