



**TE KAUNIHERA O TE AWA KAIRANGI | HUTT CITY COUNCIL**

Meeting to be held in the Council Chambers,  
2nd Floor, 30 Laings Road, Lower Hutt on  
Monday 26 August 2024 commencing at 11.30am.

**SUPPLEMENTARY ORDER PAPER**

**PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**4. INITIAL REPRESENTATION PROPOSAL - HEARING OF SUBMISSIONS: UPDATED APPENDICES**

Report No. HCC2024/4/89 by the Head of Strategy and Policy

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Kate Glanville  
**SENIOR DEMOCRACY ADVISOR**

22 August 2024

Report no: HCC2024/4/89

## Initial Representation Proposal - Hearing of Submissions: Updated Appendices

1. To provide an updated copy of the hearing schedule and submissions associated with each speaker (in order of speaker).
2. The updated hearing schedule is attached as Appendix 1 to the report. The only change is to the page number reference.
3. The updated submissions associated with each speaker (in order of speaker) is attached as Appendix 2 to the report. The following has been updated:
  - a. Page 3 of the Eastbourne Community Board's submission has been added. This was omitted in the original submission pack; and
  - b. Four submissions have been updated to reflect the original format of their submission. No content was missing from the original submission pack.
4. All submissions received on the Initial Representation proposal can be viewed here: [Representation Review submission pack](#)

### Appendices

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**Author:** Richard Hardie  
Head of Strategy and Policy

**Approved By:** Jarred Griffiths  
Director Strategy and Engagement

Hearings Schedule Monday 26 August 2024						
#	Time	Name	Organisation	In Person or ZOOM	Presentation	Page #
	11:30 am	Mayor Campbell Barry to open the hearings				
	11:35 am	Council’s Policy Lead and Policy Advisor to introduce the report				
1	11:40 am	Belinda Moss (Chair)	Eastbourne Community Board	In Person	N	4
2	11:50 am	Mike Fisher (Chair)	Petone Community Board	In Person	Y	8
3	12:00 pm	Mike Fisher	Individual	In Person	Y	11
4	12:05 pm	Bruce Spedding	Individual	In Person	Y	12
5	12:10 pm	Richard Arlidge	Individual	ZOOM	N	46
6	12:15 pm	Robert Ashe	Individual	In Person	N	47
7	12:20 pm	Barbara Sullivan	Individual	In Person	N	48
8	12:25 pm	Stephen Grenside	Lowry Bay Residents Association	ZOOM	N	49
9	12:30 pm	Emily Keddell	Individual	In Person	N	53
10	12:35 pm	Malcolm Sime	Individual	In Person	N	54
11	12:40 pm	Karl Weeks-Dickson	Individual	In Person	N	55
12	12:45 pm	Nicolle O’Neill	Individual	ZOOM	N	57
13	12:50 pm	Graham Wilson	Individual	In Person	N	58
14	12:55 pm	Frank Vickers	Individual	In Person	N	59
15	1:00 pm	Sally-ann Moffat	Petone Community House	In Person	N	60
16	1:05 pm	Joy Baird	Individual	In Person	N	64
17	1:10 pm	Sally Selwood	Individual	In Person	N	66
18	1:15 pm	Jeremy Winter	Individual	In Person	Y	67
19	1:20 pm	Gary Quirke	Individual	In Person	N	74
20	1:25 pm	Derek Wilshere	Individual	In Person	Y	80
	1:30 pm	LUNCH BREAK (45 minutes)				
21	2:15 pm	Haiying Shi	Individual	In Person	Y	82
22	2:20 pm	David L. F. Smith	Individual	In Person	N	83
23	2:25 pm	Karen Arraj-Fisher	Individual	In Person	N	84
24	2:30 pm	Karen (Kaz) Yung	Individual	In Person	N	85
25	2:35 pm	Pauline Innes	Individual	In Person	N	87
26	2:40 pm	Wal Louden	Individual	In Person	N	88
27	2:45 pm	Elizabeth Palmer	Individual	In Person	N	89
28	2:50 pm	Sandra Greig	Individual	In Person	N	98
29	2:55 pm	Michael Draper	Individual	In Person	N	99
30	3:00 pm	Pete Matcham	Grey Power	In Person	N	101
31	3:05 pm	Pete Matcham	Normandale Residents Association	In Person	N	104
32	3:10 pm	Jan Wijninckx (pronounced Yan Vaynings)	Individual	In Person	N	107
33	3:15 pm	Ross Jamieson	Individual	In Person	N	108
	3:20 pm	Peggy Luke-Ngaheke	General Manager, Waiwhetū Marae	In Person	N	110
34	3:30 pm	Huia Puketapu (Deputy Chair) (verbal submission)	Taranaki Whānui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika Trust	In Person	N	N/A
35	3.40 pm	Liz Mellish (Palmerston North Māori Reserves (Chair)) (verbal submission) Te Karanga O Te Tui Marino (Environmental Liaison Officer, Hikoikoi Management Limited) (verbal submission) Richard Te One (Relationships Liaison Officer, Hikoikoi / Wellington Tenth Trust Trustee, Palmerston North Māori Reserves Trustee) (in support) Vicki Hollywell (Tumu Whakarae, Hikoikoi) Manager Ltd (in support)	Wellington Tenth Trust	In Person	N	N/A
		End of hearings				

# Eastbourne Community Board | Belinda Moss

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## Hutt City Representation Review Eastbourne Community Board submission

This submission is by Eastbourne Community Board members. It is based on our informed views and conversations with Eastbourne residents since the proposal to disestablish community boards was announced in June.

Our submission focuses mainly on the proposal to disestablish community boards and a recommendation about Ward boundaries. It also challenges the independent panel's statements about the role of community boards.

### The proposal to disestablish community boards

The independent panel erred in its assessment by not limiting its focus to the principles of fairness and effectiveness outlined in s4 of the Local Electoral Act. The panel has based its argument to disestablish community boards on inequality.

### Inequality

The independent panel argues that there are only three community boards representing three communities, which is inequitable because not all Te Awa Kairangi | Hutt City residents have access to them. On page 32 of its report, the panel suggests that inequality is as important as fairness and effectiveness. We agree that equality is important, but it is not the test here, and the panel erred in considering inequality as one of the principles.

Even if it were a principle under the Local Electoral Act, it is incorrect to suggest that having only three community boards in Hutt City is inequitable.

Under section 49 of the Local Government Act 2002, any community can petition for a community board to be established to represent its interests. Communities like Stokes Valley, Naenae and Taita could all have a community board if they wanted one.

New community boards are regularly established throughout Aotearoa, for example, the Puketapu-Bell Block Community Board and the Oxford-Ohoka Community Board, formed in 2022.

If Councillors vote to adopt the independent panel's proposal to disestablish community boards, they risk the cost of electoral polls being held to reinstate them.

If the Panel is correct in its argument, many cities and districts would be getting rid of community boards as many others have only partial coverage, but this is not happening.

### The role of community boards in the twenty-first century

The report claims community boards are no longer relevant in the twenty-first century. However, the reasons community boards were established in 1989 are equally valid today, if not more so.



Community boards were created to help councils stay in touch with their communities' grassroots. Councils have been required to get larger; the matters they address are broader and more complex, and their regulatory responsibility is greater.

Moreover, with suggestions that Hutt City amalgamates with other Councils in the future, community grassroots representation will be even more critical. Maintaining community boards will future-proof local representation and advocacy.

Councils can be complicated and intimidating to navigate and work with. Community boards bring residents and local government closer. They are part of the community, not its governance.

We believe the need for ready, face-to-face access to elected representatives who are neighbours in our communities has never been more important. In an increasingly digital world, community boards provide a vital human connection.

The issues the panel suggests in its argument against community boards, such as diversity and representation, are the reason for having them. Community boards provide a safe place to start understanding democracy and becoming involved in Councils. The number of councillors representing Hutt City who started on community boards shows their value as a pathway to democratic representation. Anything that aids in developing strong representation when democratic processes are at risk should be valued. It is at community boards where a more comprehensive representation is likely to happen, especially given Hutt City has chosen to remain with First Past the Post.

There was too little time or consideration in the report about the effectiveness of community boards on matters beyond those in the statute, and regrettably, there was no thought as to how to ensure community boards could be more effective. We are not here to blow our trumpet but believe we have been a very effective and supportive arm of the Council on many matters beyond the statutory role and equally important to Eastbourne residents and Council.

We are proud of our work in this respect, including effectively championing the Tupua Horo Nuku resilience and shared path project. We believe we have been effective and are disappointed that the Panel has not reflected on or attempted to understand our work.

In a seismic, harbour-side area and a world facing climate change, communities need local representation and knowledge to help prepare for change and emergencies, as well as leadership and a point of contact in the event of an emergency.

**We challenge the section about awareness of community boards.**

The report lists the stated powers of community boards without referring to their advocacy and liaison roles. It refers to the mismatch between what community boards do and what the community thinks they do without examining whether and what community boards are delivering outside the stated delegations. It even refers to the

*potential* benefits of community boards without making any apparent effort to understand what we already do.

These are not potential benefits. Advocacy and liaison are actual benefits delivered by community boards like the Eastbourne Community Board every day.

Community boards are crucial in providing fair and effective representation for residents and communities. Community boards help ensure residents' voices are heard, and their members act as community representatives, advocates, and connectors.

### Ward boundaries

The Eastbourne Community Board asked the independent panel to address the anomaly that sees the Pencarrow Road from Burdan's Gate to the lighthouse as part of Wainuiomata General Ward rather than Harbour Ward. Successive Eastbourne Community Boards have also asked Council to address this.

The current Ward boundary makes no sense. The road is accessed from Eastbourne and is used by Eastbourne residents and visitors from throughout the region. There is no public road access from Pencarrow Road to Wainuiomata. It is often Eastbourne residents who alert the Council to road damage or maintenance issues.

A boundary change would have no material impact on the number of residents in either Ward. Refer to Appendix 1. It could be achieved by moving Pencarrow Head suburb to the Harbour Ward and shifting the ward boundary accordingly.

### Recommendations

The Eastbourne Community Board recommends that Council:

1. Retain community boards so all Hutt City residents can retain or have the opportunity to establish a community board and to future-proof local representation.
2. Moves the Wainuiomata and Harbour Ward boundary so that the road between Burdan's Gate and Pencarrow Lighthouse is part of Harbour Ward.

The Eastbourne Community Board wishes to speak to this submission at the August hearing.

*Belinda Moss, Emily Keddell, Bruce Spedding, Murray Gibbons and Frank Vickers  
Eastbourne Community Board  
31 July 2024*

## Appendix 1:

Pencarrow Head suburb is currently in Wainuiomata General Ward. Moving it to Harbour Ward would move the Pencarrow Road to Harbour Ward.



# Petone Community Board | Mike Fisher

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Kia ora koutou,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Review Panel recommendations.

## **Community Boards are, and should continue to be, a vital part of local democracy in Te Awakairangi ki Tai - Hutt City:**

Naturally, we are predominantly submitting on the Panel's proposal to disestablish Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai /Hutt City.

We strongly oppose disestablishing Community Boards in Hutt City. We believe this would be a significant loss of local democracy. We support all wards having a Community Board because we believe that communities are best served by local representation. We have seen the benefit and rich history of the Harbour Ward having two distinctive boards – with their own respective voices.

Petone has had its own local government representation since 1888. First as Petone Borough Council from 1888 to 1989. Since then, through the Petone Community Board.

Petone is a distinct part of Te Awa Kairangi/ Hutt City with Jackson St at its heart. The board area also includes significant commercial areas in Seaview, Gracefield and Petone and residential settlements from the harbours edge up to Korokoro, across Moerā, to Waiwhetū South.

Petone Community Board provides a formal avenue for this community to have input on Council decision making representing a community that has unique needs:

- The protection and vitality of the Jackson Street retail precinct.
- Being the part of the city at greatest risk from sea level rise and climate change.
- Being a key employment hub for the wider region.
- Being home to thousands of residents.

In the mid 2000's the lack of acknowledgement of Eastbourne's needs saw calls for secession from Hutt City.<sup>1</sup> Eastbourne like Petone has a long history of its own identity and local government representation. Eastbourne and bays are a distinct community of interest. Settlements that share a narrow coastal road and housing the stretches up to the bush clad hills.

These different histories and different future needs are why Petone and Eastbourne would benefit from retaining their separate community boards.

## **The representation review recommendation to abolish community boards is flawed**

The representation review found that people the Panel engaged with, liked the idea of Community Boards, as it sounded like a mechanism that could enhance local democracy if supported and resourced well. Council could give boards the delegations needed to realise their full potential. We

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<sup>1</sup> [Deborah Coddington](#): *Absolutely Positively stick with Hutt City* - NZ Herald

note that the parts of the city with Community Boards had the highest levels of support. This shows that when people have more opportunity to understand the role of the Boards first hand they have higher levels of support.

Community Boards are based on geographic representation. One example cited in the review was of Community Boards not representing the Pasifika Community. We recognise the importance of ethnic communities having their voices heard but note that the geographic model of local government is not designed to promote specific interest groups other than by geography. Council advisory groups can provide forums for specific groups based on factors other than geography to have their voices heard. We also note Hutt City is adding a Māori ward.

### **Community boards are fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

The Panel's report reflects on a view that formal structures like Community Boards positioned between the community and the Council are not likely to be effective in the 21st century. We do not believe that is just 'between' the community but actually alongside it, helping to understand the various decisions and functions of Council, and providing alternative ways to connect with the work of the Local Authority; and in the same way connecting Council more deeply to the community.

The panel's view is counter to the localism movement. Localism is about empowering communities to make decisions about their own futures.

"Localism provides a way to strengthen and build upon those things that make us special - developing better, local solutions to problems, fostering stronger local ties and engagement, and, ultimately, ensuring the places where people live, and work become the places they want them to be."<sup>2</sup>

Community Boards do have an operating cost to the city, as do all representative roles, as the representation review highlights. However, the review does not consider the wider benefits that include more effective solutions when council and communities work together; belonging is strengthened and those impacted by decisions are involved in decision making.

Examples of Petone Community Board making a difference are:

- Protecting the heritage of Jackson St
- Helping prevent Petone Recreation ground becoming a sports facility for the almost exclusive use of Wellington Phoenix
- Fighting for the retention and upgrade of McKenzie Baths
- Helping prevent the demolition of Petone wharf, at least for now
- Submissions on Plan changes that would erode the identity of Petone
- Assessing and granting funding requests for community groups
- Coordinating local ANZAC Day services
- Helping get better footpaths in Korokoro
- Keeping a library in Moerā and reinvestment in Petone Library

### **Community boards in general help:**

- Ensure local communities' voices aren't lost in the big picture conversations/kōrero.

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<sup>2</sup> [Why localism](#) in New Zealand



- Promote stronger community wellbeing/hauora for all the diverse communities that exist in their area.
- Feeding in local issues and needs to advocate for local voice and making submissions on council policies and decisions
- Have an important part of providing information from council/kaunihera back to the community.<sup>3</sup>

### Responses to other questions

We support the addition of an additional Councillor – bringing it up to 13, particularly with the addition of a Māori Ward Councillor – recognising this number seems to be able to represent local residents and seems about right.

We also support that the Councillors continue to be elected under a mixed system of representation across the wards as well as city wide. This structure ensures a balance between a more localised voice, and broader voices spread across our city. We note some residents have raised concerns about some wards having more than one councillor but not necessarily guaranteed localised representation and have some reservations around the perceived fairness and understanding of some wards with two Councillors, and others with one. We would like to see a consistency across the board and think one Councillor per ward would be best. This would mean creating more wards to retain proportionality of population to the number of representatives.

#### *Changes to the Harbour Ward boundary in Waiwhetu*

Although we see the reasoning regarding bringing all of Waiwhetū together, we also recognise there are distinctive parts within this large suburb. We wonder how many within Waiwhetū feel more connected to the 'Central Hutt' than elsewhere given many have a deeper connection towards the Waiwhetū Stream, the hills and the ocean.

We wish to speak to our submission.

Nga mihi,  
Mike Fisher

Chair, Petone Community Board

021 2521773

# Mike Fisher

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Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Neutral

Q4. Comments

not answered

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor? Neutral

Q6. Comments:

I'm not convinced of the need for an extra Ward Councillor

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Neutral

Q8. Comments:

I'm not convinced of the proposed new boundaries. I do accept some changes are necessary, but, would suggest for example, that Alicetown would be a logical addition to the Harbour Ward, which could be balanced by the loss of Waiwhetu South to a new Central Ward. I'm not convinced of the need for 2 Councillors for the proposed two new Wards.

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

Q10. Comments:

Where do I start?! Firstly I would like to see the retention of the current three Community Boards. I support the extension of Community Boards to other Wards of the city if those communities desire them. Since its inception, there has been numerous examples of where the PCB has made a direct impact and difference to our community. Working closely with the Ward Councillor, the PCB provides that extra support and advocacy that can clearly make a difference in ensuring Petone and its residents have their voice and concerns heard. The Panel's proposal does not in my opinion offer any realistic alternative to the current system.

# Bruce Spedding

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**I am opposed to the disestablishment of the Community Boards.**

**I believe they are important to the communities they represent, now more than ever. The arguments to remove, and the alternative solutions offered lack credibility. A true understanding of how Community Boards work in their communities would show that they are the most democratic, economic and effective way to support and serve the communities and the residents today. The appropriate response is not disestablishment, the effort should be focussed on supporting them appropriately to do their job well, and making them available to other communities who show a need. This would have the most positive outcome for both the community and the council.**

**Ironically, as highlighted later, the Panel recommends a “focussed approach to engagement” which describes the Community Board quite well - and ironically does not suggest that any powers at all be given to this process, they obviously don't think any formal powers are required to be effective.**

**I have seen submissions written by other residents which are perceptive and eloquent, so I will defer to them in many respects. I trust that the councillors will read these, even if they do not read mine.**

**Bruce Spedding, Eastbourne Resident and Community Board Member (second term).**

**My background is about 25 years as a scientist in nuclear and industrial research working across a diverse range of technologies and fields.  
A further 25 years working in online and digital development, design and management including Manager of the NZ Government website, and developing many of the Metservice websites. I also have extensive experience in User Experience Design which focuses on user needs and helping people just get on with their lives.**

**I have served on a variety of government panels, professional boards, and was President of Windsurfing NZ for several years. I also have a history of union, health and safety, employee assistance and violence counselling involvement.**



### The Review - process and results

The review process is outlined in the report. Many of the conclusions are commented on later, so I will only comment on some of the points in relation to community boards here.

#### **Communication and engagement principles (pp11)**

*"educate the community on local government by providing clear, consistent and reliable Information"*

This appeared to mainly consist of explaining to people the limited powers that Community Boards have, and then anecdotally saying that this changed people perception (away from the value of community boards).

The Panel made very little attempt to understand what Community Boards do, so their claim to be '*clear, consistent and reliable*' was flawed.

#### **The actual powers and functions of Community Boards**

Community Boards have 'Elected Members Requests' which essentially means council staff must give an acceptable reply to any request for information. This means boards cannot be ignored or fobbed off, one of the more common complaints we receive from the community we represent.

Community Boards have continuity and "institutional memory", information and decisions get passed along, unlike the council staff, where frequent turnovers often mean discussions and decisions are sometimes lost during a transition of roles. Without the boards these issues would have been lost, and confidence in council further eroded. This continuity also accounts for projects like Tupua Horo Nuku have actually progressed to realisation. Members (past and present) of the board have been involved in this for decades - unlike most of the staff involved.

Community Board Members, unlike councillors or council staff have more autonomy to compensate for lack of legislated power - this allows us to initiate, undertake and follow through on projects within our community without having to go through the bureaucratic processes that normally are required. Although we answer to the council as well, we work for and answer to the community.

Community Boards do the council's work quite a lot of the time - we can answer or explain questions about council policy and actions without reference to the council itself, reducing the burden on both council and community.

The Community Board aggregates issues, when an issue arises in the community the board will condense this into a single request for information or action, saving a lot of council time responding to multiple requests.

So while the council may see the Community Boards as an "overhead" to be maintained, they could measure this against the reduced load on council officers that boards bring about. This load will of course increase if Community Boards cease to exist.

The Panel quotes its Community Engagement activities - but is probably not aware of the involvement of Community Boards in this. We also posted campaign on our community pages which has a much higher visibility within the community than the Hutt City channels. We posted on our website, our digital notice boards, circulated it on through our email lists (455 subscribers), and included it in our regular column in the Eastbourne Herald (something the council failed to do despite our requests).

These are powers we grant ourselves, they are not given to us, and they are more powerful than the nominal powers to name streets etc.

Rather than go on and dismantle all the contradictions in the Panel's survey, analysis and recommendations I will append my original in the Appendix (my comments in red) for anyone to read if they have the energy - it is full of holes and interpretations throw doubt on the integrity of the recommendations. I will include one comment here that clearly demonstrates how little the Panel understands what Community Boards do. The section below is from the Panel's recommendation, with my comments in red.

***b) Recommendations for a focused approach to engagement ..... 38***

*Drawing on its experiences in undertaking this review, the Panel has identified a set of principles that it believes will better connect the Council with local communities:*

- *negotiating access to communities through those with 'lived experience' of that community (that's the members of the Community Board)*
- *engaging at 'their place', resulting in an increased level of comfort and safety, and at a time that best suits the community (that's what we (Community Board) do)*
- *ensuring discussions are facilitated jointly with a local community member, to allow for a wider range of community participation (that's what we (Community Board) do)*
- *communicating information from the Council to communities in their own language, if appropriate, so as to improve reach and access. (Most of the ethnic and migrant communities have regular newsletters or social media contact with their communities, and they have offered to translate summaries of Council information into their own language when necessary.)*

*From Panel members' experience, engagement is not always suited to a '9am to 5pm Monday-Friday' approach, and that 'information overload' through passive social media platforms, is not particularly effective. The Panel considers a more proactive approach is needed. (we know that full well, and that's what we respond to, we are on call 24x7) The Panel believes it would be timely for the Council to consider building a stronger, more fit-for purpose 'bridge', as a way to better engage with communities whose voices are often not heard at Council. (The bridge exists, it's called a Community Board)*

## Rhetoric

*"A rhetorical question is a question asked **to make a point, rather than get an answer.**"*

There are clearly rhetorical questions repeated throughout the Panel review, these are combined in this quote .

(pp 4 of the report) ... reflects the view that formal structures like **community boards positioned between the community and the Council** is not likely to be **effective in the 21st century**, based on the **changing nature of the community's interests, needs and aspirations**, and also the **obligation on the Council to inform, consult, represent and make decisions** on behalf of those communities.

(pp34 of the report) ... the Panel **questions** whether a community board type structure, **positioned between the community and its parent council**, that may have been appropriate **35 years ago**, is the best approach in the **21st century**.

**None of these "questions" are answered in the report**, the time of 35 years, the relevance to 21st century, the changing nature of communities. The rhetorical questioning throws doubt on the relevance of Community Board but at no stage answers the question. There is also vague reference to the changing nature of the community's interests, needs and aspirations, and also councils obligation. None of this is backed up by any research. At best it is "anecdotal".

**Community Boards are positioned alongside community and council. Not between** - no real evidence or even anecdotes are provided in the review. Any community member or group can access and work with the council directly (and often do) without the Community Board being involved. There is no requirement to go through the boards. **The board represents a channel for those in the community who feel their concerns are not being heard, or who lack the confidence, ability or resources to interact with council directly.** Sometimes the Community Board is asked to intervene when a resident or group feel they are not being listened to, or the council is not consulting widely enough on an issue. The Community Board covers any gaps that exist between council and the community - and one thing the report repeatedly identifies is that there are plenty of gaps in current council contact and interaction with the communities.

It is disappointing that the Panel report uses these rhetorical questions, incorrect descriptions, skewed response analysis, anecdotal, and unsupported opinion and conjecture to discredit their own the measured results of community feedback, and thereby justify their recommendations.



## Equity

There is confusion between “equity” and “equality”. The difference is well demonstrated by the aphorism “we are not all in the same boat, we are in the same storm, but some of us have superyachts and others have leaky dinghies.” Equality is treating everyone the

same regardless, equity is making everyone equal by responding to their specific needs. The Panel appears to have confused the two words.

In this context, some communities such as Eastbourne and Wainuiomata have special needs because they can be easily isolated both in access and infrastructure, so the need for a degree of additional support within the community makes sense, as the council may not be able to provide the support needed as easily. Other communities may have special needs and these should be assessed.

## Resilience



One issue that has dominated local and national news over recent years is the need for community resilience. Many communities have been struggling with the outcomes of extreme weather events, infrastructure failure, and communications break-down, and missing timely support from their councils and other organisations.

Recent RNZ news items reference the lack of “situational awareness” in emergency management responses - this translates as “they did not know what was going on in the actual areas at risk. This weakness is a good reason for our communities to have established local representatives who can communicate the situation and facilitate a community response rather than waiting for outside help - often the wrong help, too little and too late.

Communities such as Eastbourne/Bays and Wainuiomata can be easily isolated by weather or other events, and Community Boards can play a significant role in preparation, response and recovery, especially in those phases where council priorities lie elsewhere.

In the Eastern Bays, and presumably elsewhere in the city, the council limits its involvement in community resilience to setting up Community Hubs (in reality a box with

DIY instructions and a radio stuck in a school cupboard), combined with awesome social media postings, and a message we are essentially "on our own" for at least 7 days. As demonstrated in other events, the hours leading up to and following an event are critical, and a Community Board provides a basis for community preparedness that would otherwise be missing. The council should be looking at supporting such initiatives more, not removing them.

### Training ground for councillors

Community Boards are the feeder for council. The current national and local government landscape is littered with examples of the confusion and issues that arise when people who have little or no prior experience are placed in positions of responsibility. It is notable that a significant number of Hutt City Councillors have come into their role through Community Boards, and they will have come with 3 years of working with Council and the processes involved.

### ***RNZ: Missing mayor, record rates rises, and Tauranga's election: What's going on with councils?***

*Asquith, an industry fellow at the Institute of Public Policy and Governance at the University of Technology Sydney in Sydney, Australia, told RNZ part of the problem is a lack of quality control.*

*"I've long argued there should be a test for people standing for council, because so many people don't know how it all works and they're in it for the wrong reasons."*

<https://www.mz.co.nz/news/what-you-need-to-know/522539/missing-mayor-record-rates-rises-and-tauranga-s-election-what-s-going-on-with-councils>

### Changing Demographic

The Panel argues that increased mobility of residents means geographic communities are less relevant, and that communities of interest need more attention. In fact this assumption (if true - no data) and analysis can be easily countered, and in fact strong and well supported geographic communities are more important than ever. People may have communities of interest outside their home suburb, but that does not change the relevance of where they live, especially if they have family. People do not live outside their communities, their home is still central to their lives.

One consequence of the Covid19 epidemic was the transition for many to “work from home” (WFH), and this has persisted despite pushes in some situations to get workers to return to the office. Many people still work from home on a part-time basis, it’s an often cited feature in job ads. This means that communities do not “empty out” during the day as before, and there is no sign of this new normal changing. Communities become more relevant as a result.

Another factor is the need for new arrivals in a community to be assimilated quickly, to be “introduced” to the people and resources the community offers. A welcoming community that informs and supports new arrivals not only improves their inclusion, the community gains from the skills and contributions the new arrivals bring to the community.

All this speaks to the value of a responsive and inclusive community, which is one benefit a Community Board brings.

### Communication

**An informed community is a resilient community.** Most communities have various ways they communicate and share information - but like various other structures within a community these can be initiated and driven by specific goals, they are rarely democratic, have no accountability to the community or the council, and can be focussed on particular interests. It is important for a community to have an independent and democratic information network that is accountable and not partisan. It is also critical that such networks cater for the least well connected as they are probably the most vulnerable.

One of the most significant conclusions from the recent Eastern Bays Community Resilience Expo was the importance and need for physical / face-to-face networking to pick up those most at risk in our community. There is no easy solution, despite what many think, social media, websites and newspapers do not have a great reach in our communities.

Even those who use social channels miss a lot because there is so much information "noise", the important information is frequently drowned out. Our conclusion was that we need to actually make contact with every group in our community, from sports or services clubs to a book group of a few people. The critical basic task is to help them realise that they may be the most important (and possibly only) connection some of their members have with the community, so they have a role to play, both in passing on important community information, but also communicating back any issues their group members may have, especially so in emergency situations.

This level of community engagement requires "boots on the ground", not just when an emergency occurs, but continuously. This is another role that Community Boards can and do play, and it requires numbers that a single councillor or council staff member cannot equal.

#### Cost

The Panel makes a big deal about the cost of supporting Community Boards, \$347K per year. Approximately half of this will be council overheads which the Boards have no control over, and the allowances for Community Board members is set externally using the same processes as councillors remuneration. No breakdown is offered, no comparison with the cost of City Councillors, and certainly no comparison with the cost of replacing Community Board activities with paid staff. It's a reasonable assumption that this cost is equivalent to possibly two full time mid level council employees.

Community Board members live in the community, have regular and frequent contact with the community as a member of the community, often casual or through shared interests. As a community member they will understand and empathise with the local residents, and know that they will need to be able to face those residents again in the future. A council staff member would only have contact by arrangement, which also means that only those in the community who are confident enough to reach out will be heard. Contact will require travel and time, it will be expensive as a result.

By way of comparison:



2 council staff, working 8x5 / week, no accountability, available by appointment, little local knowledge, probable turnover within a 3 year term or:

16 Community Board members, 24x7 / week, accountable, available on demand, around for a longer time (even if they change jobs they are less likely to move).

Even if each ward has a community board the price is extremely low for the return.

Financial comparisons and comments are pointless and just further rhetoric without some sort of context which has not been provided. There is even the somewhat trite comment that the cost of the suggested agents could be in part covered by the saving from the community board fees, with zero analysis.

### Council performance

Council performance is called into question repeatedly, and much of the blame for poor understanding and use of Community Boards is laid at the door of council. The council has a difficult job, especially in this current climate of financial blow-outs, infrastructure failure, and apparent high staff turnover. To suggest that dropping Community Boards and the council does a better job has elements of "the flogging will continue until morale improves". The Community Boards should not be made the scapegoats, and removing Community Boards will do nothing to fix the council problems identified. The Community Boards hold many of the keys to improve the situation and should be invited to collaborate more, not disestablished.

### Agents

The Panel offers "Agents" as a solution to the issue, which suggests in it's very poorly structured presentation that a single volunteer well connected "agent" is a solution to all the current issues. Should the Panel be suggesting operational solutions anyway? It transpires that this was not a suggested alternative to Community Boards, no alternative has been offered there, just an expectation that the Ward Councillor will pick up all the slack. The "agents" in question were again anecdotally identified as volunteers, with



already established networks with the community of interest. It transpires that these are the communities referred to in the Panel's report. It is of course reasonable to think that these valuable contacts are already being used by council, that the council already has connections and is working with these groups. It is not a democracy issue, it's the normal relationships that should already exist between the council and these groups.

There is some commentary that these city wide groups do not get satisfaction from Community Boards, but this is only pertinent if they exist primarily in a ward with a board, and this is not made clear. Obviously a group which exists across the city is not going to get satisfaction from a ward focussed board with no responsibility for other areas, it is appropriate and the council's responsibility to manage these relationships. Apparently they have not done so, and the removal of Community Boards will have no impact at all on council's performance. More scapegoating.

So the Panel has recommended dropping Community Boards and replacing them with mythical/magical agents who will solve every problem identified?

### Ward Boundaries

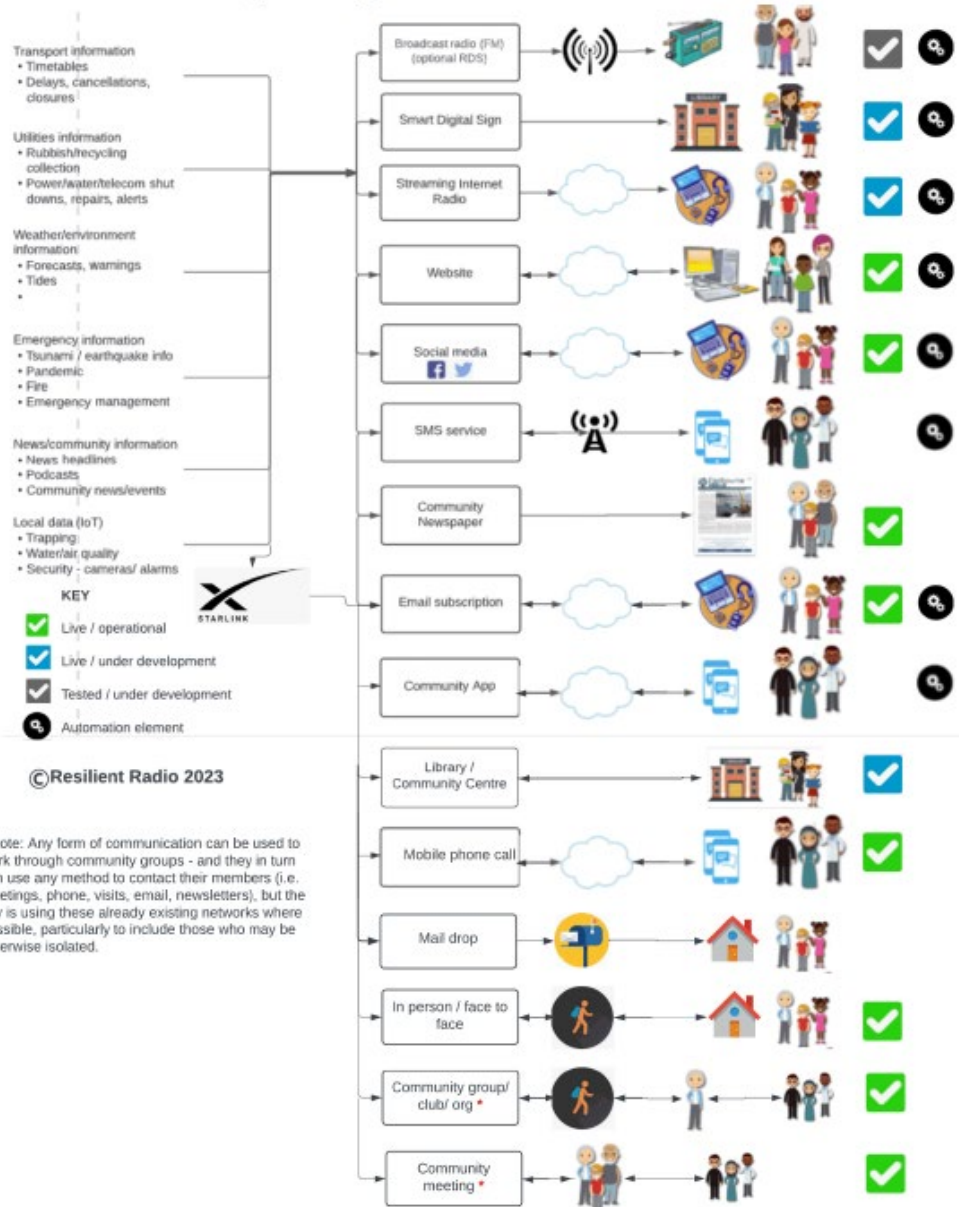
The Eastbourne Community Board requested that the Panel consider moving the Pencarrow Coast Road area to the Harbour Ward as the public access is through Eastbourne via Burdan's Gate. There can be upwards of 100 cars and several hundred people there cycling, walking, fishing, diving and surfing on busy weekends. Eastbourne

Community members are involved in various wildlife conservation and restoration projects, and regularly do coastal cleanups.

The Panel Chair admitted that this request had been missed out. The change would be easy to implement, one solution being to just reassign the Pencarrow Coast Suburb (already defined) to the Harbour Ward. There would be no significant change in electoral numbers as a result.

## Appendix1 - Community Communications Channels

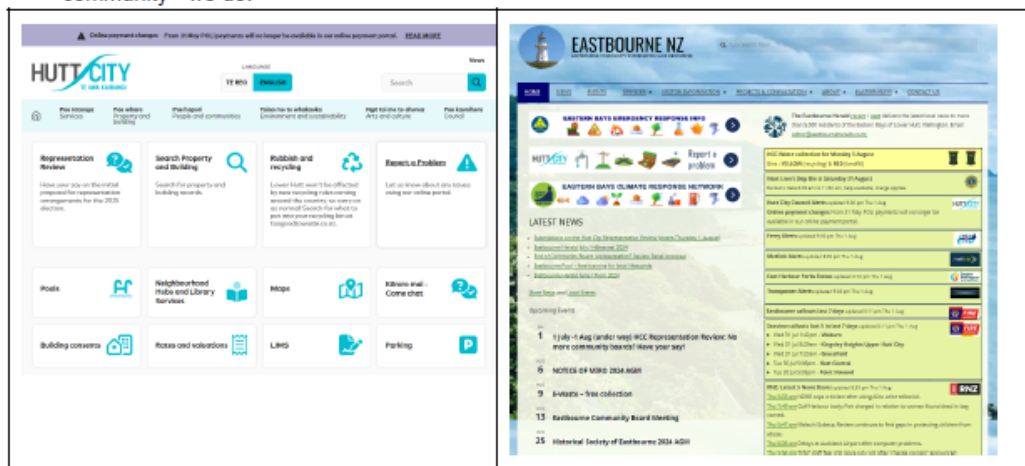
Mapping of communications channels to be utilised in creating an inclusive, informed and connected community, including our least well connected and most vulnerable.



## Appendix2 - Communication with City vs Community

The city website (<https://www.huttcity.govt.nz/>) is tasked with presenting all the council services and information to the city at large, including information that it is legally obliged to offer, even though it has little relevance or interest to most residents.

The community website (<https://eastbourne.nz/>) is designed to provide day to day information to the community, it doesn't contain extensive archives of documents, but it does provide information that is of daily interest to the community. I suggest anyone who is interested in testing how a fully functioning and supported community works should check out the website, read the Eastbourne Herald, subscribe to our emails, visit the local hub and see our digital noticeboard (as well as our additional recycling and other projects), maybe even talk to our community - we do.



## Appendix3 - Analysis of Review

### Contents

#### 1. Independent Representation Review Panel's recommendations

..... 3

##### a) Initial representation proposal

..... 3

"seven councillors elected from these five wards best meets the requirement for fair representation under section 19V of the Local Electoral Act 2001"

Note: this is fair in the context of councillors per head of population, however it is unfair in the context that some will be voting for 6 councillors (2 ward, 5 city-wide) while others will only be able to vote for 5.

"Wainuiomata Ward does not meet the requirement for fair representation (the +/-10% rule) and this is necessary to avoid dividing this community of interest between wards, or uniting within one ward, communities of interest with few commonalities."

This identifies a geographical community of interest as it's main driver, while claiming elsewhere that geographical communities of interest are less significant than previously.

"3. Hutt City Council notes the proposal for there to be no community boards in Lower Hutt and for three current boards to be abolished, reflects the view that formal structures like community boards positioned between the community and the Council is not likely to be effective in the 21st century, based on the changing nature of the community's interests, needs and aspirations, and also the obligation on the

Council to inform, consult, represent and make decisions on behalf of those communities."

This appears to be a view presented by the council staff. No evidence is presented to back this up, and states that the community boards stand between communities and Council. Is Council supposed to be making statements like this? It goes on to say:

##### b) Hutt City Council's community engagement

..... 4

The Independent Representation Review Panel further recommends:

Hutt City Council considers the recommendations set out in Section 10 of this report 'Building a better bridge to the community', with a view to improving its engagement with the community.

Obviously the Panel feels that the Council is not doing it's job at present - which is an acknowledgment that the work that community boards do, which is probably about 50%(?) communications, is not standing between community and Council, it's bridging the gap.

#### 2. Background

..... 5

##### a) 2019 representation review

..... 5

The 2019 review (that's 21st Century) recommended status quo, there were two appeals to the Local Government Commission - this resulted in the introduction of mixed representation (6 ward and 6 city-wide councillors), but retained the community boards. I.e. in both determinations community boards were not seen as inappropriate to the 21st century, even though other changes were mandated.

**b) Appointment of independent panel for 2025 representation review**

..... 5

**c) Other important Council decisions**

..... 5

Note in here, if the proposed Maori Ward is accepted it could still be established but would be subject to poll held as part of the 2025 elections, and could be rescinded. If that happened we would have even less representation than now.

**3. The recommended approach to representation reviews**

..... 7

... At the same time, the Commission also made it clear such a city-wide approach was not to be at the expense of representation for local communities of interest which was equally important and needed to be recognised.

... In undertaking its work, the Panel adopted the Local Government Commission's recommended

three-step approach. This involved:

8

1. seeking community views on the City's current communities of interest, including the extent these are seen as city-wide or local in nature, while also undertaking an in-depth community of interest analysis
2. considering all options for effective representation of identified communities of interest, in terms of the total number of councillors there should be, how those councillors should be elected, and also the option of having community boards
3. considering fair representation for individuals in relation to the requirement for each councillor to represent approximately the same number of people.

No mention of community boards - it's all about councillors.

**4. Lower Hutt's current representation arrangements in context**

..... 9

**a) History of representation arrangements**

..... 9

Note that the history of representation all the way through from 1989 shows changes with the exception of the community boards - no suggestion that they are irrelevant in 21st century.



## b) National comparisons

..... 9

... In summary, the representation arrangements for each council are a particular set of arrangements seen as most appropriate for that city or district, in light of its particular circumstances.

## c) Residents' satisfaction

..... 10

- a reasonable level of satisfaction that the Council takes community feedback into account when making decisions, but with groups least satisfied on this being: Northern Ward residents, Māori, older residents, and residents with disabilities
- a large majority (70%) agreeing it is important to them that they feel a sense of community with people in their neighbourhood, with a smaller majority (51%) saying they did feel such a sense of community.

## 5. The Panel's approach to community engagement

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## a) Community engagement

plan..... 11

i. Communication and engagement principles ..... 11

The Panel's engagement plan included the following communication and engagement principles:

- educate the community on local government by providing clear, consistent and reliable Information - of course we question that this was done in an unbiased manner
- engage with Mana Whenua and Mātāwaka throughout the review
- connect with a wide range of communities of interest and a diverse cross section of residents
- enhance relationships with, and understanding of, communities of interest
- be open and transparent about what the community can and cannot influence and how decisions will be made
- use a variety of methods to communicate and engage
- ensure the community feels their feedback was heard and that they played a part in the democratic process (fail here)
- take a 'best endeavours' approach to engagement.

ii. 'Equity of voice' in community engagement ..... 11

The Panel was particularly keen to ensure there was 'equity of voice' in its engagement with communities across the City. As a result, we developed and used a tailored approach to our engagement, including a concerted effort to reach out to communities and groups less engaged, or perhaps in some cases not engaged at all, with the Council and its activities.

This possibly also led to a dismissal of communities who have good engagement, rather than asking "why?".

In relation to these communities and groups, the Panel noted, for example, that demographic analysis from the 2023 residents' satisfaction survey indicated residents in Northern Ward commonly expressed the lowest levels of satisfaction with Council decision-making, facilities and services, as well as having the lowest levels of direct engagement with the Council. Northern Ward residents, along with Māori, older residents, and residents with disabilities, were also identified in the survey as being the least satisfied that Council takes community feedback into account when making decisions.

### iii. Key evaluation questions ..... 12

1. the level of community awareness and understanding about Hutt City Council, its role and its representation structures
2. satisfaction with current representation structures and arrangements in terms of their relevance, inclusiveness and effectiveness for the City's diverse communities
3. changes and/or improvements seen to be needed to these representation structures and arrangements, to ensure fair and effective representation for the City's diverse communities.

### b) Community engagement activities ..... 12

At the Panel's request, a social media campaign was initiated by Council officers from September to

November 2023. This included:

- a page on the Council's website introducing the Panel members and providing information on their background, experience and role in the representation review process
- a page on the 'Kōrero Mai' platform on the website, sharing more detail on the review process and how the community could engage
- promotion of the online community engagement survey (see below) through a link on the 'Kōrero Mai' platform, as well as additional engagement tools for the community to share their feedback and ask questions about the review. This was regularly monitored by Council officers and reported to the Panel
- social media posts to share different ways the community could participate in the survey or in other engagement activities.

Other activities included Council officers arranging for 12,000 postcards to be delivered to addresses in selected areas of the City, encouraging people to have their say in the review process.

In addition, contact was made with the Eastern Bays and Western Hills residents associations inviting their participation in the Panel's community engagement programme.

What was response by residents assns?

i. Encouraging community participation .....	12
ii. Online community engagement survey .....	13

In total, Panel members had nearly 30 face-to-face meetings, or participated in particular events, as part of its engagement programme. Details of the Panel's engagements and the face-to-face meetings are set out in Appendix 5.

6. The Panel's community engagement findings .....	14
a) Awareness and understanding of the Council, its role and its representation structures .....	14

... In relation to representation arrangements and structures in particular, very few knew the exact number of councillors there currently are, that some councillors are elected at-large across the City and that some are elected by wards. Many were not able to name the ward they resided in.

... Generally there was low awareness and understanding of community boards. This was well illustrated in a particular meeting where, when asked about community boards, some wondered if they related to the community information boards located around the City such as at the entrance to Kelson.

Anecdota - presumably this was a Kelson resident, they don't have a community board so why should they be particularly knowledgeable about them? Ditto any Ward other than Harbour and Wainuiomata. Obviously this, like so much else, is a reflection on poor communication by Council, not a reflection on community boards.

Not surprisingly, the online engagement survey findings painted a rather different picture...

- 17% of respondents said they were "very familiar" with the concept of community boards, with 51% saying they were "somewhat familiar", and 32% saying they were "not familiar at all".



More detailed analysis of the online survey responses can be found in Appendix 4. This shows that the highest level of "familiarity with community boards" was, not surprisingly, in Harbour Ward (30%), which has two community boards, while the highest level of "unfamiliarity with community boards" was in Northern Ward (70%) which has no community boards.

Presumably, based on the earlier result, the 30% quoted here is in fact "very familiar", not "somewhat familiar" (using 17% city wide adjusted to 30% for Harbour suggests that upwards of 90% (based on 51% city-wide) Harbour Ward respondents are "somewhat familiar"). This is a pretty good endorsement.

Levels of community awareness and understanding about the Council generally, do not relate directly to the actual representation arrangements needing to be put in place for the 2025 elections.

Why not? These numbers suggest that Wards with community boards have a higher awareness and therefore higher engagement with the process. Something to aim for, not dismiss.

#### **b) Residents' identification with communities** ..... 15

... There was a similar mix of views in the online survey. Over half the respondents (56%) said they identify most closely with Lower Hutt as a whole, as distinct from a local area or suburb. Further analysis showed this was strongest in the old Lower Hutt City area (Central Ward 78%) and weakest in the areas joining the City in 1989 (Harbour Ward 21% and Wainuiomata Ward 30%).

This makes sense, coincidentally these are also Wards with community boards which would reinforce this identification. It also suggests that Ward representation could be redundant for central Hutt as they identify with the city as a whole, so giving them 2 councillors for a community of interest seems redundant?

Some of the factors that led survey respondents to identify most closely with particular communities included: the people who live in the area, **the town centre and its services**, and its geography such as hills, rivers or coastlines. (See Appendix 4 for more detail.)

Town centre and it's services is an interesting comment - the development of Queensgate probably did more to destroy community centres and communities in places like Wainuiomata and Naenae than anything else. Redeveloping these (Nanae Pool, Wainuiomata Mall) will probably create new energy in these.

#### **c) Satisfaction and need for change to representation arrangements** ..... 15

Given the level of awareness and understanding, Panel members often needed to provide descriptions and explanations of the current representation arrangements in their meetings.

Mr Swain commented that when people were told about the powers that community boards had, they were less enthusiastic. This is of course a totally inadequate description of the role that community boards play, and would bias the listeners view. Boards rarely if ever get to use those powers, and the Council can easily circumvent them if they wish. The community board is mainly about community action and communication between Council and community, giving the community a voice when necessary and appropriate. The Elected Members Request is a powerful tool. I'm sure Mr SWain did not offer any of this and was possibly not even aware of it.

- 67% of respondents thought having a community board in their area or suburb was a good idea, while 33% did not.
- 48% of respondents said there should be community boards across the whole City, 25% said there should be no community boards, and 15% said community boards should be limited to the three current areas which have boards.

Two thirds of the respondents would like a community board in their area. Three quarters (i.e. more) of the respondents think there should be community boards with half thinking that every ward should have one.

Again, more detailed analysis of survey responses can be found in Appendix 4. This includes analysis of variations relating to community boards. The Panel notes here, the variations in support for having a community board ranged from 82% "support for having a community board" in Harbour and Wainuiomata wards, the two wards which have community boards, to 57% "opposed to community boards" in Central Ward where there are no community boards.

So those wards with community boards are enthusiastic about them, the least enthusiastic is the Central Ward which doesn't have a community identity (identifies with the city) - but there is still some support, even there.

## 7. Identifying Lower Hutt's communities of interest

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### a) City-wide communities of interest

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### b) Local communities of

interest..... 18

### i. Old Lower Hutt City communities .....

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From the perspective of 'perceived communities of interest', the Panel noted a large majority of

current Central Ward respondents (78%) in the online engagement survey, identified with Lower Hutt City as a whole, as opposed to a more local community. Eastern Ward respondents had the second highest level of identification with Lower Hutt City as a whole, at 69%.

Given that the Central Ward is the city centre, it's unsurprising that the percentage identifying with the city is so high, the lines are very blurred geographically - whereas the difference between "the city" and Wainuiomata is distinct. If the Central Ward is removed from the mix then nearly 60% identify more closely with their community.

## ii. Harbour communities – Petone and Eastbourne ..... 20

The area also has a network of residents associations, representing the interests of Eastern Bays residents.

Notably, Eastbourne does not have a residents association, so their interests are not represented as such.

## iii. Wainuiomata community ..... 21

### 8. Achieving effective and fair representation at the council level ..... 22

#### a) The total number of councillors ..... 22

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#### c) The number of Māori wards and number of Māori ward councillors ..... 27

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#### e) Conclusion on achieving effective and fair representation for Lower Hutt ..... 29

#### f) Recommendations ..... 30

### 9. Effective and fair representation and the community boards option ..... 31

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b) Community awareness and views on community boards	31

As outlined in Section 6, the Panel found from its engagement process that there are widely varying levels of understanding about community boards and their role in the community. Responses to the online survey ranged from little or no understanding, to some level of understanding. Only 17% of 32 respondents said they were "very familiar" with the concept of community boards, a further 51% said they were "somewhat familiar", and 32% said they were "not familiar at all".

On further analysis, the highest level of "familiarity with community boards" was, not surprisingly, in Harbour Ward (30%), which has two community boards, while the highest level of "unfamiliarity with community boards" was in Northern Ward (70%) which has no community boards.

The use of language is disappointing. The overall familiarity percentages are classified as "very familiar", "somewhat familiar" and "not familiar". When referring to Harbour Ward this now becomes "familiar" at 30%. Since 51% overall were somewhat familiar, the combined familiarity for the Harbour Ward would appear to be about 90%, not 30% as quoted, quite a difference, but supporting the idea that the community boards support awareness. Note also the choice of 30% familiar with 70% unfamiliar, this is very misleading reference.

When the issue of community boards was raised in the Panel's face-to-face meetings, the focus was often necessarily on explaining the role of community boards, their history and why there were community boards in some areas of the City and not in others. In line with the online survey findings, the level of understanding of community boards and their role varied according to whether people had any actual experience with community boards in their area.

Conceptually, people the Panel engaged with liked the idea of community boards, as it sounded like a mechanism that could enhance local democracy. However, when informed about the actual powers of community boards, as outlined in their "Functions and delegations 2022-2025" document, it became apparent that there was something of a mismatch between what community boards in Lower Hutt actually do, and what the community may think they do.

The document does not describe what community boards actually do, and to present it as such is extremely misleading. Even casual research into Community Boards would show that most of the activities undertaken are not listed as powers, but are related to representation and communication - the one area identified as poorly served by the Council.

Equally importantly, the Panel's engagement raised frequent questions about the equity of the current arrangements, namely there being two community boards in one ward (Petone and Eastbourne boards in Harbour Ward), one in another ward (Wainuiomata) and none in any of the other four wards.

Whoa! Surprise!

c) Community board members' views .....	32
d) The respective roles of community boards and ward councillors .....	32
e) The community board role and how it is being performed .....	33

Promoting a good understanding of the community board role and encouraging and facilitating community boards in carrying out their role, sits largely with the council concerned. It is the acceptance, or otherwise, of this responsibility, that appears to be a big determinant of whether, across New Zealand, community boards are seen as effective or not.

Clearly, the Council has a responsibility here, and underperforming in this affects the community boards effectiveness.

f) Options for community boards in Lower Hutt .....	33
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The Panel then noted that, in the absence of strong, ongoing support for community boards to give full effect to their role, community boards can be seen as:

- adding an unnecessary layer in decision-making processes, resulting in less efficient and less effective decision-making - **untrue and unfounded**
- raising false community expectations about what the community board can do - **nonsense, if this misconception exists it is because the Council has failed to do it's job, not the board.**
- likely to cause confusion between the ward councillor role and the community board role - **evidence? "likely?"**
- in the case of Lower Hutt's three existing community boards, no longer necessary or justified 35 years after local government reform - **unfounded, absolutely no grounds for this statement**
- costly - what grounds is this statement made? There is no financial analysis anywhere in this document. If any analysis was done it would probably show a significant cost benefit.

Unfortunately this is not the only unsubstantiated throw-away comment in this report? I would also question whether the costs of any option is within the remit of the Panel, especially as no costs have been quoted for any of the options or recommendations discussed - why is this the only quoted cost when it is probably the smallest one out of all the other issues discussed. There is no mention of the cost of an additional ward councillor or the overheads to support that, so why here?

i. Option 1: Retaining the existing three community boards .....	34
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The Panel first turned its attention to the three existing community boards in Lower Hutt.



While it needs to be acknowledged that the community boards have progressed important local issues over the years, the Panel believes that the historical reasons for establishing the current boards are much less valid today.

Can't argue with that

Lower Hutt has become a more cosmopolitan city with changing demographics. Residents now have greater mobility, which results in more movement of people across the previously more fixed urban boundaries, for work, housing, recreation and leisure activities.

People still live in communities, and a healthy, welcoming integrated community is much easier to move into than a dysfunctional one.

The political imperative in 1989 for establishing community boards reflected a great upheaval in the local government sector which no longer exists today. In addition, the Panel questions whether a community board type structure, positioned between the community and its parent council, that may have been appropriate 35 years ago, is the best approach in the 21st century.

Asking the question does not answer it - you can question anything, but it doesn't change anything, it's the answer that matters and none is given to this repeated comment.

Today, communities seek a more focused, targeted, flexible and responsive approach to addressing

their concerns and aspirations. One particular example of this is the Pacific community in Lower Hutt. In its community engagement, the Panel was advised that structures such as community boards or community panels, failed to respond adequately to the specific needs and aspirations of

the Pacific community.

This is an (anecdotal) example of a geographical community board not responding to a city-wide cultural group - but that's not their responsibility, it's the Council's job and it's been established that the Council has failed - it's wrong to blame that on a community board. No one would argue that city-wide communities should not be engaged, it just doesn't fit the scope of a community board.

As set out above, it appears that community boards, in both Lower Hutt and more generally across the country, have not been as effective as they could have been. This is in large measure, a result of actions, or lack of action, by parent councils over the years. This has seen, for example, very limited delegations of decision-making responsibilities to community boards, and an absence of creative uses of boards in areas such as community engagement.

The Panel does not see the current limited approaches to community board responsibilities changing in the foreseeable future.

This is blaming the "messenger" - clearly states the problem lies with Council, but says the council cannot change so get rid of the boards. The Panel cannot blame the Council as it has several times, and then solve the problem this way. It has already been established that the Council has recommended getting rid of community boards - that seems like a lazy way to solve their failures. The one certainty that will come out of this approach is that if the council doesn't do better, the community will lose what little representation it has when it loses the boards. In essence this report is saying the problems are more about Council performance than representation.

In the Panel's view it will be difficult to resolve the current confusion of roles and responsibilities between community board members and councillors. This is on the basis that councillors, and particularly ward councillors, are likely to continue to have a more accepted mandate to represent the people in their wards, to make decisions on their behalf, and to be held accountable for their actions every three years.

What confusion? This hasn't been established. The councillors have a mandate to represent at council, the boards have a mandate to represent the community views and needs, and to communicate between council and community. The only confusion is over power, and it's been acknowledged that the responsibility for this lies with Council, not the boards or the board structure.

Finally, notwithstanding the reasons for establishing community boards in 1989, the Panel noted the feedback it received during its community engagement programme, that it is not equitable to retain two community boards in one ward, one board in another ward, and to have no community boards in the other four wards.

Can't argue with that, in fact our board would like to see that change - so let's move on

The Panel was advised that successive Councils have tried alternative structures in 'non-community board' wards to address this equity issue. These have included community committees (2010-2013), community panels (2017-2019) and community funding panels (2020-2023). Members were appointed to these structures by the Council. The Panel notes that appointment by Council is seen by some as a way to ensure more diverse representation, than that which results from the traditional voting process. While to others, it may be seen as unlikely to provide an independent voice to the Council from the community, when this is necessary. The Panel understands these structures have had mixed reviews over the years, and that they no longer exist. This may be due to factors such as the appointment process, lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities, or questions about the Council's commitment to these structures.

This last long paragraph says that other attempts at setting up alternatives have failed, for a number of possible reasons, one of which is lack of support from council. Essentially, appointments don't work, ditto volunteers or self selecting, for various reasons.

## ii. Option 2: Establishing community boards in more wards

..... 35

... However, the Panel was not convinced that the case for a community board for the expanded Northern Ward in particular, or any of the other wards in its proposed five-ward model, was strong

enough to outweigh the arguments, identified above under option 1, against having community Boards.

The arguments in option 1 are weak, so this comment is irrelevant. The argument against more wards (but not all) having boards is a waste of time, except the note about some other regions having community boards except for their Central Ward - but for some reason the Panel gives no reason for not considering this, just moves on.

### iii. Option 3: Establishing community boards in all wards

..... 36

Similarly, the Panel was of the view that arguments for having community boards in all five wards under its five-ward model, were not strong enough to outweigh the arguments against having community boards set out in option 1.

This is dismissive and avoids the issue. The arguments given in 1 are weak and unsubstantiated. The boards for all wards option has fairness and equity but this is not mentioned, even though unfairness is raised in 1 - why not? Based on all the evidence given, the results, the engagement, plus community preferences expressed, the most fair, equitable and effective model would be to have community boards for each ward, with single board in the Harbour Ward. This option should be seriously discussed, community boards are effective, and just like the other electoral changes already recommended, some alterations could be considered.

### g) Conclusion in relation to community boards in Lower Hutt

..... 36

At one level, there is a degree of support for community boards in the City. In relation to the three options identified for its community engagement, 48% of online survey respondents thought there should be community boards across the City, 25% thought there should be no community boards, and 16% thought community boards should be limited to the current three areas (Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata).

It is unlikely that the 16% who opted for the status quo would have chosen to have no community board rather than let ward have one - so it's reasonably safe to say that given the choice there would be 64% support (i.e %) for boards for all wards if no boards was the only other choice.

These findings need to be considered, however, in the context of the generally poor understanding of both the formal role of community boards, and also what they currently do.

This avoids the fact that the Panel felt the responsibility for this lies with the Council, but also it would seem the Panel itself does not have a grasp of the full extent of what community boards do, there is no indication anywhere in this document that they do.

The Panel also reflected on a view that establishing formal structures like community boards positioned between the community and the Council is not likely to be effective in the 21st century.



This is on the basis of the changing nature of the community's interests, needs and aspirations, and also the clear obligation on the Council to inform, consult, represent and make decisions on behalf of those communities.

Repeating doesn't make it so. Saying the community board sits between the community and Council is wrong, and appears to be a repeated misconception - there is nothing in this report that suggests this is true. The repeated reference to the 21st Century is also unsubstantiated in any way and does the Panel no favours.

#### **h) Recommendation**

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#### **10. 'Building a better bridge to the community'**

..... 37

##### **a) Reflections from the Panel's community engagement**

..... 37

This whole section could be resolved by introducing community boards which tick all these boxes.

The Panel's engagements revealed that certain communities face significant challenges in having their voices heard by the City's decision-makers. Many do not know who their councillors are, and there is a lack of awareness of councillor roles and responsibilities. Also, many people advised that there does not appear to be a clear, visible pathway for communities to approach and engage with the Council on matters that are of interest or importance to them.

...

The Panel acknowledges that the Council spends considerable resources on engaging with communities in order to get feedback on issues critical to the City. This engagement often takes the form of surveys, consultation documents, use of social media, invitations to consultation meetings and so on. The Panel heard that while such engagement channels may work for some, they do not necessarily suit all. Improved community engagement will become increasingly important in future, given the changing face of the Lower Hutt community, and will need to take into account those who find it difficult to engage using current traditional channels.

##### **b) Recommendations for a focused approach to engagement**

..... 38

Drawing on its experiences in undertaking this review, the Panel has identified a set of principles that it believes will better connect the Council with local communities:

- negotiating access to communities through those with 'lived experience' of that community (that's the community board)
- engaging at 'their place', resulting in an increased level of comfort and safety, and at a time that best suits the community (that's what we do)
- ensuring discussions are facilitated jointly with a local community member, to allow for a wider range of community participation (that's what we do)

- communicating information from the Council to communities in their own language, if appropriate, so as to improve reach and access. (Most of the ethnic and migrant communities have regular newsletters or social media contact with their communities, and they have offered to translate summaries of Council information into their own language when necessary.)

From Panel members' experience, engagement is not always suited to a '9am to 5pm Monday-Friday' approach, and that 'information overload' through passive social media platforms, is not particularly effective. The Panel considers a more proactive approach is needed. (we know that, and that's what we respond to)

The Panel believes it would be timely for the Council to consider building a stronger, more fit-for-purpose 'bridge', as a way to better engage with communities whose voices are often not heard at Council. (Community Boards!)

#### i. Identifying community agents ..... 38

The Panel found that there are a number of community leaders who are willing to act as 'agents' of their community, to help facilitate dialogue and discussions with the Council as needed. These agents could also serve as 'knowledge hubs' to assist the Council with its work such as in its long term plan discussions. They could also provide a two-way channel, taking information to the community and bringing information back to Council decision-makers.

Note that Mr Swain made a point that he was not intending these 'agents' would be used with geographical communities of interest - i.e. that wards. This, and everything that follows refers to ethnic, migrant communities etc. There appears to be no solution offered for wards as geographical communities of interest.

#### ii. Introducing portfolio responsibilities for councillors..... 39

#### iii. Establishing a work programme ..... 39

#### iv. Approach for disabled people ..... 39

#### v. Funding ..... 39

The Panel recognises that a new engagement approach, similar to that outlined, will require resourcing if it is to be successful. We also are acutely aware that all councils are facing increased cost pressures and are fiscally constrained at the present time. We therefore suggest that some of the funding that is currently allocated to community boards, be re-allocated to implement this engagement approach.

This appears to be the motive behind disestablishing community boards, money, not representation. The funding saved would be lucky to fund 2xFTE across 5 wards and how many communities of interest?

**vi. Conclusion .....**  
39

The approach outlined here is focused on engagement with communities who are not engaged with the Council. **The approach has not been discussed with the wider population**, though we believe the general principles will still apply. Low voter turnout, and low responses to Council surveys and consultation activities, demonstrate that civic participation is low amongst all groups. Given this, the Panel's more focused approach to community engagement is likely to better serve the needs of the Council and to enable it to harness the knowledge and wisdom that rests in the population.

**Appendix 1: Independent Panel members and terms of reference**  
..... 40

Panel's terms of reference: Tasks

- Identify and define communities of interest in the city
- Identify all reasonably practicable options for achieving fair and effective representation arrangements for the communities of interest in the city, including the number of councillors, the basis of election of councillors (at-large, by ward or a mix of both) and the need for community boards
- Conduct such research, enquiries or other work as considered necessary to complete this brief
- Seek preliminary community input as required
- Report to council on the representation options identified, the community feedback received, and the panel's recommended option including the reasons for this option
- Present and explain the panel's conclusions to the community as necessary
- In the event of appeals or objections against the council's final proposal, provide support to the council as appropriate
- Such other tasks as may be identified during the process

No reference here that the Panel should be looking at fiscal issues, or describing how the council should improve its communication with the community - these seem way outside its brief.

**Appendix 2: Comparative council representation arrangements**  
.....42

Note that out of 10 comparative councils, 60% have community boards, and 3 of those have 6 boards

### Appendix 3: Resident surveys

43

The most recent annual Lower Hutt residents' satisfaction survey, conducted in 2023 with 1,719 responses, showed that 41% of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with "the ease with which you can have your say on council activities and proposals", with 21% either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, and 38% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Read this as: 2:1 satisfied vs dissatisfied, or only 1:5 dissatisfied.

A breakdown of survey respondents by ward, showed that Harbour Ward (47%), Eastern Ward (46%) and Western Ward (44%) respondents had the highest levels of satisfaction.

Survey was 5 levels of "satisfaction" - this comment only talks about satisfaction, doesn't say if it very or both. Need to see the breakdown in full

Forty percent of respondents agreed that "council takes community feedback into account when making decisions, with 37% disagreeing, and 24% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Among the groups least satisfied on this last issue, were residents from Northern Ward (32%), Māori (34%), residents aged 55-64 (28%) and residents with disabilities (38%).

Doesn't say how many are satisfied (could be more) or undecided. This figure suggests the minority are unhappy?

#### Quality of life survey 2022

Hutt City Council is one of nine councils that participates in the biennial Quality of Life survey conducted by NielsenIQ.5 Some key findings for Lower Hutt from the last survey conducted in 2022, are set out here relating to the satisfaction of residents (18 years and over) with their quality of life, including perceptions about Hutt City Council and the role it plays for their community.

Can't find ref in doc - this from online

<https://pacific.surveys.nielseniq.com/apps/dashboard/selfserve/53b/onl45378:view/ymbqh0sw3yb#fn=dashboardConfig/tab:6>

The vast majority of Lower Hutt respondents (88%~~89%~~ of the total 580 ~~547~~ respondents) felt positively about their quality of life generally, slightly above the average ~~second~~ by 1% after Tauranga for all respondents in all council areas in the survey.

In line with all respondents in all council areas, 70% ~~76%~~ of Lower Hutt respondents either agreed or

strongly agreed that it was important to them that they feel a sense of community with people in their neighbourhood (2nd after Porirua). Along with this, 51% 58% of Lower Hutt respondents said they did experience a sense of community with people in their neighbourhood. (3rd after Tauranga, Porirua)

95% (2nd after Tauranga) had positive contact in neighbourhood in last 12 months  
Scored about middle on impact of greater cultural diversity in city, 2nd least for thinking diversity is a negative, and the only city where no one thought there was no diversity.

Thirty-four percent of Lower Hutt respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed that their council makes decisions in the best interests of their city, with 26% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that this was the case. This compares to 27% and 41% respectively, for all respondents in all council areas.

Can't verify this, but better than average for sure

In relation to perceptions about the public's influence on council decision-making, 36% of Lower Hutt respondents saw the public as having large influence or some influence. This compares to 28% for all respondents in all council areas. On the other hand, 17% of Lower Hutt respondents saw the public as having no influence on council decision-making, compared to 27% for all respondents in all council areas.

So Hutt City scores significantly better on both ends regarding representation - so why change?  
There is no driver or red flag in this data to suggest things are heading in the wrong direction comparatively.

#### Appendix 4: Online community engagement survey..... 44

35% responses earned over \$150,000

Question 1: How many councillors are elected now to represent Lower Hutt?

Responses:

- 0-5 councillors: 10%, n=69
- 6-11 councillors: 23%, n=161
- 12 councillors: 50%, n=345
- 13-15 councillors: 15%, n=104
- 16+ councillors: 2%, n=16

Given that some might think the Mayor is also a councillor, 13-15 could be a reasonable response, 65%

Question 4: How familiar are you with the concept and role of community boards?

Responses:



- very familiar: 17%, n=130
- somewhat familiar: 51%, n=386
- not familiar at all: 32%, n=243

76% familiar - pretty good since 50% of the city don't have or need to understand this.

Question 5: What community do you most closely identify with?

Responses:

- 56% (n=509) of respondents said Lower Hutt as a whole
- 44% (n=406) of respondents said a more local community

Wards with Community Boards 70%-80% identify with community, Central Ward the opposite (note that at least one other authority sees their central ward as not needing a community board for this reason.

Key themes associated with why respondents identified with particular communities were:

Sorted - note this is not a valid sort but possibly indicative of something

- Its geography, such as hills, rivers, coastlines: 51%, n=466
- The people who live in the area: 32%, n=299
- The town centre and its services: 24%, n=224
- Experience with community: 23%, n=216
- Access to services/facilities: 22%, n=200
- Perception of residence as identity: 17%, n=153
- The community and recreational facilities: 18%, n=166
- Access to public transport e.g. rail, bus: 14%, n=130
- Access to parks/reserves: 5%, n=48

Need for change to current representation arrangements

Question 6: The number of councillors:

Responses:

- is about right: 71%, n=488
- there should be more councillors: 8%, n=58
- there should be fewer councillors: 21%, n=144

Note fewer result heavily biased by NZ European representation

Main driver for increasing councillors was better representation. Main driver for reduction is economic.

Question 8: Do you think having a community board in your area or suburb is a good idea?

Responses:

- yes: 67%, n=403
- no: 33%, n=195

Responses broken down by ward:

	Northern Ward n=53	Central Ward n=98	Eastern Ward n=95	Western Ward n=93	Harbour Ward n=120	Wainuiomata Ward n=79
Yes	75%	43%	62%	62%	82%	82%
No	25%	57%	38%	38%	18%	18%

Clearly follows the identification with community surveyed earlier, with the exception of the Northern Ward (identify 50:50) which has a much stronger response to this question (75:25) - conclusion is, they (Northern) want to identify as a community and see a community board as supporting this.

**Question 9: What about having community boards in the city generally?**

Responses:

- yes, across the entire city: 48%, n=307
- no community boards in the city: 25%, n=160
- limited to Eastbourne, Petone, Wainuiomata: 15%, n=99
- other: 12%, n=76

Responses broken down by gender:

	Male n=293	Female n=320
Across the entire city	37%	58%
No community boards	32%	18%
Limited to current 3 locations	19%	12%
Other	12%	12%

Responses broken down by ward:

	Northern Ward n=59	Central Ward n=117	Eastern Ward n=105	Western Ward n=110	Harbour Ward n=114	Wainuiomata Ward n=80
Across the entire city	61%	37%	52%	46%	46%	51%
No community boards	22%	41%	23%	26%	17%	16%
Limited to current 3 locations	3%	13%	14%	15%	23%	23%
Other	14%	9%	10%	13%	14%	10%

Note the stronger support for community boards by "Female" - I notice this "community of interest" was missed in consultation too.

If we remove retaining the current community board setup as an option - presumably the majority would opt for city wide (why was it not presented like this? (There is an element of dilution in this).

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	North	Central	East	West	Harb	Wainui	Average	drop 3 board option
Entire	61.00%	37.00%	52.00%	46.00%	46.00%	51.00%	48.83%	64.00%
None	22.00%	41.00%	23.00%	26.00%	17.00%	16.00%	24.17%	24.17%
3 current	3.00%	13.00%	14.00%	15.00%	23.00%	23.00%	15.17%	0
other?	14.00%	9.00%	10.00%	13.00%	14.00%	10.00%	11.67%	11.67%

#### Reasons for community boards across the entire city

- enhanced local representation: 14%, n=128
- fairness and equitable representation: 9%, n=87
- addressing unique community needs: 2%, n=20

Enhanced local representation: "Respondents generally support the idea of community boards across the city for enhanced local representation. They believe it would ensure fairness and equality of representation, address the specific needs of each area, provide better local knowledge and connection, and allow for more local decision-making. Some respondents also highlighted the importance of grassroots involvement, better communication with council, and equitable representation for all residents. Overall, there is a desire for community boards to be accessible to all areas and cover a diverse range of issues."

Fairness and equitable representation: "Respondents express the importance of fairness and equitable representation in community boards across the city. They believe that community boards allow local communities to be involved in decision-making and ensure that all areas are represented.

Many respondents highlight the need for equal access to community boards and advocate for boards in all areas of the city."

Addressing unique community needs: "Respondents highlight the importance of community boards in addressing unique community needs and ensuring representation. They emphasise that community boards allow locals to be more engaged with local democracy, make local decisions, and hold ward councillors accountable. Many respondents also express the need for fairness and equality in representation across the city, stating that all areas should have community boards."

#### Reasons for no community boards in the city

- concerns regarding costs: 6%, n=56

- questioning effectiveness and utility: 3%, n=31
- redundancy and duplication of efforts: 3%, n=25

Concerns regarding costs: "Respondents expressed concerns about the cost associated with community boards. They view community boards as a waste of money, unnecessary, and a duplication of elected councillors' roles. Some respondents also highlight the inequality in representation, with specific areas having community boards while others do not.

Overall, the sentiment is negative towards community boards and their perceived lack of effectiveness and Value."

Inequality is of course negated if all wards have boards. Why this reference to "Overall" - overall to what?

Questioning effectiveness and utility: "Respondents questioned the effectiveness and utility of community boards, with concerns about limited powers, limited influence, duplication of work, and unequal representation. Some argue that elected councillors should adequately represent their communities without the need for additional boards. Others highlight the need for simplicity, reduced bureaucracy, and financial savings. Overall, there is a sentiment of scepticism and a call to re-evaluate the necessity of community boards."

The limited powers were highlighted by the Panel, combined with the other statements infer that the Panel appears to not have done an effective job of describing what boards actually do.

Redundancy and duplication of efforts: "Many feel that community boards duplicate the work of elected councillors and do not offer sufficient benefits to justify their existence. Overall, respondents believe that community boards are unnecessary and should be eliminated."

Again - this is lack of understanding, but given that 3% of those surveyed did not have a community board, and many of these probably didn't know anything about them - their feedback is based on assumption, not fact. Technically, the only people who can really comment on Community Board effectiveness are those in wards with community boards.

Reasons for community boards being limited to current 3 locations

Note: the Northern Ward was the least in favour - probably because they were most in favour of having one themselves which this of course precluded.

Appendix 5: Community organisations and groups the Panel met .....  
53

Appendix 6: Determining the number of Māori ward councillors .....  
54

# Richard Arlidge

Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Neutral

Q4. Comments

not answered

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor Oppose

Q6. Comments:

I believe all Councillors should be democratically elected from as near as realistically equivalent pool of voters - that way you have fair representation which is surely what the review is all about? I have no real issue with what is proposed by way of city-wide and General Ward Councillors, but a 'Maori Ward' Councillor is a racist concept and should have no place in a modern, first-world city given the mix of ethnicities amongst its ratepayers and citizens. Anyone who has an issue with that should perhaps undertake some remedial reading starting with "The Sneetches" by Dr Suess and then, once that's fully comprehended, some study on the views of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr might be worthwhile?

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Neutral

Q8. Comments:

It is noted that, neither in the Council's published statement of 21 November 2023, nor its advertisement in the Hutt News linking this matter, is there mention of how many are likely to be represented by the Maori Ward? Patently, that is a deliberate oversight and deception that brings no credit nor transparency to the Review Committee's findings or Council relay of same.

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Support



## Robert Ashe

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Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Support

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Q4. Comments

not answered

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Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor Support

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Q6. Comments:

Strongly support a Maori Ward Councillor. It's about time!!

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Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Support

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Q8. Comments:

not answered

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Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

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Q10. Comments:

We're distinct communities with distinct local issues and are highly engaged with our Community Boards. They're working extremely well so why stop them! They're an essential part of solving our community's problems and supporting our initiatives. Face-to-face engagement is true democracy -- please don't take that away from us. Finally, Wellington has retained community boards for distinct communities.

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# Barbara Sullivan

Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Neutral

Q4. Comments

not answered

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor Neutral

Q6. Comments:

not answered

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Neutral

Q8. Comments:

not answered

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

Q10. Comments:

I endorse the view of the Eastbourne Community Board : " The Eastbourne Community Board believes that in this digital age, face-to-face access to elected representatives who are neighbours in our communities has never been more important." The mayor and councillors are remote from Eastbourne. Eastbourne is a destination suburb, thus appears to be infrequently visited by the mayor and councillors. Thus the mayor and councillors may find it difficult to be aware of or appreciate Eastbourne issues, when they do not experience or witness them. (Transport , and repeated flooding because of inadequate stormwater drainage are two such issues.) Unless there is a designated local city councillor, Eastbourne residents cannot be confident that their concerns are properly presented to council. The solution is to retain the existing community boards and to institute community boards in other Lower Hutt communities.

# Lowry Bay Residents Association | Stephen Grenside

Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Oppose

## Q4. Comments

I wish to raise a submission on behalf of the Lowry Bay Residents Association (LBRA), against the proposed disestablishment of the existing 3 Community Boards in Lower Hutt. The Eastbourne Community Board (ECB) provides a significant and very proactive communication link between the LBRA and the activities of the Council, as well as many other local community related activities. It can not be overstated to say that without the proactive and community-focussed eyes and ears provided by the ECB, the LBRA would find it extremely challenging to stay informed and engaged with Council activities in the community. The loss of this community focussed service and relationship with the ECB would significantly impact the LBRA's own ability to service and support our own residents and community. Recent examples (and by no means the complete list) of how the ECB has informed and supported the LBRA (and as such, all the residents of Lowry Bay) are: Tupua Horo Nuku Project: Significant collaboration, information and support across the Tupua Horo Nuku project. This has enabled the LBRA to become far more aware and participate in the project, as well as provide the vital communication link with the Lowry Bay Residents Whiorau Bird Protection Project: Significant collaboration, information and support across the Whiorau Reserve Bird Protection project. As with the Tupua Horo Nuku project, the ECB has contributed significantly to LBRA's own ability to engage with this project. Catamaran beaching and pollution of Lowry Bay: When the unfortunate destruction of this Catamaran in the last few years occurred on the Lowry Bay beach (and made less than positive national media headlines, it should be noted), resulting in significant pollution, it was the ECB that stepped in and provided communication linkage to the Greater Regional Council and other supporting services. It should be noted that the LBRA did not hear from the Lower Hutt Council on this matter at all. Council's recent Long Term Plan submissions: Provided the LBRA with awareness of Council's recent Long Term Plan and opportunity for submissions. Eastbourne traffic management and speed restrictions: Provided the LBRA with awareness and opportunity to attend and put in a submission to improve community safety on the local roads. It should be noted that the LBRA has not been engaged directly by Council on any of these matters. Indeed, in my 3 years on the LBRA, we have not been approached or engaged directly by any Council representatives on any matters at all. It would be fair to say, even when Lowry Bay has been broadcast on national media in a poor light – such as during the regular storms and roading impact (apart from immediate road cleaning of Marine Drive which is greatly appreciated by residents ), or during the Catamaran damage to the bay – Council has not engaged or demonstrated any interest or support whatsoever. For Council to suggest in this new disestablishment proposal that somehow the current ECB communication and service to the community is somehow unwarranted and superfluous, and that Council can fill this gap, is, to put it simply, ludicrous and disingenuous. I note that 2 key reasons cited by the Representation Review to justify the disestablishment are weak and defy any reasonable business case or genuine interest in progressing community service. Inequality with only 3 community boards in Hutt City: Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata This reason defies the intent of enabling and promoting equality. Council's logic appears to be "if everyone cannot have it, then no-one will have it" and disguising it as some case for improving equality. A more forward-thinking approach would be to bring the other wards up to the same standard and service that the current 3 community boards offer in their wards, as this would enhance the community experience – as can be clearly evidenced and referenced with the ECB community service examples listed above. No longer relevant in 21st century How specifically is the ECB service no longer relevant in the 21st Century? What specifically are Council's facts that back up this position? With the proliferation of social media and digital communication in the 21st Century, community engagement via human contact is at risk. Indeed, community engagement through non-digital means is more relevant and important than it has ever been; communities are already at risk of losing this human interaction with each other as well as with community bodies such as Council. Removing the ECB from this scene will be another step towards this community breakdown – a negative move, not a positive one. In summary, the LBRA strongly object to the Community Board Review and the proposed disestablishment of the existing 3 Community Boards in Lower Hutt. Regards, Steve Grenside President LBRA

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor

Oppose

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Q6. Comments:

Councillors should be elected based on their abilities, not just to make up numbers.

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Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Oppose  
Wards be made up as follows:

Q8. Comments:

I wish to raise a submission on behalf of the Lowry Bay Residents Association (LBRA), against the proposed disestablishment of the existing 3 Community Boards in Lower Hutt. The Eastbourne Community Board (ECB) provides a significant and very proactive communication link between the LBRA and the activities of the Council, as well as many other local community related activities. It can not be overstated to say that without the proactive and community-focussed eyes and ears provided by the ECB, the LBRA would find it extremely challenging to stay informed and engaged with Council activities in the community. The loss of this community focussed service and relationship with the ECB would significantly impact the LBRA's own ability to service and support our own residents and community. Recent examples (and by no means the complete list) of how the ECB has informed and supported the LBRA (and as such, all the residents of Lowry Bay) are: Tupua Horo Nuku Project: Significant collaboration, information and support across the Tupua Horo Nuku project. This has enabled the LBRA to become far more aware and participate in the project, as well as provide the vital communication link with the Lowry Bay Residents Whiorau Bird Protection Project: Significant collaboration, information and support across the Whiorau Reserve Bird Protection project. As with the Tupua Horo Nuku project, the ECB has contributed significantly to LBRA's own ability to engage with this project. Catamaran beaching and pollution of Lowry Bay: When the unfortunate destruction of this Catamaran in the last few years occurred on the Lowry Bay beach (and made less than positive national media headlines, it should be noted), resulting in significant pollution, it was the ECB that stepped in and provided communication linkage to the Greater Regional Council and other supporting services. It should be noted that the LBRA did not hear from the Lower Hutt Council on this matter at all. Council's recent Long Term Plan submissions: Provided the LBRA with awareness of Council's recent Long Term Plan and opportunity for submissions. Eastbourne traffic management and speed restrictions: Provided the LBRA with awareness and opportunity to attend and put in a submission to improve community safety on the local roads. It should be noted that the LBRA has not been engaged directly by Council on any of these matters. Indeed, in my 3 years on the LBRA, we have not been approached or engaged directly by any Council representatives on any matters at all. It would be fair to say, even when Lowry Bay has been broadcast on national media in a poor light – such as during the regular storms and roading impact (apart from immediate road cleaning of Marine Drive which is greatly appreciated by residents ), or during the Catamaran damage to the bay – Council has not engaged or demonstrated any interest or support whatsoever. For Council to suggest in this new disestablishment proposal that somehow the current ECB communication and service to the community is somehow unwarranted and superfluous, and that Council can fill this gap, is, to put it simply, ludicrous and disingenuous. I note that 2 key reasons cited by the Representation Review to justify the disestablishment are weak and defy any reasonable business case or genuine interest in progressing community service. Inequality with only 3 community boards in Hutt City: Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata This reason defies the intent of enabling and promoting equality. Council's logic appears to be "if everyone cannot have it, then no-one will have it" and disguising it as some case for improving equality. A more forward-thinking approach would be to bring the other wards up to the same standard and service that the current 3 community boards offer in their wards, as this would enhance the community experience – as can be clearly evidenced and referenced with the ECB community service examples listed above. No longer relevant in 21st century How specifically is the ECB service no longer relevant in the 21st Century? What specifically are Council's facts that back up this position? With the proliferation of social media and digital communication in the 21st Century, community engagement via human contact is at risk. Indeed, community engagement through non-digital means is more relevant and important than it has ever been; communities are already at risk of losing this human interaction with each other as well as with community bodies such as Council. Removing the ECB from this scene will be another step towards this community breakdown – a negative move, not a positive one. In summary, the LBRA strongly object to the Community Board Review and the proposed disestablishment of the existing 3 Community Boards in Lower Hutt. Regards, Steve Grenside President LBRA



Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

**Q10. Comments:**

I wish to raise a submission on behalf of the Lowry Bay Residents Association (LBRA), against the proposed disestablishment of the existing 3 Community Boards in Lower Hutt. The Eastbourne Community Board (ECB) provides a significant and very proactive communication link between the LBRA and the activities of the Council, as well as many other local community related activities. It can not be overstated to say that without the proactive and community-focussed eyes and ears provided by the ECB, the LBRA would find it extremely challenging to stay informed and engaged with Council activities in the community. The loss of this community focussed service and relationship with the ECB would significantly impact the LBRA's own ability to service and support our own residents and community. Recent examples (and by no means the complete list) of how the ECB has informed and supported the LBRA (and as such, all the residents of Lowry Bay) are: Tupua Horo Nuku Project: Significant collaboration, information and support across the Tupua Horo Nuku project. This has enabled the LBRA to become far more aware and participate in the project, as well as provide the vital communication link with the Lowry Bay Residents Whiorau Bird Protection Project: Significant collaboration, information and support across the Whiorau Reserve Bird Protection project. As with the Tupua Horo Nuku project, the ECB has contributed significantly to LBRA's own ability to engage with this project. Catamaran beaching and pollution of Lowry Bay: When the unfortunate destruction of this Catamaran in the last few years occurred on the Lowry Bay beach (and made less than positive national media headlines, it should be noted), resulting in significant pollution, it was the ECB that stepped in and provided communication linkage to the Greater Regional Council and other supporting services. It should be noted that the LBRA did not hear from the Lower Hutt Council on this matter at all. Council's recent Long Term Plan submissions: Provided the LBRA with awareness of Council's recent Long Term Plan and opportunity for submissions. Eastbourne traffic management and speed restrictions: Provided the LBRA with awareness and opportunity to attend and put in a submission to improve community safety on the local roads. It should be noted that the LBRA has not been engaged directly by Council on any of these matters. Indeed, in my 3 years on the LBRA, we have not been approached or engaged directly by any Council representatives on any matters at all. It would be fair to say, even when Lowry Bay has been broadcast on national media in a poor light – such as during the regular storms and roading impact (apart from immediate road cleaning of Marine Drive which is greatly appreciated by residents ), or during the Catamaran damage to the bay – Council has not engaged or demonstrated any interest or support whatsoever. For Council to suggest in this new disestablishment proposal that somehow the current ECB communication and service to the community is somehow unwarranted and superfluous, and that Council can fill this gap, is, to put it simply, ludicrous and disingenuous. I note that 2 key reasons cited by the Representation Review to justify the disestablishment are weak and defy any reasonable business case or genuine interest in progressing community service. Inequality with only 3 community boards in Hutt City: Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata This reason defies the intent of enabling and promoting equality. Council's logic appears to be "if everyone cannot have it, then no-one will have it" and disguising it as some case for improving equality. A more forward-thinking approach would be to bring the other wards up to the same standard and service that the current 3 community boards offer in their wards, as this would enhance the community experience – as can be clearly evidenced and referenced with the ECB community service examples listed above. No longer relevant in 21st century How specifically is the ECB service no longer relevant in the 21st Century? What specifically are Council's facts that back up this position? With the proliferation of social media and digital communication in the 21st Century, community engagement via human contact is at risk. Indeed, community engagement through non-digital means is more relevant and important than it has ever been; communities are already at risk of losing this human interaction with each other as well as with community bodies such as Council. Removing the ECB from this scene will be another step towards this community breakdown – a negative move, not a positive one. In summary, the LBRA strongly object to the Community Board Review and the proposed disestablishment of the existing 3 Community Boards in Lower Hutt. Regards, Steve Grenside President LBRA

# Emily Keddell

Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Oppose

Q4. Comments

The proposed increase of councilor numbers to 13 does not increase the representation of residents in the Hutt.

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor Support

Q6. Comments:

But I don't support a maori ward councillor being added. It promotes division between New Zealanders and sets up an apartheid system of governance at a council level.

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Oppose

Q8. Comments:

I oppose the harbour ward losing a representative in this allocation. The review wishes to remove the community boards from this area and a ward councillor.

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

Q10. Comments:

This move is centralizing governance and removing an effective form of representation to unique communities within the Hutt. Every ward should have a community board elected from local people who are accountable to their neighbours and motivated to see the best outcomes for their community.

# Malcolm Sime

Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Oppose

Q4. Comments

We don't need an extra Councilor, as we don't need a Māori Ward. Why divide the residents as we are all Kiwis and should be treated as such. Are we going to head towards Indian, Chinese and every other nationality Wards, or are we going to treat all as equal?

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor Oppose

Q6. Comments:

Delete the 1 Māori Ward Councillor.

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Support

Q8. Comments:

not answered

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

Q10. Comments:

We need a continuation of Community Board as that way the community can have a strong voice to Council, as against individuals, whose voice may be heard, but accepted with little weight. Why contemplate changing something that is not broken?

# Karl Weeks-Dickson

Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Neutral

Q4. Comments

I do not believe that we have had enough time to see if the current model of Ward/City wide councillors work. I am a firm believer in the need for a Maori ward, and support that addition; yet the current model of council needs more than two terms before we can dismiss it and the current ward layout.

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor Oppose

Q6. Comments:

See previous comment.

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Oppose

Q8. Comments:

Highlighting the councillor/population ratio is too simplistic; as effective representation is not a matter of a ratio. It is about ensuring that those whose voices are not heard currently can be heard in the future. Having an additional councillor does not ensure that those voices are heard does it?

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Support

**Q10. Comments:**

I spent 6 years (for my sins in a previous life) on one (as Deputy and then Chair), when we still had Community Panels in those areas not represented by CBs- yet council removed these and were not replaced with CBs. Why? Even then, there were questions about the efficacy of the Community Board model- and nothing since then. I have also been through a Rep. Review, including the "Super City debacle". Sadly, there was a lack of boldness from most elected members to ask whether their model was fit for purpose (this remains the same, this time around). Why I support the removal of CB's is best summed up by how CBs respond when asked to justify their existence, CBs seem to revert to the tried-and-true response- "let me tell you what I do for your community". Or "look what we funded all those years ago". Or the worst one of all, "Well our CB has been in existence since 1989, and our community needs us". These responses are akin to asking me what kind of father I am- when the best gauge of my fatherhood would be to ask my daughters. Or me espousing all the things I brought them; or the fact that I have been a father for 18 years- that must count for something? None of these things point to my value as a father, do they? As with CB's, we hear elected members telling us of their worth; and yet my own experience (and conversations in the past few months) that many people in the areas with CBs fail to grasp what they do, and who is on them- this is the curse of all local government though. I now reside in an area with a CB, and I fail to see what we are missing as a community; we have access to a councillor/councillors and can engage with Council Officers when needed (on a number of issues- both small and large). I fail to see how imposing a CB on my ward would aid me or others; instead it gives us a group of elected members with weak delegations, who simply add another layer of unneeded politicians. As the efficacy of CBs has been in question for some time, it does not make sense to adopt that model across the city- esp. when some wards have highly effective residents' associations. One submission I received during a Rep Review, "I have made my submission, but given that turkeys never vote for Thanksgiving, I am not holding my breath"- which kind points to the lack of boldness we are seeing at the moment. If CBs are truly committed to "better representation", then surely it behoves them to boldly explore what would work best for their community, as opposed to simply keeping what we have? This lack of boldness (and I would suggest leadership) is a clear example of why their time is up.

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# Nicolle O'Neill

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Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Oppose

Q4. Comments

I already have too little input and lack of response from current community board- I would get even LESS of a voice to have one person take over multiple areas. Is Council listening to anything we say??

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor Oppose

Q6. Comments:

I think each community should have it's own representative

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Oppose

Q8. Comments:

not answered

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

Q10. Comments:

not answered

# Graham Wilson

Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? not answered

Q4. Comments

not answered

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor Oppose

Q6. Comments:

I support the retention of Community Boards. They keep us close to the communities that they serve and in the event that there is a disaster we have leadership on hand and immediate direction on how to organize.

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Neutral

Q8. Comments:

not answered

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? not answered

Q10. Comments:

not answered

## Frank Vickers

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Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Neutral

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Q4. Comments

not answered

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Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of:5 city wide Councillors,7 Councillors from five General Wards and,1 Māori Ward Councillor Neutral

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Q6. Comments:

not answered

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Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Neutral

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Q8. Comments:

not answered

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Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

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Q10. Comments:

not answered

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# Petone Community House | Sally-Ann Moffat

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## Submission of Petone Community House to the Hutt City Council Representation Review 2023-2024

### Decisions sought

1. The Board of Petone Community House Inc welcomes the opportunity to submit on Hutt City Council's Representation Review for 2023-2024. The Board wishes to make the following submission on the recommendations of the independent panel:
  - It OPPOSES the recommendation to disestablish the Petone Community Board.
  - It OPPOSES Option 6 for general wards (a combined Wainuiomata/Harbour ward) and is neutral on the other options for wards including the independent panel's recommended option.
  - It SUPPORTS the recommendation to establish one Māori ward, the Mana Kairangi ki Tai Māori Ward (and supports a referendum on retaining the Māori ward in 2025).

### Introduction to the Petone Community House

2. Petone Community House Inc [PCH] is a registered charity with a purpose "to enhance the quality of life of the members of the local Petone community and those associated with the Community House by running the Community House as a place to bring the community together and by running community activities and programmes at the Community House for members of the local Petone community to participate."
3. PCH is a long-established part of the Petone community, operating from the same heritage premises in the historic heart of the suburb since 1980. We provide a safe and sheltered place for the residents of Petone to seek advice or help, improve their wellbeing, and come together with like-minded people for enjoyment and learning.
4. As a result the PCH whānau (the Board and PCH members and volunteers, those who offer community services or activities at the House, and their users and manuhiri) collectively have a strong understanding of the needs of the Petone community. Our whānau reflect the diversity of Petone, and we have a strong interest in ensuring that local democratic structures support Petone, its people, and PCH to not only survive but thrive.

### Petone is a unique community of interest which needs guaranteed democratic representation

5. PCH understands the financial situation in which Hutt City Council finds itself and the drivers to find financial savings, including through disestablishing the community boards. Nevertheless, we do not support the recommendations of the independent panel with regard to the Petone Community Board, and we support its retention.
6. The legislation and precedents governing representation reviews put a great deal of weight on the concept of communities of interest as one of the bases for determining fair and effective democratic representation for individuals and communities. PCH considers that Petone is a strongly defined community of interest that can be distinguished from its neighbouring communities because:
  - a. It demonstrates very strong local identity and its residents express a clear and enduring sense of belonging to Petone. This is reflected in the independent panel's report, which notes that the residents of Harbour ward including Petone have by far the weakest identification with Hutt City as their primary community of interest and very high

identification with their local suburb (and the strongest support for retaining community boards, at 82% – pages 15-16, 20). This identity is longstanding and Petone has retained much of its historical character while continuing to welcome new residents.

- b. With its extensive retail and service centre extending along and around Jackson Street, most of the community's need for services can be met from within the community. This is unique in Hutt City outside the CBD and makes Petone distinctive within Hutt City. Petone Community House is one of those community facilities offering services and activities accessible to the people of Petone without needing to travel outside the community. Our neighbours sum up the diverse and self-contained nature of the Petone community: within 100 metres of the House, there is a school, a library, churches, various health and disability services, food of numerous cuisines, bars, small retailers and businesses, public transport connections to Wellington and other parts of the Hutt Valley, and a mix of housing types.
7. It is important that the council can represent the communities of interest within its boundaries. The current structure (at-large wards and a Harbour ward which contains distinct and disconnected communities of interest), which the independent panel proposes to retain, leads to a very real possibility that Petone residents will be represented by a councillor without understanding of the community and its needs.
8. For this reason, PCH opposes Option 6 for the general wards, as this would bring together even more distinctive communities of interest (Petone, Eastbourne/Bays, and Wainuiomata) together into one ward. We note that Option 6 was not one of the independent panel's preferred shortlisted options or its recommendation.
9. PCH also opposes the disestablishment of the Petone Community Board on the same grounds. If the Petone Community Board were abolished, the consequence of having a councillor from other parts of Harbour ward would be that the interests of the distinct and distinctive Petone community would not be represented. We consider this would not give effect to the principles of the legislation. Our community has concerns and priorities that are quite different from those of other areas in the ward such as Eastbourne and the Eastern Bays.
- 10. As a result, PCH is not confident that, in the absence of a Petone Community Board, there will be an effective and enduring advocate for our community within council governance.**
11. As an independent charity operating from council-owned premises, a collaborative and supportive relationship with the Council at both officer and representative level is important to us. The independent panel's report puts much emphasis on consultation being undertaken by city-wide council representatives and officers with specific communities, both place-based and other communities such as disabled people. We agree that council could perform better, but a consultative approach in the absence of local representation puts the burden on Petone people and community organisations to lobby for our community's needs to those who may not be familiar with our area. Community organisations like PCH are usually run mostly by volunteers with limited time and capacity, and consultation fatigue and scepticism are real for the community and voluntary sector.
12. We note that there is little evidence provided in the independent panel's report that replacing community boards with much more extensive consultation (presumably undertaken at least in part by salaried officials) would be cheaper than the status quo.



### The issues identified in the independent panel's report are resolvable

13. As 82% of those surveyed in the Harbour ward support having community boards, we believe that the Council should take necessary measure to improve the perceived shortcomings, as most of these are within the council's control or the result of its own actions (independent panel report page 35).
14. PCH notes that some current community board members considered that council could make better use of them when engaging with committees (independent panel report page 32), which we would support. We also note that current members found the quality of input of appointed councillors on community boards to be variable. This is a performance issue that the council could address, not a representation structure issue.
15. We also note that some current members found their delegations limited and limiting. The Council controls the delegations to Community Boards and, if these are considered too narrow to be worthwhile or cost-effective, then the delegations could be revisited. For example, current delegations allow Community Boards to approve leases or licences of council property to voluntary organisations, but this delegation excludes leases to community houses like PCH. Such delegations could be widened so that decisions on the use of the premises we occupy would be made (consistent with overall council policy) by elected representatives who know their community's needs better than a council table that might contain no Petone residents.
16. We would also welcome a strong ongoing role for a Petone Community Board in providing input into district planning and policy-making. We note that the Petone Community Board has at times been active and visible in this role and in seeking out the views of the local community, including those who might not otherwise have the confidence or time to engage through formal consultative mechanisms. Maintaining Petone's much-loved character while meeting the needs of its present and future residents will be an ongoing challenge that requires deep roots into that diverse community, and it will have some different dynamics to planning for other parts of the city. Place-making for Petone should have enduring and locally-driven attention, rather than be seen as a 'project' as is the case with Petone 2040.
17. Finally, the existence of the Petone Community Board is often discussed as a concession to the Petone community following the disestablishment of Petone Borough in 1989 (see for example pages 31 and 34 of the independent panel's report), implying that it no longer serves a useful purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Given that Petone is a very strong and self-sufficient community of interest in the present day, and the 1989 reforms are ancient history for most current residents of Petone (if they are even aware of them), we think this line of argument is now irrelevant and has become a distraction. The case for guaranteed local representation of the distinct Petone community and its built environment should rest on its own merits, which we believe it does.

### Mana Kairangi ki Tai Māori Ward

18. PCH notes that the decision to create one or more Māori wards was made by Hutt City Council in late 2023 and that the only matter in question in this representation review is the number of Māori wards. We also note that population figures determine that there can only be one Māori ward for the council.

19. As an inclusive organisation which honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi we wish to put on record our support for a Māori ward and for ongoing strong Māori-council partnerships. In anticipation of the Local Government (Electoral Legislation and Māori Wards and Māori Constituencies) Amendment Bill being passed into law, we support the Council holding a referendum at the 2025 election rather than revoking the ward.

#### Hearing

20. Petone Community House Inc wishes to be heard.

Contact person: Sally-ann Moffat

Chair, Petone Community House Board

[chairperson@pchouse.nz](mailto:chairperson@pchouse.nz)

# Joy Baird

Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Support

Q4. Comments

A realistic and effective number for the size of Hutt City. Its real effectiveness depends to a large extent on the "structures and mechanisms" the council works with to truly represent the community and meet its needs. The panel has done a generally sound job in challenging circumstances. My congratulations to Paul Swain and his representative team. Well done. I do have some arguments and ideas though!

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor Support

Q6. Comments:

I generally support the structure proposed. My concerns though focus around the need for the "at large" and "ward" councillors to have some specific roles to reflect the way in which they have been elected. Councillors don't focus enough on liaising with their geographic or interest communities. Too much time around the table making decisions and not enough listening to people. I fully agree with the importance of electing a Maori Ward councillor. I am very disappointed to understand now, that the Coalition Government's new legal requirement will necessitate a referendum. It could be very difficult for such a referendum to achieve the positive outcome needed. In my experience a referendum like this on which the whole city has a voice but the outcome is perceived to be relevant to only 12,000-14,000 people will not be easy to get a positive or "YES" answer. It is important Hutt City both elect a Maori representative in 2025 (if it legally can), and carefully explain the value of this position in the lead-up to the election/referendum. Important for Council to provide sound information here. Hopefully Hutt citizens have enough vision and sense to understand this! It is the non-Maori community the city needs to engage with to get the message across. How well the council does this will determine the outcome of the referendum. During my time as a councillor Teri Puketapu was appointed to the council and was a valuable resource. Perhaps one of the 12 councillors might be Maori. (Hopefully!!) Do councillors currently reflect the ethnicity of our community? I don't know.

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Neutral

**Q8. Comments:**

Im neutral on this but have read the arguments for it. I agree with communities of interest being united. Having two councillors in some wards could be hard to explain when the populations here isnt much larger than the one councillor wards. Council need sto set out the importance of advocacy for the less engaged communities. I'm surprised and a bit disappointed the negative views and poor involvement with council and governance have not improved. During my time on council (1989-2010) there were community committees in wards without community boards, though the report does not record these dates correctly. Councillors were appointed to these committees outside their own ward, as well as being on their own community board. I spent many nights at the Northern Ward Committee meetings in an effort to listen to/be in a position to, reflect their views. Its sad to see the report suggests the best way to overcome issues still there is to remove community boards altogether, but not recommend a better mechanism to replace them. (Maybe there's space for me to comment further on this later.)

**Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished?** Oppose

**Q10. Comments:**

Definitely not. The question of understanding the council role and reflecting community views is not adequately dealt with if Community Boards are disestablished and nothing adequately set up instead. (Why do you think the Northern Ward doesnt understand about community boards? Did council ever educate them or explain? Of course not? Pretty obvious really! (I have some ideas which I will include in another comment section) There are a couple of other comments I'd like to make but there's not a specific place to record them. The first - the knowledge about all aspects of Local Government clearly declines as age groups lower. ie Oldies over 90% Young adults very poor knowledge. Council is doing some good messaging , but this is something which needs to be overcome. The importance of education and Civics at school is very clear. Its not a Lower Hutt problem and needs to be managed at a central government level. The second is the recommendation to remove Community Boards, issues with having to have a referendum before a Maori ward can be introduced permanently and the inadequacy of suggested ways to involve communities in the future. This must provide a real link between elected councillors and any new roles or structures. For example: + Elected ward councillors to be leaders/liaison/for community agents to prevent existing confusion between roles of councillors and community boards. This is vital + At large elected councillors responsible as leaders/liaison for portfolio responsibilities. These portfolios could include Pacifica, Asian, Disability and also Maori (if referendum lost) +Community hubs should provide bases for councillors to hold meetings with individuals and groups. These need to be advertised and regular. +The report doesnt talk much about council communications with its over 100,000 clients. It needs to ensure the most common communication mechanisms for each age group are used. Oldies use notices or written messages, youngies use social media, facebook etc.

# Sally Selwood

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Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Neutral

Q4. Comments

not answered

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor Neutral

Q6. Comments:

not answered

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Neutral

Q8. Comments:

not answered

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

Q10. Comments:

I have read the report of the "independent reviewers". They seem to be saying the Councillors are dysfunctional and not in touch with their communities. I agree they are not. The only people I spoke to who knew who knew the name of their ward councillors were those represented by Community Boards. Community Boards rather than disbanded should be given more power and ability to properly liaise with Councillors and Council staff and that the Councillors and Council staff be required to listen to Community Board representations. To suggest hubs and other woolly woofer ideas are really just describing a community board in disguise. Rather than disband them they should be given more status...the idea that they name streets and investigate tree hazards is an insult to what Community Boards do. They provide a great deal of local knowledge and need to be listened to. Rather than disband them they should be expanded and there should be a Community Board for each Ward. That way the Council staff and Councillors would hear the view of their communities... something that sadly isn't available to all in the Hutt Valley. With Community Boards having proper input into Council ideas where poor proposals could be counteracted before any expenditure in either planning or execution is undertaken would easily pay for any expansion of Community Boards in the other wards. Because Community Boards are elected they have powers that Community hubs or Resident type groups do not have. I refer particularly to the EMR (Elected Member Request) where when invoked Councils are required to respond not just ignore issues raised. Unfortunately I do not live in an area supported by a Community Board but have previously lived in an area (outside of the Hutt Valley ) where there was a Community Board and that area was a much richer community because of the Community Board and the work they did to truly represent their community which sadly my Councillor (whoever it is ) does not do.



# Jeremy Winter

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Tena koutou

Please find attached (word document “Comments on ...”) a submission concerning the ‘Report and recommendations of the Independent Representation Review Panel on Hutt City Council’s Initial Representation Proposal’.

My paper challenges the Panel’s analysis and arguments leading to its recommendation “that there be no community boards in Lower Hutt and the three existing community boards be disestablished”.

I would be very happy to present in person at a meeting when Council considers the Community Boards aspect of its Representation Review.

By way of some context for my comments in the attached paper, I find it strikingly anomalous that the Panel can make the above recommendation (effectively ‘abolishing’ the communities of Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata – to use the terminology in Schedule 6 of the Local Government Act 2002) – whilst acknowledging that

1. “... the history and clear distinction of Eastbourne is likely to be reflected in the number of Harbour Ward survey respondents (79%) identifying with and having a sense of belonging to “a more local community” than to “Lower Hutt City as a whole” [similarly for Petone and Wainuiomata ]. (pp 21 & 22 of the Report)
2. “community boards can undertake delegated decision-making on particular matters closer to the people most affected” (p 34 of the Report)

And in the meantime, it seems the real culprit goes unscathed: “... actions, or lack of action, by parent councils over the years. This has seen, for example, very limited delegations of decision-making responsibilities to community boards, and an absence of creative uses of boards in areas such as community engagement” [this includes Hutt City Council]. (p 33 of the Report)

*A submission on ....*

**Report and recommendations of the Independent Representation Review Panel on Hutt City Council's Initial Representation Proposal – June 2024**

*regarding...*

**Section 9: Effective and fair representation and the community boards option**

**Summary**

The report of the independent Panel reveals there are flaws in its research and analysis which cast serious doubt on its decision to recommend there be no community boards in Lower Hutt and the three existing community boards be disestablished. These weaknesses are:

1. Information asymmetry. Assumptions made about the effectiveness and potential efficacy of community boards is based on perceptions from across the entire city and yet only citizens in three communities have experience with community boards. Furthermore, it is not clear how many, if any, of the independent panel live in, or have lived in, areas served by community boards.
2. Equity is confused with Equality: the report notes that community boards are **not equally distributed** throughout the whole city but fails to recognise that the boards which are in place may in fact be helping to address **equity** issues, such as access to resources, influence, mitigating vulnerability.
3. It is illogical and unfair to penalise the victim. The report recognises that it is the councils – much more than community boards – that have failed in their obligations. It is primarily Council's fault that Community Boards have not been given a chance to shine and yet it's Community Boards which are now in grave danger of being handed the death sentence for not being good enough.
4. Lack of evidence is provided to support the "belief" of the Panel that community boards have outlived their relevance and purpose. Regardless of any historical antecedents, there are valid reasons for persevering with the three community boards and extending the mechanism to other communities who also have a strong sense of identity and also face particular challenges (eg Stokes Valley and Western Hills) – in order to ensure they are not disenfranchised.

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## 1. Information asymmetry

From the report

*... the highest level of “familiarity with community boards” was, not surprisingly, in Harbour Ward (30%), which has two community boards, while the highest level of “unfamiliarity with community boards” was in Northern Ward (70%) which has no community boards*

*In line with the online survey findings, the level of understanding of community boards and their role varied according to whether people had any actual experience with community boards in their area.*

### Comment

These findings reveal a bias: which is that respondents/interviewees, and indeed Panel members, from wards without long-standing and direct experience of community boards are much less aware of what community boards do, and could achieve. It is a ‘no brainer’, that input from such review contributors is far less likely to advocate for the retention of Boards already operating. (It’s like asking folk who live in Nebraska whether surf lifesaving clubs are a good use of public funds.)

## 2. Equality confused with Equity

From the report

*...not equitable to retain two community boards in one ward, one board in another ward, and to have no community boards in the other four wards*

*... questions about the equity of the current arrangements, namely there being two community boards in one ward (Petone and Eastbourne boards in Harbour Ward), one in another ward (Wainuiomata) and none in any of the other four ward.*

### Comment

These two statements are not about ‘equity’, they are about ‘equality’. Equality is about everyone getting the same resources irrespective of individual circumstances; equity is about having the resources and

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opportunities to be successful based on your own circumstances. The equality argument (“everyone doesn’t have one, so you shouldn’t have one either”) is too simplistic.

Having community boards for Wainuiomata, Petone and Eastbourne may instead be a way of securing more **equity** for these areas in terms of access to resources and influence.

Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata have more limited access (easy/walking/biking) than many Hutt citizens to large expensive facilities that are paid for out of all of our rates: indoor Huia Pool, Walter Nash Stadium, Dowse Art Gallery, Town Hall Events Centre, Fraser Park Sports Complex ...

The existing Community Boards provide authentic well-informed voices for three Hutt City communities which are exposed to significant and particular challenges. These communities deal with circumstances and conditions different from most other Lower Hutt communities. For example:

- a single access road vulnerable to natural disasters. Potential issues with emergency services ‘in’ and evacuation ‘out’ (Eastbourne, Wainuiomata)
- a sewerage pipeline (Eastbourne) pumping effluent from the whole of the Hutt Valley; and other utilities along a vulnerable ribbon for fresh water and electricity (Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) that often fails and leaks and adversely effects local residents’ domestic, commercial, educational and day-to-day recreational activities
- vulnerable to bush fires (Eastbourne, Wainuiomata)
- vulnerable to rising sea levels and tsunamis (Eastbourne, Petone)
- influxes of ‘outside’ visitors (to Days Bay, Pencarrow Coast, Wainuiomata Coast, The Remutaka Forest Park, Petone’s fabulous eateries and extensive beach) that can bring local and essential traffic to a standstill.

### 3. Penalising the victim

From the report

*Promoting a good understanding of the community board role and encouraging and facilitating community boards in carrying out their role, sits largely with the council concerned. It is the acceptance, or otherwise, of this responsibility, that appears to be a big determinant*

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*of whether, across New Zealand, community boards are seen as effective or not*

*With some notable exceptions, councils around the country appear to have made limited efforts to fully inform their community boards about their actual prescribed role, and to encourage and support them in carrying this out. Neither have many councils, again with some exceptions, resolved to delegate significant decision-making responsibilities to their community boards*

*... potential benefits [from community boards are] subject to better understanding of the community board role and commitment by both the Council and the boards to giving full effect to that role*

*... the [HCC] Council could better facilitate community discussion, on both local and city-wide issues, by using the boards to engage with their local communities*

*... the extent of delegations of decision-making responsibilities made by Hutt City Council to its three community boards, is within the common range of quite limited delegations made by most councils across the country*

*... community boards, in both Lower Hutt and more generally across the country, have not been as effective as they could have been. This is in large measure, a result of actions, or lack of action, by parent councils over the years. This has seen, for example, very limited delegations of decision-making responsibilities to community boards, and an absence of creative uses of boards in areas such as community engagement. The Panel does not see the current limited approaches to community board responsibilities changing in the foreseeable future*

### **Comment**

These observations do not paint a complimentary picture of the councils. Crucially, these observations do **not** provide a defensible reason for disestablishing community boards.

The report acknowledges the potential of community boards – with the right council stewardship and backing – to be fully functioning and highly effective, and then promptly relegates realizing this potential into the ‘too hard basket’.

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The report admits the overseeing councils – far more than the community boards themselves – have consistently failed to do this facet of their job properly, and yet despite the shortcomings by the **councils**, the Panel perversely recommends it's the **community boards** which should vanish.

The Panel falls short of saying that councils' neglect is deliberate, but it is hard not to conclude cynically that the under-performance of community boards renders them victims of a self-fulfilling prophesy. Sadly, there appear to have been no levers to make councils lift their game here – or maybe no-one has had the awareness or the guts to pull any levers that are available.

#### 4. Lack of Evidence

From the report

*... the Panel believes that the historical reasons for establishing the current boards are much less valid today. Lower Hutt has become a more cosmopolitan city with changing demographics. Residents now have greater mobility, which results in more movement of people across the previously more fixed urban boundaries, for work, housing, recreation and leisure activities*

*... formal structures like community boards positioned between the community and the Council is not likely to be effective in the 21st century. This is on the basis of the changing nature of the community's interests, needs and aspirations*

#### Comment

These are glib statements conveniently and spuriously justifying the Panel's recommendation. There is no hard evidence provided that, for example, Eastbourners commute to work in Wellington more frequently or less frequently, or use facilities in the Hutt Valley any more or less frequently, than they did in 1989. And even if there have been demographic and behavioural changes over time, the report does not make the case that community boards do not have a valid *raison d'être* within the changing paradigm.

The report instead implies that the three Community Boards exist mainly as a 'sop' to three communities which prior to 1989 had their own autonomous Borough Councils. Special Council positions for representing former boroughs' interests have long gone. This is surely a compelling

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reason why community boards must remain. These community areas all have characteristics which do not feature or impact on other wards in Hutt City

- Petone is still next to the harbour, has unique heritage assets important to protect (eg buildings in Jackson Street and surrounds) and is a main valley transport thoroughfare.
- Wainuiomata is still over that hill and possibly in danger of being out of sight, out of mind.
- Eastbourne is still a 'one way in and same way out' suburb squashed between the hills and the harbour.

(For more details on these three communities' particular vulnerabilities, see the above comments under 'Equality confused with Equity'.)

From a general city-wide perspective, community boards are arguably more important than ever for local democracy. In an increasingly impersonal digital age, they help ensure as many community members as possible can have a voice and be part of the things that effect their lives. The nuances of person-to-person contact with our Community Board members, who are our neighbours, is valuable. Not all citizens are comfortable making their case online or appearing in person in the CBD to confront a Councilor or a Council official about a worrying matter.

## In conclusion ...

The report offers, as a consolation for its recommendation

*... the clear obligation on the Council to inform, consult, represent and make decisions on behalf of those communities*

## Comment

It is difficult to be comforted by this statement when the same report tells us that the Council is already supposed to be ...

*... Promoting a good understanding of the community board role and encouraging and facilitating community boards in carrying out their role.*

...and then laments that this has not really gone so well.

If there is a 'community-board-free future' will the Council honour this "clear obligation" to its various communities? At the very least, community boards are a mechanism to help keep parent councils honest; to motivate councils to be more diligent and accountable in informing, consulting, representing and making decisions on behalf of local communities.

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# Gary Quirke

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## **3 Do you support the proposal that HCC comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors?**

**Oppose**

### **4 Comments**

4.1 The proposal as submitted is primarily based on an “Independent Report”. This ‘Independent Report’ is not in accordance with legislative requirements as it appears to lack input from a number of community focused bodies as no mention is made of whether the members of the Independent Group met with representatives of Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs, Probos (Friendship Clubs,), Grey Power, Year 13 of Secondary Schools (todays/tomorrows voters) and residents of Retirement facilities to name a few. These are people who are likely to take an interest in Local Community affairs. They are also people who form strong local communities. The list tabled has a very strong ethnic flavour to it-this is not representative of the Hutt Valley as per the HCC Statistics of the makeup of the people of the Hutt Valley.

4.2 It is a requirement of Councils in considering representation reviews that they consider 3 key factors such as

- Communities of interest

- Effective representation of communities of interest

- Fair representation for electors

The ‘Independent Review’ survey lacks any depth as far as these 3 factors are concerned.

4.3 There is a Period of significant change for legislative changes by Central Government which will impact directly on Local Government-why is it really necessary to change existing arrangements of 6 at large Wards /6 Local Wards

Councillors now.? I.e. status quo with some boundary changes. If HCC wishes to really save some costs and limit rates increases then status quo is a good option. The passing of the Local Government Amendment Act on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2024 is a clear example of this significant change.

4.4 The Exercise is a statutory requirement based on population numbers and not a fair and equitable representation as determined in the decision of the Local Government Commission in 2019.

4.5 The Proposal removes 1 Councillor at large from the current position of representation- this results in less democracy for all residents.

4.6 The proposal focus appears to be based more on political matters rather than building a stronger sense of community.

## **5 Do you support the proposal that Councillors be elected under a mixed system of Representation of**

**5 City Wide Councillors**

**7 Councillors from five General Wards and**

**1 Maori Ward Councillor**

### **Oppose**

### **6 Comments**

6.1 The Hutt City needs at least 6 at large councillors-Hutt City is not a large area and all residents have a greater interest in ensuring HCC Council takes a wider view with its affairs-e.g. Residents now have greater mobility throughout Hutt Valley as is demonstrated by Transportation routes /main industrial areas (Seaview and Wingate), main retail areas (CBD and Petone), location of big box retailers (Petone), main location of Supermarkets (CBD and Petone),future infrastructure developments (3 waters, road safety plans, and cross valley link) are all some of the factors influencing people interests in the Hutt Valley.

6.2 Two Councillors in 2 specific Wards is highly likely to be unworkable in practical terms-especially if the Councillors are from differing representative

groups with different agendas.(e.g. Independent candidates and those from other political parties).One cannot split the specific Ward into two geographical areas on any statistical basis of population only. I cannot see how you can split a Ward into 2 so as to accommodate all the residents varying views.

6.3 Two Councillors for 2 local Wards is likely to lead to more division than cohesion. Councillor's political agendas will create division-e.g. Both Labour and Green Councillors/candidates are bound by National constitutions. Is this a case for another Wellington City Council outcome where division is the name of the game?

6.4 The 2019 representation proposal provided for 6 Wards with 2 councillors per Ward. This was modified to the current structure of 12 Councillors-6 for City at large and 6 for local Wards. The current proposal is inequitable in that not all the wards would have 2 councillors per Ward-not that I support this approach.

6.5 I do however support a mixed Ward system but not the one being proposed.

6.6 The proposal ignores factors like location of independent schools, location of shopping centres employment, transport and communication links and general mobility - all vital aspects of meeting the 3 dimensions.

6.7 The proposal ignores the natural geographical layout of Hutt Valley (Wainuiomata is different due to its geographical location) of State Highway 2, the Hutt River and the north/south Railway line.



**7 Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows**

**Northern General-2 Councillors**

**Central General-2 Councillors**

**Western General-1 Councillor**

**Harbour General-1 Councillor**

**Wainuiomata General-1 Councillor**

**Maori Ward-1 Councillor**

**Oppose**

### **8 Comments**

8.1 The proposal creates another ward based (Maori) on ethnic grounds-it creates a 'them and us' approach and is undemocratic. This is mainly due to an interpretation of the Treaty of Waitangi (1975 Waitangi Tribunal) and which is still subject to discussion in NZ.

8.2 HCC is asking for submissions from interested parties on a revised representation proposal (Statutory requirement) but decided to establish a Maori ward direct through a Hutt Council decision.(non-statutory).This decision was made prior to the "Independent Report " being completed yet is included in the latter's terms of reference.

8.3 The "Independent Report" states that Eastern Ward respondents to the survey had the second highest level of identification with Lower Hutt City (69%)-yet proposal is to do away with this ward.

8.4 The Northern Ward definition brings in another factor of demographic and socio-economic factors in determining ward structure- other wards use geographical and numeric factors. This is not consistent in determining a fair representation

8.5 An example is that the distance between Manor Park and Haywards and Maungariki via State Highway 2 is significant and has no real link other than

they are on the western side of the Hutt River. These 2 suburbs are more likely to have similar community interests as those in the existing Northern Ward

**9 Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards and the 3 existing Community Boards be disestablished.**

**Oppose.**

#### **10 Comments**

10.1 There should in fact be a Community Board for each Ward to provide fair and equitable representation at local level.

10.2 The Community Boards would support Councillors with their high workload-the reference that they could take on some of the existing workloads carried out by Community Boards is highly unlikely. It is also likely to result in less local issues being addressed.

10.3 The Community Boards provide an intermediate step between local requirements and Council. Roles have been defined (limited) by HCC which has played a role in the past in limiting their effectiveness e.g.-budgets.

10.4 The Community Boards act as training ground for exposure to Local government (eg-Petone member who has been elevated to a national Committee role in LGNZ

10.5 All existing Community Boards believe they are contributing to developing better communities. It is difficult to understand why the "Independent Report" Came to its conclusions when a number of the Wards have had no experience of Community Boards and 2 existing Community Boards are in 1 ward?

10.6 The Total Cost of 3 additional Community Boards is immaterial to HCC overall budget of \$160 million per annum-savings to pay for can be made from within the budget

10.7 Overall the results of the "Independent Report Survey clearly show that respondents want Community Boards as they would enhance local democracy.

10.8 In the past the effectiveness of Community Boards has been constrained by HCC Council rather than them been supportive of the Boards.

10.9 The Proposal goes against the survey outcome whereby 48% of the respondents are in favour of Community Boards.

## **11 General Comments**

11.1 Is this submission only because the Hutt City Council is obligated by statute to consult with the residents of the Hutt Valley?

11.2 Has a decision already been made-refer Mayor's statement "if Council decides to amend the initial proposal....this will affect the timeframes required to meet the timetable".

11.3 Overall I find the whole proposal one of a political nature (a position of Local Government v Central Government) and not in the overall interest of building a stronger community for the residents of the Hutt Valley.

12. Yes I would like to present my submission direct to Councillors at a Representation Hearing subject to my availability

13 I live in Lower Hutt

# Derek Wilshere

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## **I recommend that:**

1. Council rejects the recommendation for the dissolution of the three Community Boards,
2. Council agrees to establish City Wide Community Boards based on the successful model of the existing three Boards and significantly supports the establishment of the new Boards. This includes reviewing the Terms of Reference for them.

## **Introduction**

**“We will lose something valuable that will not be replaced”**

**“Community Democracy is the foundation for Good Governance”**

**“People reject the tone of this Report”**

**“He Tangata He Tangata”**

This Report is underwhelming and does not recognise the achievements of Boards over the years.

My submission addresses the proposed dropping of Community Boards which I oppose.

- I am happy with the recommendations for the ward structure, councillor numbers and the mix of ward and at large councillors and Maori representation (which hopefully survives!) and Agents who could fill a useful gap in the structure. I am disappointed that the proposal in my consultation submission to reconsider the Boundary for the Harbour Ward be changed to include a change to the eastern boundary beyond Burdans Gate to be removed from Wainui oMata and added to the Harbour Ward has not been addressed
- The value of community democracy clearly identified by residents in areas with Community Boards has been overlooked not recognised and those without Community Boards have been accorded an undue weight
- The suggestion in the report that somehow the existing structure is out of time is ludicrous
- An opportunity to provide recommendations which could address Hutt City Council's (and others) historic shortcomings and propose some innovative opportunities and governance models has been overlooked and lost.

### Some odds and ends

- Residents Associations and other models exist through our city. They fulfil a valuable role and feed good stuff to Community Boards which recognise and collaborate closely with them
- But only Community Boards are democratically elected and have a statutory link to the Council. Indeed, Council attempts to complement elected Boards with ward representatives have proved weak and ineffective
- The Report cites on several occasions that historically HCC (and some other Councils) have not recognised Boards potential to contribute adequately.
- Councillor workload, already significant would increase
- Council delegations to Community Boards need not be limited by the statutes. Indeed, a better Council could benefit by fostering and respecting this by having it recognised by a more inclusive governance model. Through the link to Councillors and staff very productive and respected outcomes could led to significant financial benefit
- In Hutt City the Community Boards have provided a fine opportunity for Board Members to become notably effective councillors
- The Report makes scant reference to Community Board costs....so, are they relevant? or simply a relevant cost to good and effective governance?
- The Eastbourne community response to the recommendation to scrap Community Boards has been indignant, and loud. Indeed, the quality of submissions is excellent, respected, and complementary to this submission
- The New Zealand Government which may well propose a new model for Local Government constantly alludes to the importance of "Local"

### Recommendation

I recommend that:

1. Council rejects the recommendation for the dissolution of the three Community Boards,
2. Council agrees to establish City Wide Community Boards based on the successful model of the existing three Boards and significantly supports the establishment of the new Boards. This includes reviewing the Terms of Reference for them.

## **Viva the Eastbourne Community Board**



# Haiying Shi

Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Oppose

Q4. Comments

I don't think we need to create a specific Māori ward. Representation should be based on geographic regions. The Hutt Valley is a multicultural society, and we shouldn't focus on one ethnic group in particular.

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor Oppose

Q6. Comments:

I don't think we need to create a specific Māori ward. Representation should be based on geographic regions. The Hutt Valley is a multicultural society, and we shouldn't focus on one ethnic group in particular.

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Neutral

Q8. Comments:

I don't think we need to put energy to re-arrange the region. put the energy on more important things, for instance how to make Hutt more attractive for international tourism. It is one of the important ways to help boost local economy

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

Q10. Comments:

Regarding the proposal to disband the three community boards, I believe this is unnecessary. As a resident of the Eastbourne community, I see firsthand how locals strive to preserve our unique characteristics. Our local board members, who are also residents, are highly motivated to foster strong connections with both the community and the council. They have a deep understanding of our real issues and the most effective solutions. They also know how best to welcome visitors to our area. With the new bikeway nearing completion, it is crucial to prepare in advance to welcome more visitors. Let the Eastbourne board continue their valuable work and contribute even more to our community. Keep the Eastbourne board active and let them do more for us.

# David L. F. Smith

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Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Oppose

Q4. Comments

Thirteen councillors is too few for adequately obtaining the views of the people within the city and dealing with their concerns adequately. I have always opposed city wide councillors unless it is clearly understood that the city wide councillors should spend time in all wards so they know the needs of the people in the wards so as to have as much knowledge to have an overview of city needs as a whole. So far it does not seem to be the case. The single councillor for Wainuiomata does not seem to get that level of support .-

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor Oppose

Q6. Comments:

Oppose city councillors in general for reason stated in previous question. Open to Maori ward councillor as long as clearly stated how they got position but prefer them to have some sort of election process to get there. Prefer Wainuiomata to have 2 elected councillors given the range of issues and needs of ward. that current councillor deals with which is taxing on one person not fully supported by a citywide councillor.

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Oppose

Q8. Comments:

For reasons stated in previous questions. Plus if the views of the people who live in wards and know the issues around flooding, and and other maintenance issues are not known to their councillor when it comes to council votes then the council may end up spending money unwisely and have to hike rates to cover budget shortfalls when if information had been known this would not have been necessary. I see the reduction of councillors shortsighted in a city that is anting to grow to survive.

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

Q10. Comments:

Absolutely oppose. The number of issues the Wainuiomata board have brought to attention of council speaks for itself. Also we should never forget that community boards have given people who would never have time to attend council open sessions a chance to voice their concerns and may well make them see that it is worth voting come election time.

# Karen Arraj-Fisher

Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Oppose

Q4. Comments

I prefer it to stay as it is now

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor Oppose

Q6. Comments:

not answered

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Oppose

Q8. Comments:

not answered

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

Q10. Comments:

I believe my area of Petone will be disadvantaged by disestablishing its Community Board. The Board supports the work the Councillor does (who has two Community Boards in her Ward), gives her critical feedback as to what our community is wanting / feeling. The PCB is an unique and busy part of Lower Hutt - diverse community and residents, one of NZ's most historic towns, home to many heritage assets, largest retail area after the CBD, largest hospitality area, large tertiary institution, largest industrial area (Petone, Seaview & Gracefield), longest beach along the harbour, and at a critical junction between Wellington and the Hutt Valley. This is too busy an area for one person to look after on their own without having that a Community Board for support and guidance, not forgetting that the Harbour Ward Councillor is also responsible for the Eastern Bays/Eastbourne as well.

# Karen (Kaz) Yung

Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Support

Q4. Comments

I think 13 is a good number of Crs for our city, especially with the addition of a ward - ultimately it could be a couple up or down and it could still function relatively well, because actually what it comes down to is how effective those who are elected are in their roles.

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor Oppose

Q6. Comments:

I'll comment on this further with the next question, but I think one of the key parts of our system needs to be consistent and easy. Many people are already disengaged with local government and I think any of the barriers we can limit, particularly in what needs to be easily communicated - which includes the simplicity of structure - we should be considering. I would prefer we only had one Cr per ward and the rest of the make up is done city wide. Any perceived unfairness creates barriers, and that seems like an easy thing to avoid. I also don't agree that two Crs would guarantee good representation. In fact I'd argue historically that doesn't seem to be the case, when we've had two Crs per ward - it's dependent on WHO is elected, not HOW many.

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Oppose

Q8. Comments:

Although I appreciate the Panel looking at other possibilities and wrestling with 'communities of interest' I'm not sure I agree much with their findings. and I'm still left wondering what makes those wards 'communities of interest' in their own right. With Wainuiomata, I feel it is probably one of the few current wards which seems to clearly fit the definition of a 'community of interest' with a strong identity. It concerns me that the ratio for proposed representation falls out of the 10% guidelines, particularly as an area that continues to grow. As someone who currently resides in the Eastern Ward, and has spent most of my life here, I feel rather surprised to hear it lumped in with 'Central'. Whenever I talk to someone in Hutt Valley or even greater Wellington region - I proudly talk about being in Waiwhetū - it's only when I'm away from here do I speak of Lower Hutt more collectively, but even then that has few linkages to what I would consider 'Central'. Waiwhetū Stream, the distinctive boundaries of the railway, the various hubs of localised shopping hold a different feel and if I'm being honest I'm not sure I would consider all those suburbs lumped into the proposed 'Central' ward to have as many similarities in demographic or identity that the Panel seems to have found.

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

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**Q10. Comments:**

The one thing I agree with from the Panel is that keeping the status quo of community boards as they stand is no longer suitable. However I disagree with disestablishing them. In fact, I think there is a great opportunity to have community boards across the whole city. I'm a fan of building up and empowering local communities and creating that mechanism within our structures that isn't impacted by the 'council of the day' in the way we have seen Community Committees/Panels/Funding Panels come and go. Like sure, it would still be dependent on quality candidates who run, and who is elected in - but in any sense that is still something that would be left for the Community to speak into, either with their feet or with their votes. I also think a good structure, given time to settle in can foster good culture for the future of local govt. I don't think new boards necessarily would require the same numbers that serve on the current boards - but they would need to be fair for the sake of equality, consistency and easy communication. I also think having them across the city is a great opportunity for more people to be engaged in local govt - either by running in it, or being able to tell a more complete story which could have a good impact in allowing more people to be involved. There is also a great opportunity to foster a different kind of community leadership. Some talk about the benefit it could have for potential future leaders, but I actually believe you can have a significant role simply as a community board member, because for some they are more accessible to the community - even if that is just perception; and that in itself can make a significant difference in the community. Simply put, I think we need more guaranteed opportunities within our systems, not less.

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# Pauline Innes

Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Neutral

Q4. Comments

reservations about the fairness of waiunuiomata representation

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of:5 city wide Councillors,7 Councillors from five General Wards and,1 Māori Ward Councillor Neutral

Q6. Comments:

uneven representation

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Neutral

Q8. Comments:

not answered

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

Q10. Comments:

The current community board in Wainuiomata is friendly, approachable and capable a/doing a great deal more work in the community than they are given. All wards would benefit from lively, enthusiastic boards who could help locally eg help coordinate local sport, in particular swimming

# Wal Louden

Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Neutral

Q4. Comments

not answered

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor? Oppose

Q6. Comments:

not answered

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows? Oppose

Q8. Comments:

The Harbour Ward is a mix of very diverse communities and I feel at least 1 Councillor should be elected to Represent Eastbourne and Eastbourne Bays. I have been a resident of Eastbourne since the 1940s when Eastbourne Borough Council looked after our Village With a Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chairman of Works and several Councillors. Now the proposal is for 1 Ward Councilor Shared with Korokoro, Petone, Moera and Gracefield and the axing of our Community Board. Leaving us with no Fulltime voice on Eastbournes very diverse requirements. Facing a massive rates rise with no control on how the rates in our area will be spent in Eastbourne.

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

Q10. Comments:

see comments above. The Eastbourne Community Board has been very supportive of the Eastbourne Residents in many issues over the years ie. Saving Eastbourne Wharf. , establishing signage walkways throughout the Village and Hills giving us a voice to represent our grievances to Hutt City ie, saving our maintaining our street and reserve trees, repairing leaky watermains. Dog and Cat bylaws. etc The new proposed structure for a shared Ward Councilor and NO Community Boards would have a serious impact on our ability to communicate with Hutt City Council.

# Elizabeth Palmer

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Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Support

Q4. Comments

Given that the population has risen over the past 6 years

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor Support

Q6. Comments:

not answered

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Support

Q8. Comments:

Hrbour and Wainuiomata wards have a bigger load for the Elected Councillor & should have community boards to support the Councillor

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

Q10. Comments:

*Comments on Community Boards  
Question 6. (!)*

**SUBMISSION ON THE PANEL REVIEW ON REPRESENTATION**

28/07/24

*from Elizabeth (Liz) Palmer*

Question 6

**I OPPOSE the Review Panel's recommendation that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt and that the three existing Community Boards in Eastbourne, Petone and Wainuiomata be disestablished for the following reasons:**

**A) COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS (CBM)**

- 1. CBMs are ELECTED by their local community = DEMOCRATIC. (They are not appointed.) We get the chance to meet candidates prior to the election and assess their suitability.**

**CBMs could be assigned particular responsibility for the various diverse communities in their general community eg Tamil, Pacifica ( or an actual member of an identified group could be voted onto the CB)**

**I don't see how Ward Councillors could add the "Portfolio holder" role to their already huge load given each is responsible for around 14,500 citizens. The "at large councillors" must have many other roles to accomplish other than communication with citizens. After all, they're all running a huge business enterprise.**

I believe the suggested “portfolio approach” would cost vast \$\$\$ if an Engagement Plan is developed by Council Officers – require a new department??? Besides, is a meeting with an “identified community” once every six months really “engaging”?

2. CBMs are residents of the local community that they represent and because of that are familiar with the local environment and location, the local people, and are easy to connect with as they live, mix/work and mingle in that community. Also, they are aware of vulnerable people/communities, ethnic/religious minorities, and other groups. They are also well aware of the local support networks to link citizens up to for help.
3. CBMs are able to assess the local situation and feed information back to their Ward Councillor, HCC or HCC staff and, in turn, be a conduit back to the community.

NOTE: When working well ( as seen with ECB and Tui Lewis) it becomes such a powerful and essential two way communication system – one which I’ve experienced often .

4. CBMs are additional “pairs of hands” and “people-power” for the Councillor rather being a barrier to councillors communicating with local citizens. When I rang Tūi Lewis about an issue she immediately set up a meeting with CB members to help me and they did.



(11)

5. CBMs are frequently able to get action on a local problem much quicker than that problem being fixed after having been reported to the “HCC online Report a problem” service – even when several people have reported online. I’ve personally experienced this with the removal of sand off the road when the sand had blocked gutters and sumps.
6. CBMs are able to connect groups/associations/clubs etc in their community who may be having “differing opinions” and help to negotiate a solution. I have personal experience of this with regard to the local Bowling and Croquet clubs.
7. CBMs are there to ensure Public Consultation occurs when required. I have personal experience of this with regard to the public tennis courts in Oroua St.
8. CBMs are available 24/7, easily accessible within the local community and generally readily recognised. I’ve certainly experienced this.
9. CBMs are, in my opinion, caring and considerate local people doing a great community service – given their remuneration of \$7,510 pa they’re hardly likely to be doing it for the “money” - as I believe this money generally only covers their out-of-pocket expenses!

(17)

**B) COMMUNITY BOARDS (CB) – in general**

1. **There are 66 Councils in NZ and 39 (58%) of those have one or more Community Boards. 11 (28%) of the 39 have Community Boards across the whole city or district.**

**Just because only 2 of our current HCC Wards have Community Boards (3 CBs in all) the Panel has decided that this is INEQUITABLE so all THREE should be DISESTABLISHED - WHY not add a further TWO CBs so that ALL 5 proposed Wards have one? (See below )**

2. **Throughout the Panel's Review mention is made of the fact that the reason for some Community Boards across NZ not being as effective as could be, was due, "in large measure to the actions, or lack of actions, of the parent Council". The review also states that promoting good understanding of the role of Community Boards "sits largely with Councils and by and large this is NOT done well by HCC and many other Councils.**

**NOTE: Now that the problem has been IDENTIFIED why not RECTIFY it by changing the actions/lack of actions of Councils, and promoting the potentially extensive role of CBs, instead of throwing them out together with all their existing legal documentation and institutional knowledge.**

3. **Throughout the Review mention was made of both Councils and Residents wanting better communication**

(v)

lines. I believe this is shown in the fact that both have set up local “resident types” of groups. I’ve been a member of these types of groups in previous Wards but having now experienced being in a Ward with a Community Board there is no comparison and I’d now always vote for the latter.

In this digital and faceless society I believe it’s more important than ever to communicate face to face in a non threatening environment such as CBs. Not everyone has IT skills and families are more spread out reducing historical knowledge.

The real power of a Community Board lies in it’s “ EMR = Elected Members Request” which LEGALLY REQUIRES a Councillor or Council Staff to respond to a request from a Community Board Member.

4. The Panel stated that “conceptually citizens liked the idea of Community Boards but there was a mismatch between what they do versus what the community think they do”. Despite this, 48% liked the idea of Community Boards.

Why not have Councils spend time addressing this confusion and promote the good works that Community Boards are doing, and have done, and educate Councillors to see the advantage TO THEM of USING CBs EFFECTIVELY?

**I personally consider the way the HCC set out the responsibilities and decision-making powers they delegate to CBs to be belittling- anyone reading that is likely to say “ what’s the value.” BUT if they read the ECB document at [www.EASTBOURNE.NZ](http://www.EASTBOURNE.NZ) covering what the ECB actually does and has done, I’m sure they’ll be very impressed.**

**A good PR campaign should cost FAR LESS than basically REINVENTING THE WHEEL by probably setting up a new Council department and renaming, into modern jargon, everything that already exists in COMMUNITY BOARDS!!!! I’m certain that the current cost of around \$360,000 for ALL 3 CBs won’t go far in implementing the Panel’s “Engagement Approach”.**

- 5. CBs are a great training ground for future politicians and I understand 8 HCC councillors have come up through CBs. They can at least get a good idea of what’s involved before they stand for higher positions and then maybe realise they’re not suited to such work.**

## **TO CONCLUDE**

**Given that many of the findings of the Panel were lacking in substance and clarity, and not totally representative of ALL communities, I would like to suggest that BEFORE the Community Boards and all the value that goes with them, is thrown out, the HCC delays its decision for another 3 year term and meantime makes a sincere effort to rectify the well documented views of the Panel which identified that HCC, along with many other Councils in NZ, are in large measure**



responsible for the perceived ineffectiveness of Community Boards over the years. The Panel stated “ this has seen for example, very limited delegations of decision-making responsibilities to community boards, and an absence of creative uses of boards in areas such as community engagement”.

Regarding previous knowledge, Mr Swain and Sir John Clarke both replied to questions saying they hadn’t personally had prior experience of Local Body politics and it would seem that none of the Panel had any personal experience of Community Boards.

May I suggest that the HCC start by engaging with the Eastbourne Community Board to see how they function and work so well with Councillor Tūi Lewis and our local residents' associations - despite the HCC as a whole apparently having the issues as described above. The ECB is so proactive in our community and the recent Resilience Expo was a perfect example of that. In a major disaster we could be seriously cut off and they engaged with many services, who are here to help us, and the public to raise our skills and awareness at this Expo. The ECB are creating templates and resources from this Expo for ECB future activities, and to share with other communities if wanted, hence multiplying effectiveness.

Annually the ECB do a “walkabout” with local residents to see what needs to be done and how best to achieve it.

I note with interest that Prime Minister Christopher Luxon was promoting the idea of “localism” based on his experience in Switzerland – they have 2064 more territorial authorities, for a population of 8.7 million in a country 1/6 the size of NZ. Quite



(ym)

the opposite of what The Review Panel is suggesting! (The Post 13/7/24).

After living for 44 years in the Central or Western Wards I simply cannot believe how lucky I am to have lived in Eastbourne for the past 9.5 years under various ECBs. The tragic thing is that by far the majority of submissions will be done by citizens in non-community board Wards who have never been lucky enough to experience a CB.

The ability to easily discuss an issue with an ELECTED representative is so comforting and powerful. (Incidentally I have always taken an active interest in Local Body affairs. Eg Residents' Associations.)

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE DON'T DISESTABLISH COMMUNITY BOARDS – INSTEAD PLEASE EXPAND THEIR USE. THANK YOU

# Sandra Greig

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**VOTE to abolish HCC community boards.**

Reason.

From 1992-2016 I represented Lower Hutt on the GWRC. [Greater Wellington Regional Council]

Every 6 weeks I turned up to each and every HCC Community board meetings to update members on work of GWRC linking with HCC. Most members glazed over, didn't understand what GWRC was about, let alone what it was that I did there.

I was the chair of Hutt River Flood protection today Riverlink for many years. And Deputy chair of Transport.

I would talk to each board about what was happening.

NO ONE asked questions or if they did, the question did NOT relate to my information just given.

**HCC Community boards are a waste of money and time.**

**ABOLISH them and put the money to much need HCC works.**

# Michael Draper

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Submission to:

**Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt  
Representation Review**

**Re: Initial proposal for representation arrangements for our  
2025 election**

This submission addresses the proposal to disestablish the three community boards with no offset for the amount of representation that would be lost from this.

**Proposal would be a massive reduction in total representation**

The “Initial proposal for representation arrangements for our 2025 [Hutt City] election” would reduce the total number of people elected to represent the city’s residents to the council from 30 to 14.

This would be a massive reduction (over 50%) in the scale of elected representation to the council and its organisation across the city.

**Need for improved representation (as identified by the Independent Panel)**

From the Independent Panel Report:

*“the Panel heard strong views expressed at meetings about a desire for clear, accessible and well-promoted structures and arrangements for contacting the Council.”* - Independent Panel Report FINAL.pdf p15

*“This need arose from the collective experience of many of the groups the Panel engaged with, and was strongly expressed as an inability to have meaningful contact with the Council and its elected members.”* *ibid* p15

This need is strong (“strong views”) and widespread (“at meetings” plural). But the current proposal to scrap the 17 elected positions held under the Community Boards with no replacement or redistribution of the representation those people provide would only increase that need.

Surely the purpose of making representation changes is to better meet the representation needs across our city, not slash representation and compound those needs?

**Representation provided by current Community Board members**

The 17 elected representatives that would be scrapped under the current proposal contribute both benefits and challenges for the city.

On one hand, these 17 elected residents provide a reliable and effective channel for identifying and communicating local needs to the council, and for assisting residents to navigate the council effectively. These members sweep up many minor representation, advocacy and communication needs, making it easier for our ward and at-large councillors to focus on larger issues and council staff to do their jobs effectively. This is the real value that comes from our community boards and why residents in areas with community boards value them so highly.

On the other hand, the 17 community board representatives are allocated to just three local areas, due to the board structure under which they currently sit. This is despite the community boards being delegated very little authority for which a board structure and its associated membership is required. Also, the local orientation of community boards mean they cannot represent more geographically distributed communities. These are credible reasons for dismantling the community boards, but not for eliminating the amount of elected representation they hold.

The primary value of our current community boards comes from the representation, advocacy and communication their 17 members provide for the residents they represent. There are reasons for dismantling the current community boards, but not for losing the amount of representation, advocacy and helpful communication performed by the elected members of these boards.

**Keep the current level of representation but organise it better**

Instead of scrapping our community boards wholesale, the city's representation needs would be better met by **dismantling these boards and redistributing the 17 elected positions they currently hold to represent more communities across our city**, with those elected to these new positions being responsible for providing clear and accessible representation, advocacy and communication for the residents they represent.

This would provide stronger channels for communicating community needs to the council across the city and maintain the overall level of representation but in a more equitable way. Keeping these as elected positions would improve buy-in from the public, the Council and its staff, and having elected representatives in more areas of the city would improve social resilience in the event of a major earthquake or other emergency.

Thank you for considering these points,

# Grey Power | Pete Matcham

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## Summary of submission

Grey Power Hutt City (GPHC) has consistently advocated for equity of representation at Council in previous representation reviews. Our position has not changed.

We support the proposed changes to ward boundaries and to the distribution of Councillors since we believe they achieve this objective whilst maintaining viable communities of interest. We acknowledge the discrepancy with regard to Wainuomata, and although we have no mandate for this area (Wainuomata has its own Grey Power Association), we agree that the integrity of a community of interest should take precedence in this case.

Similarly, we have always advocated for equality of representation at second tier or Community Board level. Our position that all Wards should have equality of representation remains unchanged. However, we agree with the Review Panel that the current implementation of Community Boards with tightly proscribed power, is unable to meet current expectations of devolved decision making. We therefore support their abolition entirely.

However, we remain supportive of the ability of citizens to participate directly in policy setting and implementation; and agree that the alternate method outlined by the Panel is fundamental to achieving this.

## Detail submission

### Changes to ward boundaries

As noted in the summary, we support the proposed changes, and consider that they deliver equitable representation and cohesive communities of interest, are logical and soundly based.



### Composition of Council

We support the retention of the current mixed representation of ward and 'at large' Councillors. Our experience has been that this works well in ensuring a city-wide perspective is maintained whilst retaining a direct link to local communities.

We consider the proposed increase in Councillors to 13 logical, as detailed below.

We note that the inclusion of a city-wide Māori 'Ward' chosen by electors on the Māori Roll serves a dual purpose, being both a 'ward' in the sense that the electorate is a defined sub set of the city population but is also a de facto 'at large' seat, since the electorate is city wide. We therefore support the reduction in the current 'at large' seats to compensate.

Similarly, we accept that to maintain equity of representation, it is necessary to have two councillors in both the proposed Central and Norther wards, and that this in turn requires an increase in the overall number of Ward councillors to seven.

### Second Tier representation

#### *Community Boards*

Again, based on the principle of equity of representation, GPHC has consistently argued that either all wards should have second tier representation, or that none should.

Whilst we wholeheartedly support the idea of more direct citizen led decision making, we concur that the current implementation of an elected secondary tier fails to meet community expectations or aspirations and largely ineffective. We consider the primary impediment to be lack of delegated authority, but also that the way in which Community Boards are structured and supported militates against diversity of viewpoints or any effective community driven policy.

We therefore consider that all Community Boards should be disbanded.

### Alternative Public participation methods.

We applaud the panel for their work in deliberately extending the ability for engagement to as wide a population as possible, and for suggestions on how this could be a model for future citizen involvement.

We believe that any citizen led fora should be focused, targeted and flexible, and potentially issue/project specific. Consequently, any formally elected structure is unlikely to be effective, not least as it would tend to perpetuate the current divide in the level of participation and engagement between the dominant, well to do middle class pakeha community, allied with businesses and vested interests; and those communities the report notes as disenfranchised and under-represented – migrants, Pasifika, young people, the disabled, and older people.

We support the set of principles for connecting with local communities set out in the Panel's recommendations.

We suggest that the current method of 'consultation' is a fundamentally flawed, inappropriate approach which perpetuates existing bias in favour of businesses, other vested interests and the well off. As examples, we note and endorse the Panel's point that any expectation that engagement will occur within the traditional working week effectively excludes participation by most of the population. A point emphasised in the demographic breakdown in Appendix 4 that shows 55% of survey respondents had an income greater than \$100,000. To quote Arnstein<sup>1</sup>, when citizen input is restricted in this way *"...participation remains just a window-dressing ritual"*.

A fundamental re-think is needed to *"...enable the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included"* and enabled to *"join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set"*.

We support the suggestions outlined by the Panel as a sound basis for developing a more flexible and representative model of citizen involvement.

# Normandale Residents Association

## | Pete Matcham

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### Summary of submission

The position of the NRA with regard to representation at Council has always been based on the principle of equity of voice, and our submissions on past reviews have reflected this. This position remains unchanged. We consider the proposed changes to ward boundaries and to the distribution of Councillors to achieve the required +/- 10% variation sensible and appropriate. We acknowledge the discrepancy in the case of Wainuomata, and although we have no mandate for this area, we agree that the integrity of a community of interest should take precedence in this case.

Similarly, we have always advocated for equality of representation at second tier or Community Board level. Our position that all Wards should have equality of representation remains unchanged. However, we agree with the Review Panel that the current implementation of Community Boards with tightly proscribed power is unable to meet current expectations of devolved decision making and so support their abolition entirely.

However, we remain supportive of the ability of citizens to participate directly in policy setting and implementation, and agree that the method outlined by the Panel is a sound basis for achieving this.

### Detail submission

#### Changes to ward boundaries

As noted in the summary, we support the proposed changes, and consider that they deliver equitable representation and cohesive communities of interest.

With specific regard to the changes proposed for the Western Ward which encompasses Normandale, we agree that the current inclusion of Alicetown and Melling in the Western Ward is an anomaly, with that area having a distinctly different geography, history and demographic, to the extent that this could validly be considered a community that has more in common with adjacent valley floor suburbs than the hill suburbs that dominate the Western Ward. We therefore support the proposed boundary changes.

Although we have no representative mandate for changes to other wards, we consider the proposals logical and soundly based.

### Composition of Council

We support the retention of the current mixed representation of ward and 'at large' Councillors. Our experience has been that this works well in ensuring a city-wide perspective is maintained whilst retaining a direct link to local communities.

We consider the proposed increase in Councillors to 13 logical, as detailed below.

We note that the inclusion of a city-wide Māori 'Ward' chosen by electors on the Māori Roll serves a dual purpose, being both a 'ward' in the sense that the electorate is a defined sub set of the City population but is also a de facto 'at large' seat, since the electorate is city wide. We therefore support the reduction in the current 'at large' seats to compensate.

Similarly, we accept that to maintain equity of representation, it is necessary to have two councillors in both the proposed Central and Norther wards, and that this in turn requires an increase in the overall number of Ward councillors to seven.

### Second Tier representation

#### *Community Boards*

Again based on the principle of equity of representation, the NRA has consistently advocated in previous representation reviews that either all wards should have second tier representation, or that none should.

Our experience of engagement with the Western Ward Community Panel (when this existed) echoes the comments in the panel's report that this method of second tier representation is ineffective. We therefore consider that all Community Boards should be disbanded.

Specifically, and again based on our experience, we agree that the concept of an elected secondary tier fails to meet current community expectations or aspirations. We consider the primary impediment to be lack of delegated authority, but also that the way in which Community Boards are structured and supported militates against diversity of viewpoints or any effective community driven policy.

### Alternative Public participation methods.

As an alternative to community Boards, we consider that a viable citizen-based approach to participation in decision making is required. We applaud the panel for the work in extending the ability for engagement as part of their review, and for their suggestions on how this could be a model for the future.

We concur with the panel that this should be focused, targeted and flexible, and as such any formally elected structure is unlikely to be effective, not least as it would tend to perpetuate the current divide in the level of participation and engagement between the dominant, well to do middle class pakeha community, allied with businesses and vested interests; and those communities that the report notes as disenfranchised – migrants, Pasifika, young people, and the disabled.

We support the set of principles for connecting with local communities set out in the Panel's recommendations.

We would go further and suggest that 'consultation' as currently practised is a fundamentally flawed, inappropriate approach which perpetuates existing bias in favour of businesses, other vested interests and the well off. As examples, we note and endorse the Panel's point that any expectation that engagement will occur within the traditional working week effectively excludes participation by the majority of the population. A point emphasised in the demographic breakdown in Appendix 4 that shows 55% of survey respondents had an income greater than \$100,000.

To quote Arnstein<sup>1</sup>, when citizen input is restricted in this way "*...participation remains just a window-dressing ritual*". A fundamental re-think is needed to "*...enable the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included*" and enabled to "*join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set*".

We support the suggestions outlined by the Panel as a sound basis for developing a more flexible and representative model of citizen involvement.



# Jan Wijninckx (pronounced Yan Vaynings)

Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Oppose

Q4. Comments

The community board is highly representative for me, and I would like to keep it please!

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor Oppose

Q6. Comments:

We value representation from our own community ie Eastbourne

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Oppose

Q8. Comments:

We in Eastbourne pay such high rates and we would not even be represented? Are you kidding us?

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Oppose

Q10. Comments:

Living in the bays I highly value my ward representation

# Ross Jamieson

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## SUBMISSION ON HUTT CITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIONAL REVIEW - ROSS JAMIESON

1. I understand the Local Electoral Act 2001 and the Review's Terms of Reference don't encourage a wide exploration of Hutt City's structure. It is massively noteworthy however, that the countries we admire, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Switzerland with populations around 10 million have many more local government entities per capita than we do. The average tax collected in the OECD is split 60/40 between central government and local government. Guess what, in New Zealand it is a 90/10 split. We devolve little. The argument for this is that with a population of 5 million in a long skinny country to have many local bodies duplicates council bureaucracies and costs. This is not necessarily the case.
2. Economies of scale advocates have had their day. NZ experience shows such thinking has often led to extravagances of scale instead. Te Whatu Ora Health administration is backing off centralization for instance and returning to the clinical interface; nationwide polytechnic administration Te Pukenga is being axed and the top heavy Three Waters set up dismantled - to give but a few examples. One doesn't hear a cry for the highly localized elected school boards to go back under education ministry control.
3. The Reviews recommendations, frankly, fly in the face of all of this. Not only are community boards to be disestablished, but more remote citywide councillors become, the likelihood of them succumbing to officer driven policy increases. Local community championed concerns then take a back seat. Getting onto and off the new Tupua Horo Nuku cycle/pathway, is an example of this big brother type control - officers won't budge away from Auckland transport practices.
4. Unmentioned too, is that the reviews recommendations encourage political parties to be more involved - Labour, Greens and maybe National and others in some guise. Independents then struggle to be elected, without name recognition (like well-known sports people) or significant campaign monies. It's a mammoth task to bang on 8,000 odd doors as an independent Harbour Ward candidate let alone visit the 42,500 homes to be elected at large.
5. Its noteworthy Eastbourne was lumped in with Petone in the survey (page 20). Eastbourne Borough was established in 1906 (not mentioned). It served its community well. On forced amalgamation into Hutt City it was asset stripped (eg bus company sold); its rates significantly increased (moving off a land value system) and infrastructure replacement slowed (eg sewage leaks) and bigger city layers of bureaucracy and consultants took over.
6. Granted the Community Boards may have been regarded as a sop for the loss of their own Borough Councils, as Tawa was in Wellington. Regardless, the Eastbourne Community Board has proved its worth. It is an asset by which the city has access to how this active and interested community regards its council and what it sees needed. The proof can be seen in the numbers of Eastbourners who attend the public part of their community board's meeting. This attendance is often more than the public at large attendance at a full Hutt City Council meeting. How then garroting such community interface improves representation escapes me.
7. Lack of a community board like structures in wards other than Petone, Wainuiomata and Eastbourne, could partly be a reason for less interest in, or lack of knowledge of local body affairs. Diversity could be strengthened if a community, like say the Western Hills or Stokes Valley felt so aggrieved they lacked one by establishing Board for them. Furthermore, more

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**Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors?** Oppose

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**Q4. Comments**

Election at large discourages independents standing, and encourages those affiliated to NZ political parties dominating. This further nationalizes local issues.

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**Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of: 5 city wide Councillors, 7 Councillors from five General Wards and, 1 Māori Ward Councillor** Neutral

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**Q6. Comments:**

Given my previous comments this does not make sense. Comfortable however with a Maori Ward.

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**Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows:** Neutral

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**Q8. Comments:**

Sad the fringes of the Harbour ward are to shuffled into the central ward. They, in part offered a check on the gentrification of the Harbour Ward.

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**Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished?** Oppose

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**Q10. Comments:**

Ignores their conduit to real local issues. Furthermore this idea that everything should be the same rides roughshot over the diversity and history of the Borough. The cost is not excessive.

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## Peggy Luke-Ngaheke

Q3. Do you support the proposal that Hutt City Council comprise a Mayor and 13 Councillors? Support

Q4. Comments

excellent well balanced and thoughtful report

Q5. Do you support the proposal that councillors be elected under a mixed system of representation of:5 city wide Councillors,7 Councillors from five General Wards and,1 Māori Ward Councillor Support

Q6. Comments:

I applaud the report evidencing the rationale for the recommendation

Q7. Do you support the proposal that the 5 General Wards be made up as follows: Support

Q8. Comments:

it makes sense

Q9. Do you support the proposal that there be no Community Boards in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt, and the three existing Community Boards (Petone, Eastbourne and Wainuiomata) be disestablished? Support

Q10. Comments:

not answered