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The Council Secretary  
Wellington Regional Council  
PO Box 1 i-646  
Wellington

Dear Sir

### Triennial Review of Membership and Basis of Election 2000

I wish to lodge an objection to the Council's proposal contained in the Triennial Review Discussion Document. My submissions are as follows:

#### Submission -Triennial Review

I submit that:

1. There shall be the following constituencies represented by the following number of councillors:

either:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Comprising</i>	<i>No of councillors</i>	<i>Population per councillor</i>
Kapiti Coast	Kapiti Coast District	1	41,200
Porirua	Porirua City	1	4 7,600
Wellington (North-Western)	Wellington City: Northern, <b>Onslow</b> & Western Wards	2	34,569
Wellington (Lambton)	Wellington City: <b>Lambton</b> Ward	1	2 7, 2 1 8
Wellington (South-Eastern)	Wellington City: Eastern & Southern Wards	2	30,655
Lower Hutt	Lower Hutt City	3	32,700
Upper Hutt	Upper Hutt City	1	37,300
Masterton	Masterton	1	19,450
Wairarapa	South Wairarapa, Carterton, & part of Tararua Districts	1	18,810
<b>Wellington Region</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>30,654</b>

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or:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Comprising</i>	<i>No of councillors</i>	<i>Population per councillor</i>
Kapiti Coast	Kapiti Coast District	<b>1</b>	41,200
Porirua	Porirua City	<b>1</b>	47,600
Wellington (Northern)	Wellington City: Northern Ward	1	35,034
Wellington (Onslow & Western)	Wellington City: <b>Onslow &amp; Western Wards</b>	1	34,103
Wellington (Lambton)	Wellington City: <b>Lambton Ward</b>	<b>1</b>	27,218
Wellington (Southern)	Wellington City: Southern Ward	1	27,663
Wellington (Eastern)	Wellington City: Eastern Ward	<b>1</b>	33,628
Lower Hutt	Lower Hutt City	3	32,700
Upper Hutt	Upper Hutt City	1	37,300
Masterton	Masterton	1	19,450
Wairarapa	South Wairarapa, Carterton, & part of Tararua Districts	<b>1</b>	<b>18,810</b>
<b>Wellington Region</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>30,654</b>

2. the Council continue with the following weightings as a means of determining the level of representation each constituency will receive:

Population	90%
Net Equalised Capital Value	5%
Land Area	5%

### Supplementary Submissions - Triennial Review Process

I submit that:

1. a proportional method (such as rounding to the nearest whole number) shall be used when allocating seats, not the disproportional Highest Remainder method;
2. the prime consideration when deciding the numbers of seats shall be effective representation, with effective management being a secondary factor;
3. any constituency that has boundaries that are identical with boundaries of another local body area shall bear the same name as that local body area;

### Supplementary Submissions – Triennial Review Consultation Process

4. when conclusions are drawn in a discussion document, the evidence for those conclusions shall be included in that document;
5. any topic for change covered in a discussion document shall be included explicitly in both the document's title and its Purpose (or equivalent);
6. every discussion document shall be subject to a formal editing and peer-review process;
7. every discussion document shall be put on the Council's **website**;
8. the making of submissions by fax and by **email** shall be facilitated.

## Discussion

### *Constituencies*

#### *Wellington*

In paragraph 3.2 the document discusses Wellington having two constituencies, giving six good reasons for multiple constituencies, and three good reasons for having a single one. There is no further discussion, and Attachment 1, "Analysis of Communities of Interest", does not mention this issue. On the basis of the arguments presented it would be reasonable to expect that the decision would be in favour of multiple constituencies, but the opposite view is taken, and with no explanation.

If the current single Wellington constituency had been analysed, major concerns would have emerged. Firstly, the regional councillors are very remote from their constituents, and it is unreasonable to expect any individual to be familiar with the needs of 166,000 people. Having a single constituency for Wellington has not worked. Secondly, Wellington city is not a homogeneous whole from the point of view of the regional council functions. Taking transport as an example, the railway and motorway networks do not serve the southern or eastern suburbs, while only one trolleybus route ventures west of the city centre, and none northwards. The majority of the land area in the city Northern and Western wards is rural, while the southern and eastern suburbs are heavily urbanised. There is little community of interest between suburbs on opposite sides of the city centre.

A two-constituency city would not be easy to achieve using existing city ward boundaries. It is quite possible with a three-constituency model, but this option does not appear to have been considered. A three-constituency division (Northern, Onslow, & Western Wards: 2 councillors; Lambton Ward: 1 councillor; Southern & Eastern Wards: 2 councillors) would recognise existing communities of interest, and give reasonable councillor:population ratios.

Wellington City Council's Triennial Review documentation recognised that each of their wards has a distinct community of interest: this can also be seen to apply from a regional council point of view. Using this basis it would be feasible to divide the city into 5, with one regional councillor covering each city ward (excepting Western and Onslow Wards, which would be combined for this purpose).

Either of these options would mean that communities of interest would be represented effectively, without the current disadvantages of remoteness, or of disparate communities in Wellington City being lumped together.

#### ***Wairarapa***

Paragraph 3.4 gives one good reason for dividing the Wairarapa constituency in two and none for retaining the status quo, and then says that there is no reason to change the status quo. This is not logical, unless there are other undisclosed factors being taken into account.

#### ***Porirua/Kapiti Coast***

Using the 80: 10: 10 formula (incorrectly described in Table 3 as being the status quo), Porirua has a total factor 3% greater than Kapiti Coast. Using the Highest Remainder method, Porirua has representation 100% greater than Kapiti Coast. The Highest Remainder method may be mathematically sound and easy to understand, but it is highly disproportional in this case. An equally sound proportional method, arguably easier to understand, is to round to the nearest whole number. This would give Porirua and Kapiti Coast the same representation (one councillor each) for very similar factors – a much fairer situation.

This would also resolve the current issue of Porirua's member to population ratio being much higher (incorrectly described as "low" in paragraph 3.1) than the rest of the region. The Local Government Commission recommended that the Council consider Porirua's representation very carefully prior to 2001: it is not clear what form this "careful consideration" has taken, but it is clear that no change has resulted.

*Multi-member constituencies*

It is stated that it is highly desirable that each constituency should have at least two councillors. Since one-third of the constituencies are already single-member, this does not appear to be too significant a consideration, and it should not over-ride considerations of representation and proportionality.

*Number of Councillors*

The Act requires the Council to determine the number of constituencies and the number of members proposed to be elected by each constituency. My analysis above follows that approach, and concludes that a 13-member council appears to satisfy the requirements best.

The discussion paper starts from the opposite approach, arguing that 14 members are necessary, and then allocating them across constituencies (with the disproportionate result noted above). The assertion is that a 14-member council is necessary to meet the needs of the council as a whole, and there is little discussion as to whether this could be achieved with fewer councillors. The document does not discuss the trade-off implicit in the 14-member decision: efficient management on the one hand as opposed to proportionality and representation on the other. I contend that this is a major omission.

The Local Government Act "arbitrary limit" of 14 Councillors is described as creating pressure to amalgamate previously-separate constituencies. This may well have been an issue at one time, but it can hardly be a current issue since the Act has been in force for over 20 years.

*Constituency names*

There is no discussion in the document about the proposed renaming of Porirua, and no justification is given. Renaming of constituencies is not included in either the title of the document or the Purpose of the document as given on page 1.

No reasons are given for proposing that a single area should be able to have a different name according to which local body is being considered. Multiple names can only confuse, and having the same name for the Regional Council constituency and the local body clarifies that the same locality is being referred to.

Porirua constituency should keep the current name that it shares with the city, and Kapiti should revert to Kapiti Coast, the name of the District.

*Determining Levels of Representation*

The only reason given for changing the weightings for determining levels of representation is that "he (sic) Council's functions and services are largely to land, and only indirectly to residents". If this were the case, the proposed reduction from 90% to 80% in favour of population would be in the right direction, but clearly insufficient.

However, Council's major functions include supplying water and transport to people, and it is people (not land) that the Council is elected by and represents. The reason given is inadequate to change the status quo.

*The Discussion Document*

The quality of the discussion document is open to question, as these examples demonstrate:

- Paragraph 3.1 of the document says that "the Local Government Commission . . . stated that the member to population ratio in Porirua is low in comparison with the rest of the Region." In fact, the Commission referred to Porirua's over-representation – precisely the opposite state of affairs.

- Attachment 2 says that the weighting is 90:5:5, uses 80:10:10 in the calculation, and makes a minor error in the addition of the example.
- There are incorrect wordings or typographical errors in every quotation from the Act used in the document. For example, section 101 L(l)(a) is mis-labelled 101L(a), and is rendered meaningless by “and’ being replaced by “of’; and section 101 L(1)(c), also referred to incorrectly as 101 L(c), appears in two different incorrect ways - the second one has an emphasised shall inserted, which is not in the original.
- There are a number of other typographical errors, including some which would have been picked up with a simple spell check, such as “Bilk Water functions functions” in paragraph 4.1.

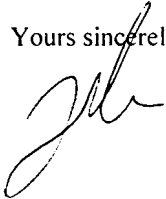
To help eliminate these problems, all discussion documents should go through a formal editing and peer-review process.

### *The Submission Process*

The triennial review process is not mentioned in the Council's website - a search on “triennial” drew a blank. No reference is made in the documentation to the possibility of making submissions by fax or by email.

The making of submissions would be facilitated by the use of up-to-date communication methods such as the internet, email and faxes, which are often cheaper and easier to use than traditional ones.

Yours sincerely



Michael Mellor