

## By email

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Tēnā koutou

I want to start by thanking you for encouraging voters to get out and vote in the recent local elections. Wellington Region voters overwhelmingly backed Māori wards on the Regional Council with over 100,000 voting yes in this year's referendum.

Following the local elections, Greater Wellington are delighted to have Cr Shamia Makarini elected as the inaugural Te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui Māori councillor.

Sitting alongside and supporting Cr Makarini, is a new Council. The Councillors contact details including mobile phone numbers can be found on our [website here](#).

I recognise the importance of our partnerships with iwi and mana whenua and the role you play in shaping the future of our rohe. We will work with our Te Hunga Whiriwhiri team, to organise hui to introduce you to Cr Makarini, and/or your local constituency councillor. I am also available at any time to talk with you and look forward to continuing to work with you. I also wanted to thank those of you who have reached out in the past weeks regarding the recent announcements.

Following are some broad areas of possible mutual interest that the Regional Council will be focussed on for this triennium:

### **Local Government Reform**

Local government reform was signalled by the government recently. Greater Wellington supports reform that engages the community and our mana whenua partners and recognises the benefits of both localism and regionalism.

We believe there continues to be a strong role for Regional Councils in areas such as river catchments, environmental management, flood protection and public transport, which are all best managed at scale. We look forward to working with you on responses to the Government's proposals.

### **Enhancing our partnership**

This triennium we will look to strengthen our partnerships with mana whenua partners by listening and learning more about your current and future priorities and ensuring we are staying true to GW's partnering commitments in a changing landscape characterised by reform.

### **Long Term Plan**

We want to make sure iwi priorities are considered by Council as we set the direction for the next three years through the preparation of the 2027-37 Long Term Plan. We also want to work with iwi at the operational level to shape a shared programme of delivery through our Kaupapa agreements.

### **Staying connected on Resource Management Act Reform**

There will be a number of phases to this significant proposed change. The first step will be sharing submissions and learning together about what is proposed. The impact on existing governance structures will also be critically important, such as Te Upoko Taiao and the Wairarapa Moana Statutory Board.

### **Confirming a Regional Spatial Plan**

While I don't yet know who will take the lead on regional spatial planning, it's likely Greater Wellington or Wellington Regional Leadership Committee may be involved in some way. It's important we stay connected on this so that together we can help influence a plan that achieves coordinated regional planning and investment to support thriving communities, strong local and iwi economies, and a resilient, low-emissions future.

### **Supporting housing intensification**

Establishing a vehicle we can use to support housing intensification, like Auckland's Eke Panuku Development. Building better quality, more compact and mixed-use urban communities will help reduce infrastructure costs and make it easier to reduce transport costs and emissions, cleaning our air and making our towns and cities healthier and cheaper to navigate. Healthy, cheaper and safe housing is of shared importance to both iwi Māori and councils in our current climate.

### **Restoration and biodiversity**

I know that the health of the region's awa, fresh water and protecting our precious indigenous biodiversity is a focus for you. We are committed to working with you to carry out restoration planting and control pests in regional parks and supporting iwi-led and community-led groups who are helping with restoration planting and pest control.

We continue to support the establishment of mana-whenua led plant nurseries which in turn support environmental restoration work.

## Connectivity

I know that community transport and connectivity is important to you, particularly where it supports access to education and opportunities for rangatahi and whanau, so I wanted to give you a heads up about some of our public transport focus areas:

- Further measures to strengthen bus reliability across the region and exploring some higher capacity public transport across Wellington, starting with the Harbour Quays bus priority lanes.
- Making progress with publicly owned bus depots. This includes making progress on the Memorandum of Understanding with Te Rūnanga o Toa Rangatira to explore the development of an electric bus depot at Kenepuru Landing. This partnership reflects our shared aspirations for decarbonisation and environmental stewardship.
- Advocating for further investment into rail renewals and modernisation, including rail station upgrades and the removal of rail crossings on the electrified network.
- Revising the Metlink fare structure and introducing new fare products and modern payment systems
- Progressing work to prepare for the delivery of our new Tūhono trains bringing more frequent, and more reliable services across the Wairarapa and Manawatū lines - connecting communities from Masterton and Palmerston North through to Wellington and the wider region. Better rail means better access to jobs, education, and services - and it helps us build a more connected, sustainable future for everyone in the Lower North Island.

I look forward to working with you as always.

Ngā mihi



**Daran Ponter**

Haemana | Chair

### Appendix A:

At our Council meeting on 27 November 2025, we agreed key positions for Council committees, which you [can read about here](#):

Copy to Chief Executives of Ātiawa ki Whakarongotai Charitable Trust, Ngāti toa Rangatira, Ngā hapū o Ōtaki, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Charitable Trust, Port Nicholson Block Settlement Trust, Rangitāne o Wairarapa Inc, Rangitane Tu Mai Ra Trust, Kahungunu ki Wairarapa Tāmaki Nui a Rua Settlement Trust and GWRC

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