



REPORT 6
(1215/12/IM)

REGIONAL GOVERNANCE SUBMISSION

1. Purpose of Report

To enable Community Board members to approve the Boards submission on Regional Governance Reform in Wellington.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Tawa Community Board:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Approve the submission of the Tawa Community Board on the Regional Government Reform in Wellington attached as appendix 1.*

REGIONAL GOVERNMENT REFORM IN WELLINGTON

The **Tawa Community Board** has received feedback from the Tawa community both by email (30+) and at a public meeting called in early April to discuss the issue. More than 120 members of the community attended that meeting.

A straw poll taken at the meeting produced the following results:

Small minorities supported Options 1 & 2. The overwhelming majority supported the status quo, but with improved efficiencies and greater collaboration.

When given the option of Tawa being part of a northern Wellington ward or a Porirua ward, the overwhelming majority supported being part of a northern Wellington ward.

Those results are very much in line with the opinions expressed in the emails received.

Part of the reasoning (and it may or may not be a significant part) is that people see Options 1 or 2 adversely affecting Tawa's "community voice". Many residents recall the 1989 amalgamation which was not necessarily in the best interests of the Tawa community, and the perception is that further amalgamation is again not likely to be in the best interests of the Tawa community.

Under Option 1 a new Council has the option of allowing community boards. However it is very much at the behest of the Council to create or dissolve community boards as it sees fit, hardly a satisfactory scenario for Tawa people who have in the past experienced a Council voting to abolish the board.

Under Option 2 local boards are guaranteed. Under the current proposal Tawa would be absorbed into a new Porirua ward comprising around 68,000 people. Whilst in theory there is every chance that Tawa would be directly represented on the new local board, there is no guarantee that that would be the case.

A common thread in the feedback we have received can be seen in the following quotes:

"My view is that we should not become part of a new Porirua ward - and keep the Tawa Community Board."

"I like to have a community board specific to Tawa!"

"I want to keep Tawa Community Board. I don't want Tawa to be part of Porirua."

APPENDIX 1

“Our board is passionate and engaging, and encourages a real sense of community ... I would not only be disappointed but angry if we lost our right to have our own board.”

“I like having a Tawa board and being linked to Wellington.”

“My view is that I much prefer how things run today, and would be very keen to retain our own local Tawa Community Board.”

“I am strongly apposed to being part of a Porirua ward and not having a community board for Tawa.”

However if change is to happen, the preference of the majority of the **Tawa Community Board** is for Option 1, but hand-in-hand with one or more single member wards.

Communities of interest need to retain their own voice. To ensure Tawa retains a voice of its own, an aspect which is important to local people, a Tawa ward comprising around 15,000 people and being represented by one councillor, is something for which we would strongly advocate.

Whilst single member wards may or may not be warranted across a “unified” city of some 400,000 people, Tawa is a distinctive community whose background and population would justify its own ward status and individual representative on a 27-member council.

As previously indicated, one of the major concerns of the Tawa community is the potential reduction in terms of “local democracy” if major regional governance changes are to take place. Localised community-oriented decision-making is vital in the interests of democracy. The perception is that a move towards “super city” status is a threat to that, and it probably is.

Tawa people appreciate grassroots representation. If that is to be taken away, the next best alternative is the guarantee of a councillor specific to the Tawa community. Thus our advocacy of a single member ward for Tawa.

We do not have a hard and fast view on whether either Kapiti or Wairarapa should be included in any new and improved arrangement.

Tawa Community Board:

Malcolm Sparrow (Chair)

Graeme Hansen

Margaret Lucas

Chris Reading

Alistair Sutton

Robert Tredger

2 May 2013