

3 May 2013

Regional Reform
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Re: Regional Reform

This submission is from the Architectural Centre, an incorporated society dating from 1946, which represents both professionals and non-professionals interested in the promotion of good design. Our prime interest in the debate regarding Regional Reform is from the position of a community group supporting of strength in local government democratic processes.

1. The Architectural Centre supports the greater representation available through the two-tier model and the status quo over the single-tier model. We consider that these two models have a greater ability to represent local communities in the decision-making processes.
2. We are not convinced that there is a need to change the current system of local government representation in the Wellington region, and understand that the status quo has the capacity for cross-council initiatives (e.g. Civil Defence).
3. We support Māori representation on the council, and sincerely hope that Wellington is able to acknowledge the significance of mana whenua and taura here in meaningful local government decision-making, in contrast to Auckland.
4. We note that the proposed area of amalgamation has a significant range of diversity and we support models which are responsive to community need, and enable this diversity (e.g. rural, urban; different topography/geography, small communities vs larger cities, different economies) to flourish. There appear to be good reasons for areas such as Kapiti and the Wairarapa to retain independence from Wellington.
5. We would also like to comment on the material made available for consultation. Overall the material available does not assist people trying to understand the issues and the comparative benefits/weaknesses of the different models. Different documents duplicate others, the combined amount of material is repetitive, lengthy, and spread across a number of websites, and few provide good comparative information of options proposed with the status quo. This is largely because the Joint Working Party Report does not engage with the status quo, and because other documents (e.g. WCC Report 9 Appendix 1) appear to have been produced for internal city council processes rather than a consideration of assisting the public, and are not labelled to convey a sense of content. We acknowledge it is difficult when different parties promoting consultation have different ideas about possible outcomes, but the status quo is something most people will have a good working knowledge of, and so is a useful barometer for understanding other possibilities.

Thank you for this opportunity to make a submission on this proposed Regional Reform.

Yours faithfully

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