



20 May 2024

Rt Hon Christopher Luxon

Hon Simeon Brown

Hon Tama Potaka, Minister for Māori Crown Relations: Te Arawhiti

Rt Hon Winston Peters, Leader, New Zealand First

Hon David Seymour, Leader, ACT

Kia ora Prime Minister, Ministers, and party leaders

### **Changes to Māori ward and constituency poll provisions**

Local Government New Zealand and the Mayors and Chairs that have signed this letter are opposed to the changes the Coalition Government is proposing to Māori ward and constituency poll provisions.

The Government's decision to remove decision-making from councils by mandating that polls be run on Māori wards and constituencies is an overreach on local decision-making when current legislation already requires councils to seek community views. It sets a concerning precedent that the Government may overturn other decisions made by democratically elected councillors. We are disappointed this is in contrast with the commitments the Government made during the election campaign to empower local government to make decisions about its own communities.

Our position – a position that has been held by Local Government New Zealand since 2018 – is that Māori wards and constituencies should be treated like all other wards and that decisions should be made at the council level. Polls aren't required on any other wards or constituencies, and requiring them will add increased costs to councils.

We are concerned that the Government's decision is a distraction from the hard work that councils are doing to deliver infrastructure and keep costs down for their communities. It also undermines the important contributions that Māori are making to local government.

We urge the Government to reconsider its position and leave it to local councils to make decisions about appropriate representation arrangements in partnership with iwi and their communities.

Ngā mihi nui

#### **Local Government New Zealand**

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Mayor Sam Broughton  
President  
Local Government New Zealand

Mayor xx  
xx Council

Chair xx  
xx Council