



RANGITIKEI
DISTRICT COUNCIL

21 July 2022

Committee Secretariat
Justice Committee
Parliament Buildings
Wellington
via submission to www.parliament.nz

Tena Koe

Rangitikei District Council submission on the Electoral (Māori Electoral Option) Legislation Bill

The Rangitikei District Council (Council) thanks the Justice Committee for the opportunity to submit on the Electoral (Māori Electoral Option) Legislation Bill and supports this change to allow Māori voters to change between General and Māori Rolls more freely.

The Rangitikei District has a relatively high Māori population, with the 2018 census showing 26.6% of the district's resident population are Māori, compared with 16.5% nationally.

Council is committed to working with Māori and tangata whenua, including supporting Māori to contribute to, and participate in, decision making processes.

Māori Wards

On 29 April 2021, Council unanimously voted in favour of establishing Māori Wards for the 2022 election.

Following the Representation Review undertaken in 2021, Council representation for the 2022 election will include two Māori wards – Tiikeitia ki Uta (Inland) and Tiikeitia ki Tai (Coastal), with one Councillor for each ward.

Māori voters last had the option to determine their roll during the Māori Electoral Option in 2018 and will be unable to change rolls for the upcoming local body election despite the widespread establishment of Māori Wards since this time. The regulatory impact statement states that approximately 6,000 people per year attempt to exercise the Māori Electoral Option to change rolls and are unable to do so, increasing to 24,000 in the last General Election year. Council agrees that this indicates that the current Electoral Option system is not clear or easy to navigate, potentially disadvantaging Māori voters.

Conclusion

Council supports this Bill and agrees it is appropriate to allow Māori voters to move between electoral rolls more freely, making it easier for voters to participate in both general elections and local body elections on their preferred roll. Council supports this effort to remove restrictions on Māori voters' electoral rights and maximise voter participation, while acknowledging that this change is not able take place in time for this year's local body elections.

Naku noa

Mayor Andy Watson
On Behalf of the Rangitikei District Council

Making this place home.