

The Council Secretary
Wellington Regional Council
PO Box 11-646
WELLINGTON

8 August 2000

Dear Secretary

RE: Triennial Review of Membership and Basis of Election

I wish to lodge the following objections to the proposed Council Conclusions for the 2001 Local Authority elections:

1. The weightings adopted to achieve "fair representation" (Conclusion 2) ; and
2. That the Kapiti Constituency only have 1 (ONE) elected representative (Conclusion 3).

DISCUSSION

1. Membership is based on the stated premise that 'electors receive 'fair' representation, having regard to the population of every constituency and where appropriate, the **rateable** values, areas or other relative characteristics: The Council has decided that it is 'fair' to allocate weights to population, net equalised capital value (**NECV**) and land area on the basis of 8:1:1.

I would argue that, given the Council clearly states on P6 of its document that 'the Council functions and services are largely to **land** and only indirectly to residents,' a weighting of one to land, compared with a weighting of eight to population is not implementation of its stated policy. This is notwithstanding that in the WRC Appeals (LGC 104/76), **Para. 25**, it states 'the Commission must have regard primarily to population . . .' and ' . . population must remain the predominant factor..' The words primarily and predominantly suggest more than 50%, not necessarily the 80 or 90% used by the Council.

Since there is an almost perfect statistical correlation between population and NECV ($r = 0.975$), it is statistically invalid to use two such highly inter-correlated variables. The net result is that ~~land~~ population receives an additional weighting (**NECV**) while land receives even less.

Given these facts, only Population and Area should be used as weighting variables and land area should receive a much greater weighting than it does at present. I suggest a ratio of 6.4 (see the accompanying Table).

2. The number of members to represent each constituency is ultimately based on a rounding up or down of the proportions calculated on the basis of the weighted variables used (highest remainder method). Under the current proposal, **Mana** is allocated **TWO** members whereas

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Kapiti is only allocated ONE member. The basis for this decision rests on the fact that on the present weighting model, **Mana** receives 0.28 per cent more than Kapiti, a difference that represents 0.04 of a member! This is objectivity taken too far. In the WRC Appeals (LGC 104/76) **Para. 25**, it states 'any mathematical calculation should be seen only as **guide** to a level of fairness which can be achieved on the basis of the factors required to be taken into account under the provisions of the Act.'

Furthermore, any other weighting (7:2:1; 6:3:1; 6:2:2 or the 6:4 shown below) shows that Kapiti outscores **Mana** on every occasion and if objectivity prevails, would be allocated the additional member in a 14-member Council.

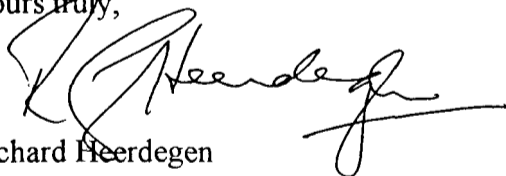
Given the closeness in scores of these two constituencies, other criteria should be used. For instance, Kapiti has the second-largest land area; Kapiti has less in common with its neighbouring constituency **Mana**; **Mana** has more in common with its other neighbouring constituencies in that many issues would be common to them all.

I have calculated the number of members based on Population and Area for weighted proportions of 6:4. It shows that Kapiti has a much higher weighted proportion than either **Mana** or Upper Hutt. However, Council should be able to use some judgement as to how to allocate the membership rather than relying exclusively on the mathematical outcome of the table. In this instance, Kapiti should still receive 2 members given that it has substantially more weight than either **Mana** or Upper Hutt. Wellington City and Wairarapa should probably be lessened a little based on the need to give a more qualitative weighting to the outcome. I realise that Wairarapa would have two more representatives than the current proposal – not unrealistic given that so much of the WRC rates are spent in the non-urban environment.

Population: Area 6:4		
Constituencies	Weighted Proportion	Number of Members
Kapiti	0.093047	1.303 (2)
Mana	0.075179	1.053 (1)
Wellington	0.247398	3.464 (4)
Lower Hutt	0.155777	2.181 (2)
Upper Hutt	0.079421	1.112 (1)
Wairarapa	0.349178	4.887 4)
	1 .000000	14.000

* The numbers in parentheses are my suggestions.

Yours truly,



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