



**We're  
reviewing  
Māori  
representation  
at Council**

We would love to hear your views  
on our options for encouraging  
Māori participation in Council  
decision making in time for the  
2025 local government election

# What's the process??

This consultation document has been sent to households within the Waitomo District.

We are seeking feedback and submissions from iwi, mana whenua, Māori and the general population. Submissions are open until Sunday 17 September 2023.

Following the close of submissions, the Council will hold hearings for anyone wanting to speak to their submission.

This is not a vote, but your input is hugely important. Following the hearings, the Council will make a decision on Māori Representation for the next election.

**Want to chat to us in person?**  
There will be a drop-in session on  
Thursday 17 August 2023 from  
3pm-6pm at Railway Building 3 on  
Rora Street, Te Kūiti.

## **Why is it important to talk about Māori Representation?**

This District, being within Te Rohe Pōtae King Country, has a rich history in the formation of the governance of New Zealand. Approximately half of our population in Waitomo are Māori, so it is important our Council is set up to enable Māori perspectives and values to be considered when we're making significant decisions. We want to ensure that the way Māori are represented works for our District.

Council will continue to strengthen our relationships with local Māori, hapū, and iwi through whichever method of representation is chosen. We will ensure that we facilitate participation by Māori in local decision making by doing more than just the obligations we have under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Local Government Act 2002, which requires councils to provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to decision-making processes.

## **Why are we asking about this now?**

Following recent amendments to the Local Electoral Act 2001, we are required to decide whether to establish a Māori ward for the 2025 and 2028 elections before the end of the year.

But before we make that decision, it is worth considering all the options we have for representation and participation for Māori at Council. We have made some recent changes with the new Council and want to consider if this meets the community need or if other options would work better.

Communities are no longer able to request binding polls on the topic of Māori wards, and any decision Council makes about this is final and cannot be appealed or changed for at least six years. That's why it's so important we hear from everyone in the community.

## **What are the options?**

We have four options for consideration, the status-quo, introducing Māori wards, or introducing a committee with Māori representation and/or Māori wards and a committee. Further information is available on our website with answers to FAQs and an online submission form.

# OPTION 1: Status-quo

Following our review, we can decide that what we're doing now is working well and choose to make no changes.

This term, the Council has newly established Te Rāngai Whakakaupapa Kōrero committee (TRWK) to provide guidance, assistance, and support to the Council on matters specific to iwi and mana whenua relationships.

Made up of two sitting councillors and the Mayor, the committee also considers topics which are of particular interest to Māori. The current structure only allows for elected members to be on the committee.

The Council also has existing relationships with Whare (committees made up of representatives from local marae) and some hapū, we are developing relationships with the new Post-Settlement Governance Entity for Maniapoto, Te Nehenehenui, and have ongoing obligations in the Joint Management Agreement (JMA) relating to the management of Waipā river and will have additional obligations under a new JMA with Te Nehenehenui.

Members of the public are and will continue to be able to bring matters directly to Council as individuals or groups at monthly Council meetings. Anyone can directly contact councillors and the Mayor to discuss matters one on one.

## Advantages

The new TRWK enables a focus on topics of concern to Māori and is a place people where may feel more comfortable discussing issues that are important to Māori.

The Council is currently able to engage with Māori for specific projects.

General roll vs Māori roll – no impact on voting for any candidate.

## Disadvantages

It isn't guaranteed that any Māori candidates will be elected to Council from our existing wards.

Stronger representation may reduce the risk that Council decision making does not always consider Māori perspectives.

The current structure of this committee only allows for elected members to be on the committee.

# OPTION 2: Māori Wards

Māori wards provide for direct representation of Māori at the Council table. In the same way that Māori seats in Parliament work, voters on the Māori electoral roll vote for candidates in a Māori ward, and voters on the general roll vote for candidates in a general ward.

If we create Māori wards, we don't get to choose how many Māori ward councillors we have. While influenced by population numbers, this is calculated based on the proportion of the local voting population who are on the Māori roll not the population who are Māori.

Currently Council is made up of six councillors and a Mayor. If we kept these numbers, we would have two Māori seat councillors and four general seat councillors.

More information about the choices available if we decide to create a Māori ward are available in the FAQ document. (Add QR code)

## Advantages

Specific Māori seats at the table can help ensure representation and make sure Māori voices are heard across all areas of Council.

Recognise the unique cultural identity of Māori communities and promote diversity. Is consistent with Te Tiriti o Waitangi and principles of the Local Electoral Act 2001 to consider fair representation.

Encourage participation by Māori voters in local government and strengthen Council's relationships with Māori.

## Disadvantages

It could be hard to elect one or two persons to represent the diversity of Māori views.

There may be better ways for Māori viewpoints and perspectives to be raised with Council.

With few people typically standing for election, the District may struggle to have enough people standing in each seat which diminishes democracy and choice.

Māori who do not live in the District cannot vote for Māori ward candidates.

# OPTION 3: A committee with Māori representation

A Māori committee is a formal council committee set up to represent Māori interests. If established, this committee would meet to specifically discuss issues relevant to Māori (whānau, iwi, and hapū).

This committee will include some elected members, but unlike the status-quo (TRWK committee), community members will also be appointed. Community members could be representatives from local Whare<sup>(1)</sup> who would enable broader representation and a greater diversity of Māori perspectives.

Māori committees provide input and expertise into council decision-making processes, in the same way that WDC's existing Audit and Risk Committee provides input into council decisions about risk and compliance.

<sup>(1)</sup> Whare within the District are made up of representatives of local marae. Whare meet to discuss issues of importance to those marae.

## Advantages

Representation on this committee could strengthen Council's ability to consider Māori viewpoints.

Local iwi and hapū could determine the most appropriate people to sit on this committee, providing more diverse representation than Māori seats.

## Disadvantages

These appointments won't have a seat at the Council table so do not have as much ability to influence decision making over all Council decisions.

It could be seen as undemocratic to have appointments to a Council committee who have voting rights.

# HAVE YOUR SAY



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation/group (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want to speak to Council about your submission? Y | N

Please circle your preferred option:

- 1) Status-quo                      2) Māori wards
- 3) A committee with Māori representation
- 4) both Māori wards and a committee with Māori representation

Please explain why you have made the above choice:

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Please scan or take a photo of your submission and email to: [haveyoursay@waitomo.govt.nz](mailto:haveyoursay@waitomo.govt.nz) or post your submission to: PO Box 404, Te Kūiti 3941. Alternatively, you can visit our website to make an online submission - [waitomo.govt.nz](http://waitomo.govt.nz) Submissions close 17 September 2023 with hearings scheduled for 4-5 October 2023.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What is a Māori ward?**

A Māori ward would be an additional ward for the Māori population, elected by voters on the Māori roll.

## **Who votes in the Māori ward?**

Anyone who is registered on the Māori electoral roll within that Māori ward area.

## **How many Māori ward councillors would we have?**

It is based on the Māori roll, not on the Māori population, currently this would result in two Māori ward seats.

## **Who could stand as a candidate in a Māori ward?**

Anyone who is eligible to stand in a general ward is also able to stand as a candidate in a Māori ward, regardless of ethnicity or which electoral roll they are enrolled on. They only have to receive a nomination from two people on the Māori roll in Waitomo District.

**Read more here:**

