



Local Government Commission

Mana Kāwanatanga ā Rohe

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Wayne Guppy
Chair
Wellington Regional Mayoral Forum
Private Bag 907
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Dear Wayne

Strengthening the Wellington Region – A Regional Response

Thank you for your letter of 14 March 2018 providing a collective response from the Mayoral Forum to the Commission's report *Strengthening the Wellington Region*.

I appreciate the considered response that you have provided. I agree with your statement that there has been a very considerable change in the relationships among the region's councils since applications for reorganisation in 2013. In addition there have been some significant achievements over this period, perhaps most notably the establishment of Wellington Water, which positions the region "ahead of the game" in this vital area of council responsibility.

The Commission is pleased to hear that shareholding councils appear committed to fully capitalising on the advantages that such a metropolitan scale water management company offers. The Commission has highlighted the model which you have developed as worthy of consideration to other regions in the course of our work on other parts of the country.

As you have detailed there is currently a far more collaborative approach among the region's councils across a range of areas than was in evidence during the lead up to the reorganisation applications, and during the earlier part of the Commission's engagement with the region. In particular you have highlighted the current work on *Lets Get Wellington Moving* and the response to the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity.

We appreciate that councils currently see the planning and subsequent roll out of decisions arising from these major “city shaping” exercises as their immediate priorities. We note that you consider that significant progress is being made in these areas without considering the sort of more systemic changes in relation to transport and spatial planning that the Commission recommended. We accept that councils do not intend to take up these recommendations at this time.

The Commission was conscious in making these recommendations, however, that the current collaborative approach stands to a significant extent on the foundation of the positive relationships among the individuals in key decision making roles within the region’s councils for the time being. Personalities change, however, through time and electoral cycles.

The times of positive relationships are also windows of opportunity to think about the sorts of arrangements which might be put in place to deal better with those times in the future where relationships may not be so positive. It remains open to councils to pick up the recommendations the Commission has made on these matters, and consider them further at any future time that they may wish to do so.

Finally I would like to take the opportunity to thank you and your colleagues for the assistance they have provided to the Commission, and the positive and professional engagement of your councils I have enjoyed as Chair of the Commission.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wira Gardiner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sir Wira Gardiner
Chair Local Government Commission