# The Future for Local Government and Local Governance<sup>1</sup>



## Taituarā Executive Board Vision, Principles and Proposals

## **Our Vision: People thriving in place**

Because everyone doing well matters – Councils of the future will function within a system of local decision making and accountability that:

Principle 1	Is inclusive, values diversity, strengthens social cohesion, and unleashes the inherent power and strength of communities
Principle 2	Enables place-based decision making and action
Principle 3	Gives effect to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and partners with Māori
Principle 4	Is innovative, self-improving, and adaptive, building and sustaining trust and confidence in government
Principle 5	<ul> <li>Through collaborative leadership, ensures central and local government MUST</li> <li>a. think and act as one system to deliver improved community wellbeing.</li> <li>b. have funding approaches that:</li> <li>support fair allocation and equitable distribution of resources across the system</li> <li>enable decision-makers to make the best use of limited resources.</li> </ul>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> In this context governance means the decisions and processes we use to collectively solve our problems and meet society's needs. Local governance refers to the system that governs communities and requires genuine collaboration between public, private, Māori, community and not for profits to achieve outcomes

#### For Principles 1 and 2:

- Is inclusive, values diversity, strengthens social cohesion, and unleashes the inherent power and strength of communities
- Enables place-based decision making and action

#### Future state - attributes

**Government systems** reduce inequalities by taking an ora / whole systems approach

**Communities** are active innovators, participants, and partners in achieving wellbeing outcomes, creating, and leading solutions that meet their needs

#### **Councils**

- are convenors of place, acting as brokers, bridge builders, and connectors between communities and government, aligning community needs with resources and services.
- **reflect** the communities they represent
- enable and support community leadership and delivery
- share kawana space with the community – grass roots involvement is vital
- promote evidence-based decisionmaking and increase community access to information for planning in place

### How we get there

**Equity of outcomes and intergenerational wellbeing** is at the **core of future systems** design and resource allocation legislative change

#### **Community Wellbeing Plan**

There is broad participation in and commitment to the development and implementation (including funding) of a long-term, place based, Community Wellbeing Plan

**Representation and engagement arrangements** more effectively reflect all interests and communities, including Māori, and provide voice for those whose interests are currently under-represented.

**Councils bring people and information together** – making sure that issues and needs are well articulated, that everyone can have their say where and when they want to, and that a wide range of community voices are heard.

- **Councils engage and empower** when engagement and empowerment counts
- **Formal and informal community partnerships** can coalesce around issues and opportunities as they arise.
- Open access to a national system of wellbeing data, information, and metrics

## **Current state & opportunity**

Many councils already engage, inspire, and collaborate with their communities to deliver successful community-led projects and improve place-based outcomes. But this is not universal.

Engagement, partnering and collaboration with communities, central government agencies and other local governance organisations would benefit from better:

- co-ordination
- alignment of priorities and inputs
- understanding of local places and
- sustainable resourcing

#### **Future state - attributes** How we get there **Current state & opportunity** Many councils are growing their capability to build Māori are an integral part of local Giving effect to the principles of Te Tiriti is included as a foundational authentic relationships and actively partner with Māori governance principle in local governance legislation lwi, hapū and whānau of the future exercise The scope to explore active partnership in all its forms tino rangatiratanga while councils of the can be better supported by enabling legislation and a future foster a mutually respectful and **Workforce development** joint workforce development plan to increase capability equitable Te Tiriti partnership with Māori in and experience of partnership working across central and local government Councils of the future are natural **An active partnership**, supported by enabling legislation, is a step towards partners with Māori using a variety of formal, legal mechanisms (requirements) to more formal governance develop active partnership approaches arrangements in the future not an end across Aotearoa state

#### **Future state - attributes**

Alongside enhanced representative democracy, Councils:

- use participatory democracy approaches that meet their community needs and encourage the sharing of diverse voices and expertise as part of the decisionmaking process
- include local tikanga in their day-to-day operations, evolving governance approaches to recognise hui customs and practices of diverse community groups.

### How we get there

As active partners, Councils and Māori provide the necessary scaffolding to encourage wide community participation, identify community aspirations, opportunities, and challenges, and make decisions together about resourcing and delivery of local public services

Councils will continue to evolve, learn, and adapt, to meet community needs and aspirations as these change over time, using local indicators, information, and feedback loops

Some rationalisation of boundaries

**Fewer units of administration** will reduce system costs and better enable delivery of the right public services in the right places

## **Current state & opportunity**

Participation in local democracy is often aligned with a person's view on whether their opinion matters to decision-makers

By increasing the alignment between the makeup of communities and the makeup of their local elected representatives and growing trust in government we will reverse the conditions for declining social and community cohesion with people choosing to participate as they feel their voices "are heard"

Current boundaries cut across Māori and, in some cases, natural local<sup>2</sup> boundaries, resulting in duplication of effort, back-office systems and resources for Māori and Councils

This adds another layer of the complexity and breadth that constrains active partnering for both parties

The status quo for local government organisation is not sustainable.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> community

For Principle 5: Through collaborative leadership, central and local government MUST (a) think and act as one system to deliver improved community wellbeing

#### Future state - attributes

System that is **founded in the spirit of community service** 

**Councils have a clear place** in the governance system

Mutually **respectful high trust relationship** with central government

Integrated system that provides **flexibility** and supports **collaboration** in pursuit of **shared interests and outcomes** 

Councils are allocated, and can allocate or delegate, functions, and roles at the most appropriate scale, whether that is community, rohe, town or city, sub-national, or national levels

**Joint oversight of the system**, its performance (and the performance of local and central government), capability and resourcing for outcomes

## How we get there

Legislation is **principles-based** for wellbeing outcomes

**Constitutional position** of local government is protected in legislation

Councils play a key role **utilising their convening capacity** to support local delivery of local public services to achieve wellbeing improvements

**Evaluation** of locally designed and delivered projects; **measurement** of the contribution local government makes to **wellbeing outcomes** at community, rohe, town, regional, subnational and national level

#### Fit for purpose workforce

- a commitment to the spirit of public service across all levels of the public service
- behavioural change premised on a shared sense of purpose
- skills and desire to work collaboratively, facilitate increased community participation in decision-making and actively partner with Māori
- joint workforce planning

Establishment of a **Reform Office** or National Transition Unit to coordinate and "drive accountability and learning" located to emphasise the importance of the partnership between central and local government

#### **Current state & opportunity**

So much can be achieved when central and local government work in partnership with others in communities to achieve wellbeing outcomes

However, currently the central/local government interface is at times frustrating for both parties and struggles to support the high trust public services environment needed to pursue the joined-up, long term planning required to improve wellbeing

Councils and central government agencies currently lack a "one source" wellbeing database that captures and enables the sharing of data/information from public services research and evaluation (both local and central) and community data to inform and drive community-based, designed, and delivered interventions

For Principle 5: Through collaborative leadership, central and local government MUST (b) have funding approaches that:

- support fair allocation and equitable distribution of resources across the system
- enable decision-makers to make the best use of limited resources

#### **Future state - attributes**

## How we get there

## **Current state & opportunity**

Local government, whatever future form it takes, has **sufficient capability and financial capacity** to deliver the responsibilities allocated to it and contribute meaningfully to their communities' wellbeing.

There are wider choices in funding models, and a range of funding tools and solutions utilised between central and local government, Māori, and communities

• mix of rates, income, sales, or expenditure taxes and/or some form of transfer from or revenue sharing with central government

Local government's current ability to address the wellbeing responsibilities currently allocated to it, is constrained by reliance on property taxes, the lack of coordination of whole of government resources and limited models for the funding and financing

# The unique value proposition of Taituarā

Taituarā is an incorporated society of almost 1000 members drawn from local government chief executives, senior managers, and council staff with significant policy or operational responsibilities. We are an apolitical organisation. Our contribution lies in our wealth of knowledge of the local government sector and of the technical, practical, and managerial implications of legislation.

Taituarā will continue to invest in capability-building in the local government sector. People are at the heart of making the reforms, and the outcomes they seek, happen. Taituarā (alongside LGNZ) is a natural partner and bridging agent, providing support for both sectors as they work towards an integrated public service that is self-improving and thinks and acts as one. In the future central government could partner with and invest in Taituarā to:

- leverage Taituarā's unique value to enable communities to shape their future and create energy and enthusiasm for change especially when the journey gets difficult
- support, enable and promote integrated reforms, with appropriate sequencing for success
- bring together professional local government leaders, and participate in a Combined Reform Office / oversight body to ensure the reform outcomes are achieved
- increase capability across the public service and orientate towards the future as part of a joined-up system for wellbeing, for example through:
  - i. joint workforce development to ensure we have the right people with the right skills in sufficient numbers for the future
  - ii. co-design of policy and legislation.