



4 May 2017

Bill Bayfield
Chief Executive
Environment Canterbury
PO Box 345
CHRISTCHURCH 8140

CHC/76715

Tēnā koe Bill

RE: Environment Canterbury Representation Review

I am writing in regards to the Representation Review that Environment Canterbury is required to undertake in accordance with the Local Electoral Act 2001 (the Act).

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu are acutely aware of the need for a robust process for determining appropriate representation within a region. We therefore support the review process and acknowledge the work of the Local Government Commission in developing guidelines in this regard.

Te Rūnanga note that there are provisions within the Act to provide for the establishment of Māori wards. However we would not support this option for the Canterbury region. We would like to ensure that Environment Canterbury is fully aware of the possible implications of establishing Māori wards.

Acknowledging the rights of mana whenua within their region is a fundamental feature of Māori law and Māori political organisation. Although Māori wards would provide for a Māori representative, this representative would not necessarily be someone of Ngāi Tahu whakapapa. More importantly, even if the representative was someone with Ngāi Tahu whakapapa, they would not necessarily be answerable to Ngāi Tahu whānui in the manner and extent that is required to bring through the kaupapa, priorities, rights and interests of Ngāi Tahu as the Treaty partner.

Therefore our position is that Māori wards would not be appropriate within our rohe and would undermine the current relationship between the regional authority and the Mana Whenua/tribal authority of this area.

Te Rūnanga recommend that all future local body representation arrangements within our tribal area ensures that the Ngāi Tahu voice is provided for through a Ngāi Tahu representative

that is answerable to the Ngāi Tahu whānui. We endorse the current arrangements that provide for that voice, and we look forward to working with you, David Bedford and the Councillors to explore other options for the future.

We would appreciate your careful consideration of this matter, as Environment Canterbury progresses the Representation Review .

Mō tātou



Arihia Bennett
Chief Executive Officer