CURRENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENTS

4. Councils, Councillors, Council Staff, and Consultants

4.1   As well as wanting to hear from submitters about the values and principles they wanted to see in local government, the Commission was also interested to hear people's comments on how well the current arrangements worked, and how happy they were with them. In the *Call for Submissions* document, both general and specific questions were asked on this topic, and the responses ranged from contentment with the present system, to frustration and desire for radical change.

4.2   It can be inferred from the number, size, and content of submissions that most submitters were unhappy with one or more aspects of local governance. However, as explained in Chapter 1, the Commission draws no conclusion on whether submitters represent public opinion. A very small number of submitters said they were happy with the present form of local government. A greater number (more than 200) seemed sufficiently happy to argue for retention of the status quo.

4.3   The next section of this chapter summarises the submissions that support the status quo, albeit in some cases with qualifications. The question about changes submitters would like to see is covered in the following sections of the chapter, as well as in Chapters 5, "Comments about Specific Councils", 6, "Regional Boundaries", 7, "Local Government Representation", and 8, "Community Boards". Other issues, such as the number and calibre of councillors, the electoral system, the role of mayor, and councils' functions and powers, are covered in Chapter 7. Further issues and concerns, such as the Resource Management Act (RMA) and planning processes, infrastructural development, community engagement, consistency or the lack of throughout the region, and consultation and communication issues, are covered in later chapters. Details of alternative governance models are covered in Chapter 27.

Keep the status quo

4.4   Submitters who supported the status quo seemed generally happy with the current arrangements. One said, "The present structure isn't broken and doesn't need fixing. We urge its retention." [10065]

4.5   Many supporters of the current structure gave examples of how things were working well in their area, for example in North Shore City and Papakura District. Local identity loomed large for some submitters. The North Shore, West Auckland, and Manukau areas were all said to have clearly different identities and should remain as they were.

4.6   In relation to the Auckland Regional Council ("ARC"), those submitters who supported the status quo thought that the regional council ensured consistency, both in the management of regional resources and in transparency of regional assets. The Eastern Bays Community Board "asks why should there be a new regional entity when the Auckland Regional Council already exists." [10372]

4.7   A few submitters said that the best part of the present local government structure was the ARC, although it needed its powers increased to coordinate regional issues such as water, transport, and public assets. The theme of allocating more responsibilities to the ARC was mentioned by many submitters, and is covered in more detail in Chapter 21, "Future Allocation of Local Authority Functions".

4.8   Another advantage of the current framework was said to be that decisions for regional issues were subjected to close scrutiny and that local or council representatives reflected the different constituencies of interest and promoted their constituencies' needs. One submitter distinguished city and ARC interests as the city politicians being more interested in the economic development of their area and the ARC being more interested in social development. This, they said, created conflict to some extent but also had a balancing effect where the worst excesses of each were moderated by the other.

4.9   Others suggested that competition between councils might be a useful mechanism to ensure that they were kept under control. There were, however, many hundreds of submitters who felt the opposite; their views are detailed in later chapters, such as Chapter 9, "Consistency and Collaboration".

4.10   In relation to territorial authorities, there was a general feeling amongst those supporting the status quo that little needed to be changed. Submitters said that their local council offered personal contact, robust decisions, and effective democracy. Each area was said to need its own governance to enable it to cater for its own residents. Many submitters from Papakura and Franklin Districts said that their local council was accessible, and the community could be heard by the local mayor and councillors. It provided timely responses to local needs. Submitters overwhelmingly valued local councils that were accessible to local people with local issues:

> We have easy access to our Councillors and Mayor. Small communities are able to create a stronger sense of belonging and ownership than large urban areas. Decisions about what happens in Papakura are best made by people who live or work here and understand the special character and needs of the local community. [10151]

4.11   One submitter said that the way forward was to resolve differences of view democratically, and that the various challenges to Auckland in terms of infrastructure development did not provide a reason to restructure local government:

> Trying to create a high-level authority that is more independent of the concerns of those who are to pay for the development may make it easier to get agreement but it also diminishes the fundamental democratic link that is essential in such decisions. It is important to determine whether the obstacle is the cost or the governance structure … hanging the governance structure to make large projects and higher rates easier directly reduces democratic accountability and … is … the wrong way to go. [660]

4.12   Some gave only qualified support to the current structure. There seemed to be several main qualifications. They wished to retain the current structure because it had enough merit to enable modifications to meet future needs. Several suggested that improved cooperation between councils was the key. Some submitters advocated an evolutionary, not a revolutionary, approach to change because they feared the costs of transition to a new structure would outweigh the benefits. One submitter said,

> We believe that restructuring is the wrong solution because it will not address the underlying issues. In all likelihood a restructuring will be a costly and time consuming exercise that diverts attention and resources from the environmental, economic and social issues that are much more urgent. [10897]

4.13   Several said that there was more advantage in horizontal integration of councils (amalgamating councils from the same level of governance, such as Rodney District, North Shore City, and Auckland City) than in vertical integration (amalgamating local bodies from different levels of governance, such as the regional council, territorial authorities, and community boards). One submitter advocated rationalisation of the non-council organisations and a more standardised approach from councils, which would provide quicker decision making and still enable ratepayers to look after local issues.

4.14   Many people opposed to amalgamation or restructuring of local government said that the economies of scale that are often suggested are illusory. Many commented that the amalgamations in 1989 had not resulted in economies of scale. (See more on amalgamations in Chapters 22, "**Proposals for Modifications to Present System**" and 27, "**Proposals for New Governance Structures**".)

Councils' decision-making processes

4.15   Those submitters who were not happy with current local government arrangements had a lot to say about why, in particular about the way councils made decisions and conducted business, and the dynamic between elected and employed staff. (Comments on specific councils are summarised in the next chapter.)

4.16   The *Call for Submissions* booklet asked submitters whether they thought their local council was making good decisions for their area. Hundreds of submitters answered this question. Most of these submitters were unhappy with the present situation, and offered many specific positive and negative examples of how councils operated, and what could be done to improve their functioning.

4.17   The processes and quality of decision making were questioned by many submitters. Themes included lack of experience and skills on the part of councillors, councillors, and council staff being influenced by lobbyists or business interests; lack of genuine consultation; disengagement by the citizens; and conflict among the different councils:

- There is too much duplication, with slow decision-making, high costs, confusion and slow ponderous delivery. [1130]

- It is inevitable that the seven territorial authorities compete ceaselessly with each other, attempting to best serve the needs of their particular ratepayers, which may not necessarily be in the interests of the region as a whole. … The continuing disputes among territorial authorities in the region, and the regional council contribute to public cynicism about local body politics, and does not encourage participation. [10861]

(More detailed comments on collaboration between councils are provided in Chapter 9, "Consistency and Collaboration".)

4.18   The role of council chief executive officer came in for some criticism. This role was seen as often having too much power, being the unelected de facto leader of the city or district, an office-holder who sometimes acted in an arrogant way, wasted money, and ignored the wishes of the citizens. The issue of the new Auckland City logo was raised several times as an example of this, where an expensive decision was perceived as having been made without proper consultation or process. The tension between the responsibilities and authority of elected representatives and council staff was frequently mentioned:

> In district or regional councils of any size – and this includes all of those operating in the Auckland region – the chief executive has far more power than elected decision-makers.
> … the fuzziness around the role of elected decision-makers continues to lead to dysfunctionality in outcomes and poor accountability. [11269]

4.19   One of the potential problems mentioned was when a mayor and council may be elected to discover an unsatisfactory or incompatible chief executive whose contract extends well beyond their council term of office, and whose defensiveness of former council policy can make it difficult to make changes. [11306]

4.20   The impact of several restructurings and the move to employing more consultants was seen as further removing the decision-making process from citizens to an unhelpful bureaucracy:

> Successive restructurings have destroyed institutional memory and neither we nor Section 10 of the Local Government Act has been served by a massive, self-sustaining, self referencing and often spiteful bureaucracy. Wholesale employment of 'consultants' merely adds to the too-visible gravy train that excludes ordinary citizens on price alone. [10820]

4.21   The issue of accountability for decisions was mentioned repeatedly, and concern was expressed that this seemed further removed by the frequent process of contracting out services and the establishment of council-controlled organisations ("CCOs"), which were not subject to the same rigorous controls as council activities. Recommendations were made for auditing, fourth estate, judicial, and statutory controls on all processes and staff.

4.22   One submitter was very clear about the principles for effective decision making on councils: such bodies must be politically neutral, sufficiently informed, have enough time to make careful decisions, have the desire and opportunity to consult with relevant parties including the public, and admit when they did not know or understand. [11161]

4.23   Conflicts of interest can be created when someone is elected to two positions, for example a city councillor who is elected to a community board. They were seen as being duty-bound to act in the best interest of the council over the community board. Although one submitter thought this was acceptable, a few submitters did not, and recommended a rule that people could represent only one local body at a time.

4.24   Māori, Pacific, and other ethnic input into council decisions was called for. A consistent recommendation to achieve this was to make available seats for these representatives on councils, as election processes were not suited to achieving such representation. Other suggestions from Ngāti Paoa were for local councils to employ a dedicated team of Māori technical specialists within council to give effect to strategic and policy advice across council operations, and to establish educational policies and programmes for all council staff to raise awareness of Māori needs. [11276] (Further detail on proposals for Māori, Pacific, and ethnic representation are in Chapters 25, "**Māori Representation**" and 26, "**Pacific Island and Ethnic Representation**".)

Councillors and council staff

4.25   The proper relationship between councillors and council staff was a topic of interest for many submitters. Some clearly felt that council officers had too much power in council decisions, and did not work by the values of democracy or public service:

- We are effectively ruled not by our democratically elected representatives, but by a bloated bureaucracy of unelected and completely unaccountable functionaries, with a culture of arrogant disregard for the will of the people. [10070]

- The proper relationship between members (policy setters) and officers (policy advisors and implementers) should be made absolutely clear. Any discretionary powers to officers should be severely limited in the interest of transparency and democracy. [10830]

- Officials, too often in the last two decades, have been accountable only to themselves and judge themselves on corporate loyalty above all. It's how it is and always will be when that much power is not moderated by auditing, elected, fourth estate and judicial and statutory controls. The culture set up in 1989 should not be repeated. CEOs and directors should not have unfettered tenure and a handy isolation from those affected by their decisions, which have been, in Auckland City, often made without the slightest local knowledge which was comprehensively destroyed by successive 'restructurings' in the 90s. [10820]

4.26   A common view was that council bureaucracy was too large and unwieldy. A typical perspective came from a water engineer who had decades of experience in dealing with councils, and believed that council bureaucracy protected itself as a priority:

> The big problem in today's local government administration is the unwieldy power of the administration that the elected representatives have enormous problems in controlling. The advice and service that the administration provides is unbridled and not subject to independent audit or challenge. I have consistently seen the advice given to councillors as being totally designed to protect the administration and the processes of regulatory control they design. I have strong views that councils should be subject to, at least, three yearly audits to test the level of efficiency and unnecessarily high levels of regulatory control and approvals it administers. [10603]

4.27   A few submitters wanted a change in culture amongst council staff, calling for a move from the corporate model, back to a public service model:

> Just changing the structure of governance will not deliver a more open, transparent and democratically accountable system or the promotion of social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of a wide and diverse range of communities, in the present and in the future. We need to move to a Service Model where People are more important than profits, where the environment and the well-being of future generations … [are] our guiding objects. [11129]

4.28   Although the occasional submitter wrote about the "friendly and cooperative" council officers, there was often a lot of antagonism expressed towards council staff, particularly those from Auckland City, and those dealing with resource consents. They were criticised for having no or scanty knowledge of certain areas, issues, and legislation; having poor customer service attitudes; sometimes being rude and arrogant; and being focused on process rather than outcomes:

- The poor quality of council employees is shown by:

- Inordinate time taken to approve town planning applications – this is the reaction of a low quality bureaucrat – it is better to make no decision than to stick one's neck out.

  …

- The enormous sums now spent on outside professional advice – there will always be a need for this, but the majority of the council work should be handled in house. [10027]

  - The overall picture is of ineptitude and waste on the one hand, frustration and helplessness on the other. [1457]

  - council officers are a law unto themselves … . [1554]

4.29   The criticism of planning processes and staff ranged from inadequate knowledge, lengthy delays, and exorbitant costs, to incompetence, inaccessibility, inexperience, and lack of commercial reality. The cause of this was usually seen as not having enough experienced skilled staff to maintain planning sections in all the councils across Auckland, or to develop expertise in a particular area:

> there are large numbers of non-specialist staff developing complex plans for relatively small areas which include zones from city through suburb through rural fringe, to harbour and coastal activities without full understanding of the activities which predominate in each of those and without access to the required expertise. … As a consequence small numbers of non-expert staff in any given council on any given day are making decisions about maximum heights for multi-storey tower buildings and maximum depths for farm runoff ponds. As a result, while there is no shortage of good intention on the part of council staff, they cannot develop the sort of expertise which they require to make competent, consistent decisions in such disparate areas. [10818]

4.30   Improvement of attitude starts from the top down, according to one submitter who had decades of experience as an engineer, councillor, and council contractor:

> The attitude of staff members reflects the attitudes of managers and ultimately the CEO and Mayor. … A strong Mayor could direct his CEO to convince all staff that their job is to serve the Ratepayer and provide a mechanism whereby the ratepayer can achieve his or her objectives while complying with the requirements of the legal framework. … Too often a staff member states a certain project can not be achieved rather than saying a small modification in the application could make the project viable. [1139]

4.31   The most common redress was seen as training staff and giving them more specialist roles. In a tight labour market, advertising for staff internationally, and increasing the levels of experience and qualification necessary to obtain positions were also mentioned. An idea put forward by several submitters to improve experience and consistency was to centralise and specialise planning staff, rather than have them spread across eight councils. One submitter recommended the development within the region of four specialised planning offices, each focusing on different planning areas, such as the

inner city, suburbs, rural areas, and coastal and harbour areas. With such specialisation, staff would become more competent and confident,

> saving the embarrassment and time consumed in constantly having to tell people that they will have to return to the office and talk to someone else who 'knows the answer'. [10818]

4.32   There was a general recommendation across the board for the quality of employees to be improved. Suggestions included

- giving staff psychometric tests as a criterion of employment
- developing better training
- improving their qualifications and management skills
- ensuring employees reflect the diversity of the city
- having a trial period for new staff
- selecting staff on merit
- inducting staff into understanding democracy and public service
- giving them a course in listening skills
- having appraisal and performance monitoring
- developing a career structure
- creating more specialist roles
- ensuring clear lines of accountability
- having generous packages for senior staff
- increasing salaries
- linking remuneration to performance
- having more checks and balances
- initiating staff secondments between local authorities to ensure best practice and consistency is communicated across the region
- giving the community some say in the appointment of a chief executive
- limiting chief executives to six years in the role
- ensuring the ability to remove council officers (including the chief executive) from staff if they act contrary to the wishes of councillors and ratepayers.

4.33   Submitters emphasised the importance of choosing appropriate council employees:

> The council needs qualified and talented management. This will come from the employees of the council, more so than the elected officials, for the most part. Unless

> there is a method of qualifying candidates on an appropriate experience basis, then we need to ensure that a council has employed sound staff. [10838]

4.34   Two union submissions also offered a different perspective to balance some of the criticism. The New Zealand Council of Trade Unions believed that local government workers were best placed to comment on what was needed to ensure that Aucklanders received high-quality, value-for-money local services, and pointed out that they were a vital part of the system:

> It is their continued well-being, enthusiasm and cooperation that will be the key to realising efficiency and effectiveness gains that any restructuring of Local Government will be aimed at producing. [10787]

4.35   A senior council officer and Public Service Association representative believed the problem was less the staff than the conflicts created by the fractured structure of Auckland's local government:

> Various initiatives have already been taken to share information, develop best practice and share services largely driven by staff. Unfortunately with the best will in the world staff struggle to get anything done while the Auckland political situation is as it is. Having four powerful and self-absorbed City Mayors and parochial Mayors in the other TA areas, does nothing to overcome the current almost dysfunctional situation in Auckland. [10477]

4.36   The fact that elected representatives are on council for only three years (initially) while council staff have permanent jobs, was seen by many as a factor in the imbalance of power, as the staff could promote or obstruct policy and decisions while the elected members were easily kept un- or under-informed. Suggested remedies were to review all council positions every three years; to restrict permanent jobs to the areas of maintenance and administration; to leave researching issues and proposals to elected councillors or specialised project employees; to clarify roles and responsibilities for all staff from the chief executive downwards; and to have an auditing process based on performance criteria.

4.37   One submitter suggested that if there was a reduction in the influence of high-ranking employees, there could be more input from elected representatives. But another wanted expert staff to be allowed to make lower-order decisions based on the facts.

4.38   Sixty-two people commented on the number of council employees; aside from two exceptions they wanted a reduction in staff numbers. Reasons for this were that council bureaucracies had become inefficient and costly, and that they are oppressive, inflexible, and overstaffed. However, one submitter wanted an increase in staff so they had more time to plan and analyse issues [10703], and the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions pointed out that research showed any salary savings were matched with increased expenditure on external consultants. They also noted that the recent Rates Inquiry found that local government employment had grown at a lesser rate than central government

or the private sector, and they issued a warning note about jumping to conclusions about staff numbers:

> We would caution the Commission against assuming that there is wastage within the current arrangements that could be freed up by any merger of authorities. Our experience is that generally government employees are now ever extended in terms of workload, to the point that increasingly the Union is dealing with employee stress arising from this situation. [10787]

But other submitters were convinced there was a lot of fat and wastage in the system:

> It is unthinkable that Auckland City Council with a ratepayer base of 433,200 has more than 2,200 employees working at the Auckland City Council. That means one official for every 200 persons! On top of that, a large percentage of the work is done by consultants, including the recently prepared submissions to the Royal Commission on Auckland Governance. … For Auckland governance to improve, less bureaucrats are required and a more lean and effective organisation is required to own and implement projects and plans. [11058]

4.39   The constant use of consultants by councils was another topic that drew a lot of angry remarks. Submitters resented situations where staff left and were then re-employed by councils as consultants and paid exorbitant fees, which was seen as wasting their rates. A few were of the opinion that local council staff should make decisions, rather than have consultants make them. Many submitters wanted more transparency around consultants and contractors, and more auditing of their work and charges, calling for all such costs to be publicly disclosed and justified.

- Council Annual Plans and Annual Reports do NOT state which companies have the contract to do what work, for what length of time, for what cost. A multitude of private contractors – all whose main objective is to make private profit for the shareholders who own them – do not have as their primary and driving focus the betterment of the Auckland region (or the bit they're doing the work for) and the rate-paying public. [11300]

- Councils are being run with a 'cost plus' mentality that would be unacceptable in the real business world. Council officers do not try to get the best deal for rate-payers when they negotiate with service providers. Why should they negotiate in a business-like manner when they can pass the costs on to the ratepayer. [1133]

- Take also for example the North Shore City Council contracting out somebody to check on the standard (ie height!!) of lawn-mowing. Cut such an absurd contract and spend it on mowing the lawns! … Sadly, there has been a loss to the local workforce who KNOW the area with such contracting in doing council-related work. The last thing needed is the same thing happening at a decision making level. Contracting needs to be more 'locals' working 'locally' (and hey! this might even in some small way alleviate some transport problems!). [10474]

4.40   A vision for council staff was offered by one submitter:

> I wish to see a clean, mean bureaucracy, well paid, and taking pride in the outcomes
> arising from their work, understanding the needs of its citizens, promoting progress
> while recognising the limitations of resources of some citizens … . [763]

Local access to councils

4.41   Although council staff were frequently criticised, 54 submitters unanimously wanted more access to them. Being able to contact council employees who could understand the issues, offer advice, and help them through processes was clearly important for residents. "Listen, listen, listen to residents". [1081]

4.42   Having staff in local council offices was seen as providing a valuable conduit for community interaction and communication, and for efficient payment of fees, retrieval of reference data, lodging of applications, and distribution of information. Some submitters suggested having a full-time office in each locality manned by professional staff; others wanted a team of community staff specialists in each community office, ideally living locally; while others thought only a skeleton staff was necessary, for instance having only one secretary and an office for the councillor to meet people as necessary, with all key staff in a centralised regional/city council. A couple of submitters recommended having a local one-stop shop, with some council staff, volunteer centres, and citizens' advice bureaus; another wanted 30 small offices throughout the region, with a staff of one to three people and rotating elected representatives.

4.43   A council staff member, writing anonymously, urged the Commission not to put too much weight on structure as opposed to staffing:

> the calibre of the people involved in district governance, both elected and employed
> – in terms of commitment, skill and vision – far outweighs the importance of the
> structures applied. Many of the traditional structures, and variations on them, can be
> made to work by committed people of good will. But the above traits need developing,
> encouraging and nurturing, and that in turn, I think, is the greatest challenge facing
> local governance for the future. [11313]

5. Specific Councils

5.1   This chapter summarises submissions about the existing councils, namely the Auckland Regional Council (ARC), Rodney District Council, North Shore City Council, Waitakere City Council, Auckland City Council, Manukau City Council, Papakura District Council, and Franklin District Council.

Auckland Regional Council

5.2   There were 124 submitters who explicitly stated their support for the status quo, including retention of the ARC. However, just over half that number, 71 submitters, advocated its abolition.

5.3   Many submitters were satisfied with the current operations and culture of the ARC. One submitter said that the ARC had been outstanding in what it had achieved in working for the good of citizens, not politics. Another said, "ARC are more blue sky thinkers, more likely to make the longer term benefit choices …". [10703]

5.4   Other submitters who expressed support for retaining the ARC said that the ARC had been a moderating influence on territorial authorities; it could assist in fighting inappropriate development; it coordinated the issues of the region; it worked well to guard the regional parks; and it was the guardian of the Resource Management Act.

5.5   The genesis of the ARC was referred to by some submitters, along with comparisons with its predecessor, the Auckland Regional Authority ("ARA"). It was mooted that two of the reasons for the replacement of the ARA by the ARC was that local councils chafed under the strong regional voice of the ARA, and some larger councils resented what they saw as the disproportional voice of smaller councils under the ARA representation system. However, if the ARA was seen as too powerful, the ARC was usually perceived as not powerful enough:

> Clearly the job was overdone in 1989 and the resulting Auckland Regional Council (ARC) was made too impotent, subject to criticism from councils being hamstrung by a separately elected, and uncoordinated, body that did not understand, or even want to understand, the difficulties their seemingly repressive policies have been creating on the economic development within council boundaries. [10603]

5.6   Many submitters asked for the ARC to be given additional functions, and these are referred to in other chapters, especially Chapters 21, "Future Allocation of Local Authority Functions" and 27, "Proposals for New Governance Structures".

5.7   The group of submitters who wanted the ARC abolished gave several reasons: extra rates, the costs of the ARC, and suggestions that the ARC impeded the growth of Auckland, that it was unrepresentative, and that it was redundant.

5.8   In regard to rates and costs, submitters commented that the ARC was expensive, stifled constructive work, and duplicated local council functions. These submitters were concerned that ratepayers pay rates twice to two different organisations. With respect to the ARC impeding growth, comments were made that the ARC was a monopoly opposed to expanding Auckland and was impeding the Auckland City Council's progress.

5.9   Some advocates for abolition thought that the ARC did not act to represent the wishes of Aucklanders and did not have a meaningful working relationship with current councils. Those who thought that the ARC was redundant commented that it was "just an extra fat cat council" [10291] and a "moribund body" [10475].

5.10   Rodney District Council said its efforts to develop business land had been made more difficult by the ARC's "interference" in land use planning processes. It pointed out that residents' rates were being spent on legal battles between Rodney District and the ARC. It advocated the disbanding of the ARC (and creating new regional institutions) and gave its reason:

> Understanding the District is important. The other Auckland local authorities and the regional council currently lack this understanding as demonstrated through their publications and statements and the constraint the regional council imposes on our economic development. [11022]

5.11   However, like a number of other submitters, Rodney District wanted the current responsibilities of the ARC in relation to coast, water quality, and air quality to be continued on a regional basis through an environmental management authority. It could also take a more active role in river management.

5.12   Waitakere City Council also advocated a new regional entity, and said,

> A weakness of the current regional arrangements is the low level of accountability to the citizens of the Auckland region. It is our contention that regional councillors do not have sufficient incentives to engage with the communities that have elected them. Decisions are often not fully understood nor fully informed by local communities. [11121]

5.13   Papakura District Council said,

> ARC as an organisation has a culture which is focused on policy and planning, rather than efficient service delivery. Papakura notes that most regional service delivery functions (with the exception of public transport contracting and regional parks) were taken from the old Auckland Regional Authority in 1993. [10537]

5.14   On a very specific issue, one submitter gave as an example of ARC's failings its inability to do anything about the growth of noxious weeds in the Pukekohe rail corridor, which he had drawn to ARC's attention repeatedly over two years:

> if this over a period of two years is the best the ARC can do for the Franklin district, I don't like to express my feelings about this kind neighbour of ours, and for what it is worth joining them as a body, what a future we would have, no thank you. [10266]

Rodney District Council

5.15   Rodney District drew 32 submissions for its retention and 133 for abolition. Of the submissions asking for the council to be disbanded, 103 were on a printed form. Rodney District was the only council that had more submitters arguing for abolition than retention.

5.16   There was support from iwi[16], who said that they had formed a good working relationship with the council. Iwi would like to see this model retained and valued, and would not favour being governed from one central point in Auckland.

5.17   The most common reasons given for retention of Rodney District were the positive performance of the council, the disadvantages of amalgamation, and the need to preserve the unique identity of the district. Some of the support was qualified.

5.18   In terms of positive council performance, it was said that Rodney District has built trust and won a reputation for excellent customer service (with a good call centre) that submitters did not want to lose. These submissions said the council had always looked after its ratepayers and the council understood and looked after its unique communities. Submitters said that they had good access to representatives at present. They favoured accountability for local issues and expenditure remaining in the area.

5.19   The disadvantages of amalgamation included that there was no commonality of interest with other areas, and development was not at similar levels to urban Auckland. Amalgamation would see a reduction in the number of representatives, and rates money being spent out of the district:

> Rates paid by Rodney Ratepayers into a Super Council will disappear into the mire and not be spent in the area from which it has been obtained – resulting in reduced growth and the upkeep of all of our essential services and infrastructure which we have all paid so much for and worked so hard to obtain and develop. I don't want my rates paying for South Auckland's graffiti problem … . [10232]

5.20   The performance of Waitakere City (which submitters thought might take over Rodney District) was a source of concern. It was said that Waitakere City had made bad decisions on borrowing, subdivision, and the ranges. Waitakere did not have a community of interest with the more rural Rodney area. The increasing Waitakere City bureaucracy did not understand rural issues, hence the "flight" to Rodney District. A forced integration with Waitakere City would cause enormous friction as electoral numbers swamped the rural areas.

5.21   The rural identity of the district was another reason given for preserving its independence. Submitters said that Rodney District was not a metropolitan district or a suburb of urban Auckland; it was a rural community with its own identity. They said that, if merged, the rural area would lose out to the urban area because of urban voting power. Urban sprawl would continue. Rodney District should be allowed to implement its own planning and infrastructure.

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16   Tribal grouping.

5.22   Qualified support for retaining Rodney District was expressed by several submitters. One acknowledged the current lack of services in the Western Ward and inequity of expenditure between the wards, but said that there was at least an opportunity to redress this through the council. Two referred to the current arbitrary boundaries (with little shared community of interest) but said it was the service quality and equity that counted, so long as representatives were able to get over local parochialism.

5.23   Submitters who referred to possible changes to boundaries focused on three broad areas: south-west, south-east, and the remainder. The 103 printed form submissions suggested that Hibiscus Coast and Orewa be absorbed by North Shore City, Helensville might be a good fit with Waitakere City, and other parts of Rodney District should be absorbed as appropriate.

5.24   Other submitters identified Kumeu, Huapai, and Helensville as part of the Waitakere community of interest. One said it would make logistical, economic, and governance sense for these areas to be part of Waitakere City, especially given the likely growth in the future. One submitter who advocated for including Muriwai in Waitakere City said that the latter had significant experience in managing west coast beaches. Against this, another said Muriwai should not be put into Waitakere City because the existing boundary was logical geographically and should be retained. The question was also asked whether the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area needed to be under two local councils or one.

5.25   There were submissions for and against amalgamating the east coast of the Rodney area with North Shore City. Several submitters suggested that rural values would be served by amalgamating the Northern and Western Wards with Kaipara District, because of the similarities between them. Specific suggestions were that Whangaparaoa, Waiwera, and Wainui south to Coatesville should join North Shore City.

5.26   The 133 submissions advocating abolition of Rodney District were numerically dominated by the 103 printed form submissions. The form did not give reasons. Other submitters gave three main reasons to abolish Rodney District: the diverse communities of interest, the poor performance of the council, and the current high rates.

5.27   In relation to communities of interest, submitters said that Rodney District consisted of three areas that were unrelated and always at loggerheads. This should be replaced with a method of service delivery more consistent with the separate and identifiable communities of interest of the district. The three communities of interest were identified as Kumeu-Helensville, Hibiscus Coast, and the rural area north of Puhoi. Submitters suggested amalgamation of these areas with Waitakere City, North Shore City, and Kaipara District respectively. Community Waitakere Trust [10263] did not wish to see Rodney District become part of Kaipara District; it saw it as an intrinsic part of the Auckland region.

5.28   Some submitters saw a continuing role for a reduced district with its own council governing one of the existing communities. Two submitters specifically asked for a commissioner to be appointed to replace the existing council.

5.29   The council's performance was said to be poor, although there was no common view about the specifics of this. Several submissions in relation to the council's performance had an emotional tone that was not evident in relation to other councils. A couple of restrained examples follow:

- The RDC [Rodney District Council] is not accessible for the community. Its officers hide behind locked doors in large office blocks. [10814]

- Surely a change – any change – would be better than what we have to endure now. [10086]

5.30   Examples of poor performance were given. High rates and overspending were mentioned by three submitters. One said that their annual rates were $1756.89, on a property value of $195,000, with a proposed rise of 26% in the coming year. One submitter said that the largest rate increases were in the lowest socio-economic area, and that a disproportionately large amount of funding went towards projects in the east and northern part of the district. Another said that employees had increased from 200 to 500 in the past few years.

5.31   Apart from rates and spending, the council performance was said to be poor in terms of lack of community consultation, lack of transparency, and not providing for people's needs. A number of submitters wanted to abolish the council because of what they saw as a pro-developer policy of the council, one commenting that "decisions are often better made from a distance by fully independent people that don't have local preferences or obligations" [10063].

5.32   Two submitters favoured amalgamation with a city council because it would enable greater access to resources, from a larger pool of ratepayers.

5.33   See Chapter 23, "**Proposals for Waiheke and Great Barrier Islands and Kaipara Harbour",** for submissions specific to Kaipara Harbour.

North Shore City Council

5.34   Four submissions advocated retaining the current North Shore City. Reasons given were that North Shore ratepayers had spent a lot of rates getting good facilities, parks, and water, and did not want to subsidise the rest of Auckland. They had a different identity, and amalgamation would be disruptive. No submissions were received specifically advocating abolition of North Shore City.

5.35   Devonport was the subject of some submissions that emphasised that it is a community of interest distinct from the rest of North Shore City. One suggested that Devonport should be returned to Auckland City because there was a cultural gulf between it and North Shore City.

Waitakere City Council

5.36   In April 2008 the *Western Leader* newspaper published submission coupons for people to sign and send to the Commission. These called for the retention of Waitakere City in its existing or an improved form. No reasons were stated. A total of 217 of these coupons were sent to the Commission.

5.37   In addition to the coupons, a further 31 submissions were made by individuals supporting the retention of Waitakere City, and four submissions were made arguing for its abolition.

5.38   Most submissions were positive about Waitakere City:

-   I am very proud of our Waitakere City Council. Our Mayor and councillors are very accessible. The processes of consulting the community are outstanding … we can indicate our preferences and be listened to. Suburbs are systematically being 'renewed' with full consultation and action plans implemented. Our infrastructure is sound. We are proud of our EcoCity successes and innovations … . [1135]

-   Waitakere City has the strongest sense of identity and pride of the four cities in Auckland. … The strong sense of identity has led to pride in the surroundings and a real drive to see the city succeed. This drive requires the constant push of the Council. This has led to a growth in industry and an increase in jobs in Waitakere City. [10166]

5.39   The functioning of the council was mentioned favourably, with comments that the city council was responsive to the needs of the people, effectively representing and serving its communities. It was said to be a successful local government with engagement, participation, and community networks.

5.40   Points of difference from other parts of the region were its "eco-city" identity (mentioned by five submitters) and a more general sense of a separate identity (mentioned by six submitters): "Waitakere is a unique cultural and creative city and taking away the close local ties the council has to its community will cause it to suffer." [10100]

5.41   Particular aspects of the separate identity mentioned were the Waitakere Ranges, the Waitakere Licensing Trust, and the local volunteers who provide many services.

5.42   The submissions argued that this separate identity meant that Waitakere City had the right to self-determination. There were fears that in a "mega city", council services might not happen, and that rates might not be spent locally.

5.43   Against this, several submitters were critical of Waitakere City. A few submissions from businesses were critical of council policies, particularly in terms of planning and consent procedures. A couple of submissions advocated abolition of Waitakere City. One said that the council lacked common sense, and did not have ratepayers' interests at heart. Another traced Waitakere City's history as "an unfortunate compromise" created by the Local Government Commission, which resulted in "this dysfunctional entity we endure today" with unreasonably high rating charges for low-decile income earners: "If

Waitakere were a commercial entity it would long ago have been merged or taken over by another municipality in the interests of efficiency." [10139]

5.44   A small number of submitters suggested boundary changes. Four advocated expansion of the current city boundary to include Avondale from Auckland City and the Western Ward of Rodney District (particularly the Rodney District part of the Waitakere Ranges). The Waitakere Ranges Protection Society asked the Commission to consider whether the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area as well as local catchments needed to be under two local councils or one. [10957] Other submitters advocated abolition of Waitakere City, with it being absorbed into Auckland City, North Shore City, and/or Rodney District in various proportions.

5.45   One submitter suggested that modification of Waitakere City boundaries should occur only if there was a tangible benefit to the wider community of existing Waitakere residents.

Auckland City Council

5.46   Apart from submissions about Waiheke Island and Great Barrier Island, which are summarised in Chapter 23, "Proposals for Waiheke and Great Barrier Islands and Kaipara Harbour", there were fewer submissions about Auckland City than might have been expected from the city with the largest population in the region. Many of those received were critical of the council. Most criticisms came from lobby groups, which said the council displayed poor accountability, transparency, and democracy. One suggested that councillors and senior management be sacked and a commissioner appointed. The most criticism came from Waiheke Island (see also Chapter 23), for example,

> Auckland City Council is much too large, with impossibly cumbersome bureaucracy, inefficient due to its large size, inaccessible, un-accountable. [10155]

5.47   The power of the bureaucracy was mentioned by other submitters. A number mentioned a recent example where it was said that staff had chosen a new council logo, at considerable expense, without consulting elected councillors or ratepayers. These incidents caused resentment:

> In local governance (speaking to our area of expertise, Auckland City Council) democracy has lost its checks and balances and governance is now de facto controlled by the employees. As such it produces an endless stream of errors, omissions, bad judgements, but most often a level of mediocrity where the results are just below the threshold of citizen outrage. [11156]

5.48   Some residents of former boroughs believed that their areas were neglected in favour of Auckland City:

- Since the amalgamation of Mount Wellington Borough Council with Auckland City in the late 1980s, the town of Panmure and the wider Mount Wellington area have effectively been asset-stripped by the Auckland City Council and our once-thriving

town centre left to struggle and deteriorate, while the Council spends our rates money on more grandiose schemes elsewhere in the city. [10892]

- I think that Auckland City Council is large enough to deliver efficient services, but not small enough for accessible and accountable local governance. I think that the answer is to remove the middle layer of local governance altogether – the city and district councils – and delegate all their powers either up to the regional level, or down to the community board level. [10843]

5.49   An unsatisfactory relationship between the council and its community boards was mentioned not only by many of the Waiheke submitters but also by others:

Auckland City Council is quite hierarchical in its structure and attitudes and this results in both officers and elected members regarding Community Board members as coming from a vastly lower level, and therefore unfit to make decisions or have opinions. [11263]

5.50   Several people made submissions advocating adjustments to the existing boundaries of Auckland City. Two submitters said that the Avondale and New Lynn-Whau River Basin communities have more in common with Waitakere City than Auckland City and should be added to Waitakere City.

5.51   One submitter suggested extending Manukau City into Otahuhu because under Auckland City Council there was an evident lack of responsibility taken for this city edge.

5.52   Special arrangements for the Auckland central business district ("CBD") were suggested by two submitters. One suggested that the Auckland CBD should be a stand-alone territorial council, with all suburbs being "given" to surrounding city councils. Another submitter argued that the Auckland CBD should constitute a central ward with boundaries as set in the present Auckland City District Plan, Central Area Section.

Manukau City Council

5.53   Several submissions advocated retaining the current Manukau City. The main reason given was that amalgamation would not save any money and local voices would not be heard. Concern was also expressed that amalgamation would mean loss of local jobs.

5.54   One submitter quoted the previous amalgamation experience as evidence enough that amalgamation could lead to poorer areas such as Manurewa being overlooked:

I believe the amalgamation of Howick and Papatoetoe into Manukau City Council in 1989 created a myriad of new challenges for the council. Manurewa and its concerns were forgotten or put to the side and later forgotten.
So, you have to ask the question, has amalgamation benefited the Manurewa community? From my observations over the past 37 years, the answer is no. It has instead been a direct contributor to the poorer outcomes for the Manurewa community. Residents of Howick express the same sentiments. I believe the residents

of Papatoetoe, Mangere, Otahuhu, Avondale and many others would also agree that amalgamation has not benefited their communities. [11025]

5.55   Those who wanted changes focused on boundary adjustments. Submitters advocated both contraction and expansion of current boundaries.

5.56   Several submitters suggested that eastern areas including Howick, Pakuranga, Beachlands, Maraetai, and Whitford should be self-governing, because these areas did not get enough representation in Manukau City and had no community of interest with the other wards of Manukau. Another submitter said that Manukau City should be expanded to encompass the Otahuhu, Papakura, and Franklin areas. Contrary to this, another said that rather than adding Franklin District to Manukau City, it might be better to add rural areas of Manukau (such as Clevedon) to Franklin.

5.57   Natural features were suggested to be important in choosing district boundaries. One submitter said that the Manukau Harbour should stay under the management of only one authority. Another submitter wanted Manukau City to cede the Hunua Ranges to Papakura District.

Papakura District Council

5.58   There was very strong support for the council from those who wrote to the Commission. The relatively small size of Papakura District was said to give residents a sense of place and a feeling of belonging in the community. Generally submitters wanted to keep their council as it was, and opposed any move to amalgamate them:

> The Papakura District Council is far from perfect. ... But they're OUR council. We can communicate with them and complain about them. And every three years we can vote them out ... That's democracy. And democracy, along with community and identity, is what we will lose if the oligarchs in Auckland Town Hall have their way. [10589]

5.59   Papakura District was one of the areas that had a campaign supporting its council. The *Papakura Courier* newspaper on 16 April 2008 published a pre-formatted submission coupon that people could sign and send to the Commission. This coupon was headed "Save Papakura" and the text supported the current form of local government, in particular the Papakura District Council. A total of 298 people signed and sent in this coupon.

5.60   A further 87 people made non-coupon submissions in favour of retaining Papakura District; 19 people made submissions advocating its abolition.

5.61   The expression "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" was quoted by two submitters, and expressed a general sentiment of submitters who wished to retain Papakura District. Submitters thought that the council was currently working well, and they feared that amalgamation with a larger council would negatively affect democracy and increase costs. Others opposed amalgamation on the grounds that it would reduce the district's

special identity. Several submitters saw lessons in the previous amalgamation exercise of 1989:

> Amalgamation has not worked for many communities in Auckland. Poor community and social outcomes have been the by-product of the 1989 reforms. Communities need the ability to make decisions about their local interests and priorities, and be held accountable for such decisions. Larger bureaucracies cannot. My hometown, Manurewa, is an example of what hasn't worked well. Papakura is an example of what has worked well … Papakura would not be the place it is today, if it had been amalgamated into Manukau City Council in the 1989 reforms. There is a lesson that needs to be learnt from this. [11025]

5.62   Support for retaining Papakura District came also from Ngāti Tamaoho Trust, which said that the council had given iwi every opportunity to be represented at the highest level of governance within the council. [776]

5.63   Several submitters commented that the mayor and councillors were accessible to the public, and provided timely and appropriate responses to local needs. It was said that decisions affecting Papakura should not be made by people who did not live in the area and were removed from the day-to-day life of Papakura District.

5.64   Several submitters referred to the lower rates in Papakura, saying that the council was more efficient than bigger councils, and had the lowest debt per head in the Auckland region. The idea that rates money might leave the area after amalgamation had some traction:

> … I object to being bunked with all other city councils in Auckland. To do so, would cripple many low income families in the Papakura District and see our rates channelled into areas that do not benefit our residents. [10059]

5.65   Submitters generally seemed satisfied with what the council achieved. It was said that roading projects were started and finished, and parks were upgraded. The pools were a good meeting place for many cultures.

5.66   Retention of the special identity of Papakura was also given as a reason to retain the council. The *Papakura Courier* coupon presented this argument:

> I think it is really important that a community has a sense of identity and that having influence over decision making is a key part of that. I think Papakura is a great community and I would not want to see it change by becoming part of a bigger city.

5.67   The special identity was variously described as "small town feel", "country feel", "semi-rural lifestyle", and "mixed urban and rural". The distinction from urban Auckland was mentioned, with many submitters declaring their physical and cultural distance from Auckland:

> We're self-sufficient out here in Counties. We have our own social and sporting structures; our own commercial and trade centres; even our own dramatic and musical societies which, though hardly Covent Garden, are a lot of fun. … I'd class the Museum, the Zoo and Motat as Auckland facilities to which even we bucolic Counties

types do make an expedition from time to time … Otherwise our huge neighbour, with its gridlocked traffic, remorseless sprawl and soulless centre is something we'd rather avoid. [10589]

5.68   Two submitters saw planning value in retaining Papakura District, both to restrain urban sprawl and manage the area's future growth.

5.69   Submitters who advocated the abolition of Papakura District mainly saw the council as an anomaly, and a "waste of time and resources". One said that there was no logical physical boundary between Manukau City and Papakura District, and the 1989 division was wrong. Abolitionists mostly suggested that the district be merged with Manukau, but some suggested a combination of Franklin District (for the rural areas of Papakura District) and Manukau City (for the urban areas):

> I believe that the Papakura District has very little to justify its existence. It is located between two bigger Councils: Franklin & Manukau, that are far better at managing Rural and Urban land-use issues respectively. I believe that the rural land in the Papakura District would be better managed by falling within the Franklin District, and conversely, the urban land placed within Manukau City. In Franklin particularly, a large portion of the management issues faced relate to the utilisation of the rural land resource. Franklin is predominantly a rural Council and better understands the methods of dealing with rural land utilisation. The same stands for Manukau City and managing urban land-use related issues. [10559]

5.70   Some submitters said that it was not fair that Papakura District did not contribute to maintain central services such as libraries and art gallery, and that the district should have the opportunities that were offered to the rest of Auckland.

5.71   Contrary to the pro-Papakura District submissions, some submitters said that local identity would not be lost by amalgamation, but rather services and facilities would improve: "when [Manurewa] was amalgamated into Manukau, things improved, and its identity and independence still remains strong …". [10054]

5.72   Two submitters who stated a preference in the event of amalgamation preferred to join Papakura District with Franklin District because of the shared rural outlook.

Franklin District Council

5.73   Seventy-three submissions urged the retention of Franklin District, and 15 supported its abolition.

5.74   The main reasons given by submitters in favour of retaining the district were that the council currently works well, Franklin District had no community of interest with Auckland, urban Auckland did not understand the district's rural needs, and amalgamation would have adverse effects, especially impacting on its rural identity, as

well as local job losses and less efficiency for residents needing to interact with their council. For example,

> Franklin District Council's Vision Statement, 'Franklin: A country lifestyle in harmony with our environment' is no doubt very different from that of Auckland or Manukau. Local government must remain with FDC so that this vision can continue to be pursued. [10391]

5.75   Positive comments about the performance of the council included that it was efficient, accessible, and accountable; queries were answered in a timely and efficient manner; it was doing a good job; it was a stable council to be proud of; and it could stand on its own feet.

5.76   Concerns expressed about the adverse outcomes from amalgamation were that efficiencies would decline, rates would increase, and Franklin District would be under-represented and in danger of neglect. One said that Manukau City would spend too much of their rates on social services. One submitter warned that if Franklin District were to be absorbed into any other councils, or one big council, there would be

> the danger of being 'neglected' or 'forgotten', as well as under-represented by the low number of councillors allocated (we believe we would only have one council representative as part of Auckland!). Issues like the amount of roading in Franklin per capita compared to Auckland are paramount – would they receive the attention that they deserve? We would suggest that funding would be channelled towards a second harbour crossing long before the maintenance of Franklin's roads. [10391]

5.77   In regard to rural identity, it was said that if merged into a larger or single council, the rural area would lose out to the urban area because of urban voting power. "We do not want to be governed by the kind of people that Aucklanders choose to vote in." [10408]

5.78   Submitters from the area said that Franklin District was distinct ("worlds apart" [10302]) from Auckland. They said Franklin people did not consider themselves Aucklanders and that amalgamation would erode rural identity and community, and that the district's rural-based economy had a different set of requirements from those of Auckland. One submitter said that Franklin District was the food basket of the nation and it was essential that it retained its mostly rural features. Most submitters saw no advantage in amalgamation with Auckland or Manukau Cities or Papakura District. Submitters said that people wanted a rural lifestyle, and did not want to be another sprawling suburb of Auckland.

5.79   There were many voices arguing for increased alignment with the Waikato region. These arguments were sometimes on the basis that this would be the lesser of two evils. However, there were others who saw no real connection with the Waikato. One said that most people who live in Franklin District work in Auckland, not Hamilton. One submitter called for Franklin people to be given a vote on whether they wanted to be part of Auckland or Waikato.

5.80   The in-between location of Franklin is highlighted in submissions referring to sporting boundaries:

-   We don't have much in common with Auckland. Our affiliations are with Counties rugby (based in Pukekohe), the Chiefs (based in Hamilton) and Northern Districts cricket. [10213]

-   At Pukekohe and Waiuku Netball Centres we are extremely concerned at talk of Franklin District Council being aligned to either Waikato or Auckland. Currently Pukekohe and Waiuku Netball Centres are within the Counties Manukau Region along with four other Centres. … Should Franklin be engulfed in the larger Waikato/ Auckland 'Sea' we may be regarded as small fry and lost in the bigger picture. We see our preferable alignment being Manukau City and therefore remain as Counties Manukau Region. [10874]

5.81   Some submitters argued for making the council a unitary authority, to provide independence from both Auckland and Waikato regions. The reasons given for a unitary authority were that Franklin District was a key food source; it was a buffer zone between urban and rural; and maintaining the separation would stop the pressure for urban development. Flooding and river issues were likely to be better addressed by a unitary authority. A unitary authority would reduce the time and money associated with consents, and could save money on facilities such as the museum, which were difficult for residents to access.

5.82   The submitters who sought abolition of Franklin District gave few reasons. One saw advantages in terms of greater access to municipal district resources. Another observed that much of the district has been cut up into lifestyle blocks so there was little real difference from Manukau City's semi-rural areas.

5.83   There were a variety of proposals for amalgamation of Franklin District with other districts. The discussion sometimes overlapped with considerations of regional boundaries, and there may have been confusion between Environment Waikato and Waikato District Council in some submissions. (Submissions on regional boundaries are discussed in Chapter 6.)

5.84   Three submitters asked for all of Franklin District to merge with Manukau City. Most others who stated an amalgamation preference wanted Franklin District split between north and south, with northern areas joining Manukau City and/or Papakura District, and southern areas joining Waikato District.

5.85   Waikato District Council in its submission called for the parts of Franklin District that were in the Waikato region to be transferred to Waikato District. This included Tuakau, Pokeno, and Mercer, as well as the area south and west of the Waikato River that was in Raglan County prior to 1989. On the latter, a contrary view came from the Waikaretu Citizens and Ratepayers Association [766], which argued for Franklin District to retain the land south and west of the river, saying that it had campaigned in 1989 to join Franklin District rather than Waikato because the local community's business and social activities were oriented north (to Franklin District) rather than to Hamilton.

5.86   One submitter asked for Papakura District to include all of Franklin District to the Waikato River. Other submitters argued for a new district combining all of the rural parts of Franklin and Papakura Districts and Manukau City, to form a sustainable rural-urban buffer zone. One submitter suggested a single council should manage all the land bordering the Manukau Harbour (both urban and rural) to maintain and enhance the Manukau Harbour as a significant asset.

5.87   One submitter said that Pokeno should belong to Hauraki District for community of interest reasons, so the community did not become marginalised. Three submissions suggested Kaiaua should become part of Hauraki District, which would better service them and where they would feel more sense of belonging, especially through community connections to Ngatea, including secondary education, health care, and sports. Conversely, it was said there were few connections to Auckland urban areas. (One of these submitters suggested Kaiaua could be in Waikato District as an alternative to Hauraki District.) One said that the entire southern ward of Franklin should be re-examined: Pokeno should be in Waikato District, Maramarua in Hauraki District.

5.88   Franklin District's submission acknowledged the very strong link the district had with Auckland. The council suggested that, even if the entire district became part of the Waikato region, Franklin District should enter into a formal memorandum of understanding with the Auckland region, regarding each party's contributions and obligations to Auckland issues, especially relating to economic development, transport, and regional amenity matters.

6. Regional Boundaries

6.1   The *Call for Submissions* document invited comment on whether Auckland region should retain its current boundaries or whether they should be altered.

6.2   Many submitters responded to this. Generally, the more distant submitters were from the Auckland central business district, the more they had to say about the regional boundaries. There was relatively little comment about urban areas remaining within Auckland region. However, the areas north of Rodney District, those bordering the Firth of Thames, and around the Waikato River in Franklin District were the subject of many submissions, including proposals for the redrawing of regional boundaries in these areas.

Keep the current boundaries

6.3   There were 21 submitters who advocated keeping the boundaries as they were. Reasons included support for the present basis of drawing the regional boundaries around water catchments. Other supporters of the current boundaries said that they were in accordance with communities of interest.

Shrink the region

6.4   A smaller number (16 submitters) advocated removing rural areas from Auckland region. They considered that only small rural areas (e.g. land earmarked for urban development) should be included in the Auckland region. These people considered that rural areas should not be dominated by Auckland urban interests. Concern was expressed that an urban council would tend to look after its own needs, and ignore rural needs. Others considered that it was worthwhile to separate out the rural areas in order to streamline the functioning of the urban part of the regions:

> Outlying areas with no community of interest with the City should be separated off. In this category are Rodney District, Papakura District and Franklin District. They should be free to make their own arrangements as to whether to be totally independent or who to throw in their lot with. ... It should be made clear to them at the outset that they will not be able to join the city. They are just too far out. That makes for expensive services and unwieldy administration. Auckland is better off without them. [10678]

6.5   Some submitters thought that the rural areas should be buffers against sprawl and the best way to achieve this was to separate them from the Auckland region. They also saw this as giving protection to the metropolitan urban limit ("MUL"). However, one

submitter disagreed, commenting that if the regional boundary were pulled back to the MUL, there would be

> edge development effects over the line under the jurisdiction of another regional authority [which] would likely unleash a round of peri-urban/lifestyle development which would damage the rural fringe, and put at risk sustainable development. [10098]

Expand the region

6.6   Relatively few submitters wanted to expand the Auckland region. Some saw the Auckland region as being interconnected with the Northland, Waikato, and Bay of Plenty regions and felt that it should expand into these areas. Others who wished to see an expansion of the region said that the catchment-based boundaries did not reflect current administrative and urban pressures. Suggested expansions of the region included adding Whangarei and parts of the Waikato region, including Port Waikato and Thames; one submitter was in favour of the region extending into the Bay of Plenty.

Northern regional boundary

6.7   Those who supported a change to the regional boundary north of Auckland gave several reasons. Some wanted to see the rural areas of Rodney District forming a separate region in order to protect the rural character of the district. These people said that there was no community of interest between the rural areas and the main Auckland urban area. Some felt that their quality of life would suffer if their area was swallowed up by Auckland. The Environmental Defence Society supported the regional boundary following water catchments, saying there was a case to extend Auckland region north to the Brynderwyns. [10788] Ngāti Whātua wanted the Commission to consider including Whenuapai and Hobsonville in the Rodney District catchment area. [1330]

6.8   Another concern was in regard to the Kaipara Harbour. (See Chapter 23, "Proposals for Waiheke and Great Barrier Islands and Kaipara Harbour", for more detail.) Submitters said that the Kaipara Harbour should not be divided in its administration between different councils, but should be subject to one regional council. This was to protect both the water quality and Māori cultural values attached to Kaipara Harbour. Iwi[17] submissions urged the inclusion of the Kaipara Harbour into one region. Oruawharo Marae Trust and Hapu [1559] and the Environmental Defence Society [10788] said that Kaipara Harbour should all be in Auckland region. There was a suggestion that the Local Government Act requirement that regional boundaries follow catchment boundaries had not been observed in the 1989 reorganisation and this should be rectified now.

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17   Tribal grouping.

6.9   Submissions on the northern boundaries of Auckland region often combined their suggestions about changes to the regional boundary with changes to the Rodney District boundary. (See Chapter 5, "Comments about Specific Councils", in regard to the territorial boundaries.)

Southern regional boundary

6.10   In regard to the southern boundary of Auckland region, 61 submitters, including Franklin District Council, were in favour of including all of Franklin District in the Waikato region. (At present Franklin District is split between the Auckland and Waikato regions.) The council also suggested that other southern rural areas, such as those in Papakura District and Manukau City, be removed from the Auckland region and amalgamated with a wider Franklin District. [10315] On the other hand, 16 submitters advocated including all of Franklin District into the Auckland region.

6.11   Those who wished to include all of Franklin District in the Waikato region gave the following reasons. They saw the current split across the two regional councils as confusing and unhelpful and argued that Franklin District was outside Auckland's MUL both physically and psychologically. Most residents did not think of themselves as Aucklanders. Franklin District was not connected to any of Auckland's water, wastewater or stormwater structures, and owned and maintained its own wastewater treatment plants and reticulation systems. It also administered its own community halls, drainage districts, and rural fire parties. A local consumer trust owned its electricity lines company and its libraries were operated independently by a trust. [10315]

6.12   A key argument was that being part of the Waikato would preserve the rural environment, which submitters wanted acknowledged and respected. They saw the Waikato Regional Council (Environment Waikato) as being more likely to protect rural interests:

> there are a number of farmers who feel more aligned with with the more rurally oriented Waikato Regional Council than with the Auckland Regional Council, which has a far greater proportion of urban issues to manage than rural issues. This is definitely a community of interest issue with respect to the farming community. [10822]

6.13   Others saw a community of interest between Franklin District and the Waikato, and two supported the retention of the Waikato River within a single regional council area (i.e. within the Waikato region). Environment Waikato supported any changes to the northern boundary of Franklin that would increase the portion of the Firth of Thames within the Waikato region, in order to provide a consistent and coherent planning framework for marine farmers, recreationalists, and other users of the Firth of Thames. However, Environment Waikato advocated that should the outcome of the Commission process result in Franklin District being moved into the Waikato region, some regional council responsibilities (such as management and funding of certain transport routes,

marine farming and navigation and safety management in the Manukau Harbour, and management and funding of the current Auckland Regional Council regional parks) should remain within the Auckland region. [10822]

6.14   Those who wished to include all of Franklin District in the Auckland region gave several reasons, including that Franklin communities have a close affinity to Auckland in terms of community of interest and shared services. Some commented that they wished to continue to support the Auckland services such as the zoo and train services. Economic and resource linkages between Franklin and Auckland urban areas were also referred to.

6.15   Some of the other Auckland councils expressed a desire to retain Franklin District within the Auckland region, citing reasons such as keeping an urban/rural balance. Manukau City Council proposed a three-city model in which the southern city would include Otahuhu south of Portage Road, the current Manukau City, the current Papakura District, and the Franklin District north of the Waikato River. [11041]

6.16   A group of submitters were in favour of creating a unitary authority to cover Franklin District alone. This would be a combined regional and district council. They saw this as supporting the uniqueness of the district, which in many ways they considered to be separate from both Auckland and from the Waikato.

6.17   Other submitters had suggestions for the fine-tuning of the southern boundary line with a variety of proposals for the drawing of a new regional boundary. Some saw a logical line as being to expand the Auckland regional boundary as far as the Waikato River so as to include all of Waiuku, Tuakau, and Pukekohe. The Environmental Defence Society supported the current regional boundary at the Bombay Hills. [10788]

6.18   One iwi submitter said that the boundary through the Firth of Thames was artificial. This submission urged that the Firth of Thames be managed by Environment Waikato, as this would better align to ecological systems. Several iwi submissions (from both northern and southern areas) commented that the regional boundaries cut across the rohe[18] boundaries of iwi. They suggested adjustments that would be more in keeping with the rohe. They said that the current boundaries compromised their capacity to exercise kaitiakitanga[19].

6.19   Iwi and Environment Waikato submissions referred to the parts of the Waikato River catchment that were in the Auckland region, where the boundary truncated the catchment at the Hunua water supply dams, calling for these to be included in Waikato region:

> Environment Waikato considers that bringing the upper Mangatawhiri and Mangatangi catchments into the Waikato Region would be beneficial in that it would provide a separation between the resource user and the resource regulator. It would allow for more holistic management of the stream networks and associated wetlands. Currently Environment Waikato is charged with managing the water quality, quantity and habitat issues associated with the lower portions of these streams while having

18   Tribal area.

19   Guardianship; the responsibility for caretaking.

limited ability to influence their source catchments. This is not an ideal situation and does not represent good resource management practice. It also does not align well with Waikato Tainui's wishes to manage the river holistically. Environment Waikato therefore would support any moves to remedy this. [10822]

6.20 Environment Waikato also saw advantages if all of Franklin District including the Manukau coast was included within Waikato region, saying it would make a more effective biosecurity boundary and make it easier to prevent the spread of plant and animal pests into the Waikato region. [10822]

7. Local Government Representation

7.1   This chapter summarises the submissions about representation and the electoral system for regional and local governance. First it considers regional representation in terms of

- election of regional chair/mayor
- concept of regional mayoralty
- executive powers of regional chair/mayor
- election of regional councillors.

Next comes analysis of submissions concerning issues of local representation under a territorial authority:

- local mayoralty
- number of councillors
- quality of councillors
- remuneration of councillors
- election or appointment of representatives
- voter turnout and the electoral system.

The chapter then deals with submissions on representation of groups within a local authority area:

- Māori representation
- community boards representation
- comments by community boards
- powers of community boards
- remuneration for community board members.

Mayoral election – by public or by councillors

7.2   The *Call for Submissions* document asked whether the chair or mayor of a regional governance body should be directly elected. By a ratio of 2:1 submitters preferred to retain the non-elected chair rather than adopt an elected mayoralty.

7.3   Submitters who supported the status quo seemed generally to be satisfied with the way the system works at present. They saw the election of a mayor or chair by councillors as a way to avoid dysfunctional decision making. They said that councillors knew better

than the public who was the best potential mayor. In a direct election, they foresaw ratepayers voting for "fading sportspersons, TV personalities and the like", who would not be effective in the job. [10427] One said,

> Appointment by the elected representatives ensures the person's accountability and ability to do the job. … If the person was elected we are likely to get some 'known' person who may not have the skills and experience to effectively lead the region. … If this person is selected by his/her colleagues they will be in a much better position to judge their ability to perform the role and can change the person mid-term if they are not performing. [10527]

7.4   Other submitters saw better democracy coming from election of the mayor or chair by councillors. One saw value in political parties becoming more formally involved with the party leader clearly identified as the mayoral candidate. This eliminated the possibility of mayors being elected without decision-making capability. Several submitters saw indirect election as avoiding the election of a "lame duck" mayor, unsupported by other councillors:

> Mayors or Chairs should be selected on merit, ability and experience. The best people to make this selection are their elected peers. The leader then can lead knowing he or she generally has the support of the majority for a more conducive climate for good decision making. Criticism has been levelled that this form of selection leads to cronyism and thus corruption of independent decision-making. The criticism is made to present this as a bad thing, but if cronyism means that a number of people are like-thinking in arriving at a decision, then this is the substance of majority rule arrived at by a group within the council being like-minded. [10603]

7.5   People who supported the idea of a regional mayor or chair being elected by the public argued that there was value in the person being directly accountable to the people of Auckland region. Advantages included that it focused the organisation on people, not processes, and provided leadership and vision. One said,

> The City will need a figurehead who will provide the leadership needed to establish and unite the city. I consider that a 'chairman of the board' or other less than obvious leader will not provide the leadership focus a city needs. [10656]

7.6   Others identified value in a directly elected mayor ensuring accountability and independence from the rest of the regional governance body. They also said that there would be more citizen engagement with the regional body. Others felt that a direct election process avoided backroom deals being made.

7.7   Some submitters who supported direct election of a regional mayor wanted to expand this to include direct election of other positions such as deputy mayor and treasurer. One suggested that the mayor should be elected in the middle of a council term, to provide continuity and greater independence.

7.8   A number felt that the quality of candidates would be improved by direct election and it would reduce the risk of politicising regional government. Direct election would allow the promotion of a platform with disclosure of ideas before election. The electoral

mandate obtained by the elected mayor was considered by a number of submitters to improve their prospects of success.

Concept of regional mayoralty

7.9   Submitters who supported the concept of a regional mayor saw the need for a figurehead to represent the common voice and authority of Auckland. Clear external representation, for example to the Government and outside stakeholders, was considered important by these submitters. It was thought that a single mayor could provide leadership and unite the city. The continued existence of the city mayors was seen as potentially confusing, and if a regional mayoralty were created, these submitters argued for the abolition of any city or district mayors.

7.10   Many commented on the title of "Lord Mayor", which had been proposed initially by Auckland City Council in its controversial draft submission (but was later changed in its final submission to the "Greater Auckland Mayor"). There was little support for this title and much opposition. Reasons given for disliking the title included, "we are not a little Britain" (10622) and a general opinion that the concept of a Lord Mayor was archaic and elitist. Alternative names were suggested, including "Governor", "Chairman", "Chairperson", "Chair of Governors", and "Commissioner".

7.11   Some submitters opposed the idea of having one mayor for the region; one said that the idea of the "one mayor" was an assault on present democratic process. Other submitters feared that the one mayor would effectively be elected by a group of business people.

7.12   Alternatives to a regional mayor were suggested. One submitter suggested that an individual should be appointed to represent all local authorities as a figurehead, like the Governor-General. Another suggested having city mayors on the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) in order to strengthen the ARC and produce an outcome where the mayors of territorial authorities would be invested in the ARC outcomes. And another proposal was original:

> my partner and I feel very strongly that the idea of a Lord Mayor is ridiculous. What would be truly beneficial would be a new form of leadership – two people from different backgrounds, one man and one woman, sharing the role, and modelling partnership and intelligent cooperation. [10498]

Executive powers for regional chair/mayor

7.13   The *Call for Submissions* document asked submitters for their opinion on whether the mayor/chair should have executive powers to make decisions for the region independently of the council. A total of 118 submitters addressed this question. They opposed the idea of an executive chair or mayor by a ratio of 2:1.

7.14   Those who supported the regional mayor or chair having executive powers gave as their reasons improved accountability and the ability to get things done. Others commented that the region needed visionary leadership, not just a figurehead. Some supporters referred to the models of New York and London, saying that in those places the executive mayoralty worked well, and provided a good precedent to follow.

7.15   Nearly a quarter of the submitters who supported the idea of an executive mayor expressed qualifications. Some felt that executive powers should be within clearly defined limits, or matters of urgency. Others felt that the council should delegate the executive powers to keep them under control. One submitter said that one of the great weaknesses of the "strong mayor" system was that it was untested in New Zealand. [10843]

7.16   The scope of possible executive powers was not detailed by many submitters. Some mentioned powers to deal with emergencies, others saw a wider role with powers to veto council decisions, and one saw a role in intervening in the resource consent process by the ordering of important applications to the Environment Court.

7.17   In terms of electoral process, most supporters suggested that if the mayor had executive powers, it would be necessary for the mayor to be directly elected. Exercise of executive powers was seen as undemocratic if the mayor was not selected by popular vote. However, one submitter said that there were various ways in which the mayoral position could be appropriately empowered to deliver on election promises. These could include the power to appoint key positions through executive decision-making powers, through the introduction of party politics, or through the mayoral position being appointed by the majority of elected council members. [1476]

7.18   Others who mentioned the electoral process in relation to executive mayors, sought election by single transferable voting so that the mayor would have majority support, and one suggested a two-term limit for an executive mayor.

7.19   Submitters who were opposed to the mayor or chair having executive powers suggested that there would be less democracy in such an arrangement. They saw poor accountability, susceptibility to commercial pressures, and potential for corruption as downsides to an executive mayoralty. Papakura District Council was wary of the "extraordinary power" the One Auckland chief executive would have if the One Auckland proposal advocated by the New Zealand Council for Infrastructure Development and the Employers' and Manufacturers' Association ("EMA") were followed. [10537]

7.20   Submitters not in favour of mayoral executive powers identified a need for consensus amongst councillors, and felt that it was the role of the chair to coordinate and sell ideas to the councillors and form consensus. These people saw the role of the elected mayor or chair to be only the servant or mouthpiece of the body he or she represented. Being an ambassador for the city was mentioned as a more appropriate role for a mayor than as a lone decision maker. In general, it was felt by these submitters that the mayor should be a consensus builder rather than a dictator.

7.21   Other reasons given for why it would be unwise to give a mayor or chair executive powers:

- variations in the standard of skills of the executive decision maker

- reduced accountability of the rest of the council

- effect on quality of senior council officers.

Election of regional councillors

7.22   The relationship of territorial authorities with the regional body and the desirability of coordinating their representation arrangements gave rise to a number of submissions about the possibility of territorial authority councillors sitting on the regional council. These submitters considered that this would mean that the work of local government could better influence regional government and visa versa. Some submitters suggested the community board members should similarly sit on the regional body. One suggested that the chair of each community board should automatically be a regional councillor.

7.23   A number of submitters suggested that half the regional councillors could be appointed by councils with the remainder elected by the public. Others did not suggest direct appointment by territorial authorities, but felt that electoral boundaries, especially the local ward boundaries, should be the basis for regional election. The outcomes from this were expected to increase the level of local representation. One submitter suggested that a 50-50 split of elected and regional representatives would ensure that political factions did not hijack regional decisions.

Local mayoralty

7.24   This section and those that follow consider submissions concerning local representation. Although the Commission did not pose a specific question about the local mayoralty, submissions were made on the subject, with many similar themes to submissions on the regional mayoralty. A small number of submitters considered that the office of mayor should be abolished. One said that mayors were a relic from the past. One submitter felt that having numerous mayors in Auckland meant that there was unnecessary competition amongst councils. Another submitter felt that it would be desirable to keep the Auckland City mayor for ceremonial reasons.

7.25   The direct election of local mayors was opposed by some submitters. They argued that the present system could lead to mayors who lacked ability to implement their stated policies because they did not have council support. These submitters suggested that a mayor's proper function was to ensure meetings were conducted in a proper manner and to act as spokesperson for the council. One submitter thought that removing the directly elected mayor would remove some element of emotional voting on the basis of one

theme. An indirectly elected mayor would enhance continuity of vision and consistency of service for a community. Others felt that election of the mayor by councillors would ensure support of the council and genuine representation of the policy position of the council. It would get the best person for the job.

7.26   A few submitters discussed the idea of a local mayor with executive powers. One submitter opposed it, saying that an executive mayor could become a victim of their advisers, and thus remove council officers and consultants from public scrutiny.

Number of councillors

7.27   The *Call for Submissions* document asked for views on the number of councillors on city and district councils. Comments on this topic were markedly divided between those who wanted councillor numbers dramatically reduced, and those who wanted them significantly increased.

7.28   A majority of people thought there were too many councillors and that numbers should be reduced, usually by half. Comments included the following:

> Have you noticed that the total [number of] mayors, councillors and community board members comes to more than the numbers of Members of Parliament? [10433]

7.29   However, a few submitters were concerned that lesser numbers would mean representation would be less diverse, and some were clear that one or two councillors per electorate/council would not be enough.

7.30   Indeed, a significant proportion of submitters were of the view that there were not enough councillors. Several recommended double the number of councillors. Submitters pointed out that by international standards an Auckland councillor currently represented a large number of residents. Some quoted statistics from other countries such as France, Germany, and the UK:

> In Europe, the European average is less than 2,000 people per councillor. In France, there is one councillor per 116 citizens, Germany one per 250 … Italy 397, Spain 597, Sweden 667, Denmark 1084. In the UK, one councillor represents 2065 citizens. Yet Aucklanders continue to be told we are over-represented." [10493]

(The number of Auckland's community board members may not be included in this comparison.)

7.31   The Local Government Centre from Auckland University of Technology noted that although New Zealanders thought they were over-governed, "the evidence suggests otherwise."

> The average population of a New Zealand territorial local authority district is 56,000. That is smaller than the current UK average of 128,000, but the larger number of councillors in English local government produces a much lower resident to Councillor ratio in England than in New Zealand. … The average population for the equivalent

of a New Zealand territorial local authority is 1600 in France, 4900 in Spain, 5200 in Germany, 7100 in Italy, 17,000 in Belgium, 18,200 in Denmark, 25,200 in the Netherlands, and 31,300 in Sweden. [11078]

7.32   The Local Government Centre submission discussed academic writing on the subject of neighbourhood or local governance, and the issue of how to increase participation by citizens in local government. It made the point that the experience of France and England

> at the very least raises a prima facie presumption that a scale of local government which makes it easy for residents to engage informally with their elected representatives is an important factor in strengthening local democracy. [11078]

7.33   One submitter considered that councillors should represent no more than 20,000 people. Another wanted the ratio to be 1:7,000. Another suggested that there should be a formula of one councillor per 10,000 ratepayers. It was suggested that the number of territorial authority councillors could be reduced because the real work was at regional and community levels. Several submitters saw a reduction of territorial authority councillors as reflecting a reduction in the workload of territorial authorities after reorganisation of functions. In particular, these submitters saw a need to move some functions from territorial authorities up to the regional council, and other functions down to community boards. One submitter suggested that a councillor should not represent more than 10,000 people unless community boards were in place.

7.34   A commonly suggested ideal number of councillors on a council was 20–21, but there was a wide range of other suggestions. The minimum suggested was four councillors with a mayor. Many submitters did not stipulate specific numbers, but said there should be enough to do the job:

-   Auckland needs a strong council with sufficient members to manage the considerable workload and allow the bureaucratic process to be properly monitored. [225]

-   The size of council needed is one that will efficiently and effectively process all of the regulatory issues, enforce the regulations appropriately and respond to regional and community issues quickly. Size is not the issue here, but governance is. [10838]

7.35   One submitter suggested 10 councillors on the council was about the right number to provide the potential for varying opinions, and to represent the community reasonably. Another saw a danger in too few councillors giving rise to a possibility of power gains by lobby groups. Another felt that the number of councillors should reflect the special needs of each area.

7.36   A few also made the point that if there were fewer councillors, they could be paid more. Another warned, however, that in order for fewer councillors to engage with the public and deal with their concerns, councillors would require additional support staff and no savings would be made.

7.37   There was no strong advocacy from submitters in favour of an increase in councillor numbers. However, some had sympathy for councillors in regard to their current

workloads. These submitters saw a need to moderate workloads, and to provide better remuneration for councillors. Several submitters felt that the councillor role was now a full-time job.

Quality of councillors

7.38 Submitters stressed the importance of the quality of representatives:

> No matter what system you put in place, it is only as good as those that are put in place to make it work. [771]

7.39 In general, people believed the quality and professionalism of councillors needed to be improved. One senior council employee was concerned that

> Politicians are often sidetracked to irrelevant matters, are very short-term minded (<3 years), while the long-term outcome or vision is ignored. A very good example is a recent decision to lower rates by changing the loan-term from 30 to 50 years. Short-term gain is lower rate increases. Long-term result is a higher debt burden on our children. This is so wrong! There is very little visionary leadership and recommendations of experienced staff are too often rejected. This is obviously a delicate issue. I truly think that democracy is very valuable but on the other hand it is frustrating to see that quality recommendations are sometimes not recognized. [11277]

7.40 A consistent theme was the lack of knowledge of local governance by councillors. Submitters had a variety of remedies to increase the quality, skills, and performance of councillors. They called for

- more detailed job descriptions with clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- more investigation of candidates' education and professional backgrounds at the time of their election
- psychological profiles and IQ tests for all intending candidates
- requirement for candidates to have professional skills
- a six-month probationary or trial period for councillors
- development of a code of conduct
- compulsory training or induction courses in local government processes
- training in listening skills
- access to independent advisers
- more accountability
- more evidence-based planning and decision making

- compliance with statutory requirements to undertake cost-benefit analyses

- performance measures and assessment

- the ability to recall representatives through a "no confidence" vote

- the separation of policy and strategy making from implementation.

7.41   One submitter made the point that councillors were often ignorant of their legislative responsibilities, and acted as if they had complete powers of discretion over their actions and choices, but said that this "directly contradicts the sworn declaration to uphold the relevant acts and principles and … utterly subverts the principle of democratic accountability." [1457]

7.42   A few submitters suggested that the criterion for being a councillor was to serve at least one term as a community board member; and for being a regional councillor, to serve at least one term as a councillor.

7.43   Some people believed councillors should be full time, so that they could concentrate on council business, and become familiar with the issues and processes, and skilled in handling them. About 20 people recommended running the council more as a business model with councillors being experienced business people.

7.44   One submitter offered the view that lawyers should not be involved in governance. One suggested balancing right-brain and left-brain professions on councils.

7.45   One submitter wanted automatic suspension or termination for councillors missing four meetings, or for misdemeanours such as criminal offences while in office. Independent policing was called for. Another wanted a six-month probationary term when councillors were first elected, so that the incompetent ones could be weeded out.

Remuneration for councillors

7.46   Some submitters believed increased pay would attract better-skilled councillors, with the suggestion that pay should be linked to civil service levels. One commented, "It should be more than a hobby for retired people." [10749]

7.47   Submitters who were concerned about the pay and conditions of regional councillors suggested an increase in remuneration and increasing the administrative support for regional councillors so that they had an electorate office and were as accessible as members of Parliament.

7.48   However, other submitters recommended the opposite, with one stating that payment of councillors had done nothing to increase their competency.

7.49   Another idea on pay was that councillors should be volunteers, with reimbursement only for out-of-pocket expenses, so that the incentive of money would be removed from the equation and clarify candidates' motivation. One submitter said, "now it is a career choice for people, instead of doing a duty and trying to make folks' lives better." [10582]

Election or appointment of representatives

7.50   The *Call for Submissions* document asked whether local bodies should be composed of elected members only, or whether there should be provision for appointment of expert members. Opinion was divided on the question of whether non-elected people should be included on councils.

7.51   Supporters of the appointment of co-opted members saw this as increasing the potential to make informed, beneficial decisions. They recommended the inclusion on councils of people with expertise in business, social, and cultural matters. Hospital, educational, port, manufacturing, labour, and primary producers were suggested by a few submitters as justifying co-opted member representation on the regional body. Knowledgeable locals were suggested as being valuable to special-interest decision making.

- We support the concept of appointing outside directors. This improves decision making, reduces the occurrence of political grand standing, and prevents special interest groups dominating future planning. [546]

- One area of concern is elected members making decisions regarding large infrastructure portfolios which they have no understanding of. Final decisions regarding the best technical solutions or the best contracting methods should be left to experts, following input from elected members. This could occur with Boards of Directors managing infrastructure companies on behalf of the region. Each Board could have elected representatives on it to provide a link back to the regional council. [10650]

7.52   Some of those who supported the use of co-opted members expressed qualifications about it. A majority of these submitters felt that these non-elected committee members should not take part in the deliberations and voting of the full council, as this was undemocratic. Others urged a limitation on the number of co-opted members to ensure they were a minority. Some wanted to ensure that experts would be used in an advisory capacity only for specific issues or projects, and not have permanent roles or have the right to vote on issues, as councillors do.

7.53   The role of council staff drew conflicting opinions. One submitter saw "no reason why senior officials should not be full members of the various bodies" with full voting rights, with the chief executive sitting on the regional council, department heads on relevant council committees, and local council managers on local councils and their committees. [10438] Another suggested that regional committees could have five councillors from different districts and five council officers who had expertise in their field. Against this, one submitter thought that there was no need for special appointments as it was the role of council officers to provide the expert impartial advice.

7.54   Submitters who argued against the appointment of experts and advisers to councils commonly said that non-elected people had no place on an elected council, as it was

not democratic. Appointment was seen as undemocratic, lacking accountability, and not reflecting the composition of the local community.

- In the last few years there has been a proposal aired in the public arena to appoint non-elected members from sectors such as commerce, to council decision-making authority. I would dismiss this as contrary to basic notions of accountability and transparency. Whoever is appointed would have clear unresolvable conflicts of interest, and it is not clear if this suggestion was acted on, how they would be publicly accountable. [10414]

- All representatives should be elected. Decisions of council should be made openly, with real and meaningful transparency with full and easy public access to relevant documents except where secrecy is paramount and justified. [10655]

- A case can be made for expert involvement but such ideas automatically erode democracy and could become a door for business interest dominance. … Talk of big stakeholder interests makes communities nervous. [1117]

Voter turnout and the electoral system

7.55   Several submitters commented on the level of apathy evident from low voter turnouts for council elections. One submitter said that the low voter turnout is a sign of the territorial authorities' lack of engagement with voters:

> The fact that only 37% of the public voted in the last election is proof positive that the public feel alienated. Often people say to me 'What's the point? We changed the elected members but NOTHING changes.' The lack of genuine consultation and respect by the unelected council officers from the top general mangers down, has led to a complete and total loss of faith by the public in local governance. [11299]

7.56   In contrast to the New Zealand (and English) experience, the Local Government Centre submission quoted a researcher who observed,

> … in France, local government is still seen as important in the eyes of the public. For instance, participation levels for local government elections are appreciably higher than for others, averaging 75 per cent since World War II. Even in these days of political disenchantment, public opinion polls show that, of all political mandates, that of the Mayor is most highly regarded; all agree that elected local representatives perform the most useful roles.[20] [11078]

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20   Lugan, J.C., *The New Face of Local Government in France*, Swinburne Institute for Social Research, Melbourne, 2001.

This submitter's observation was that the differing experiences could lead to the presumption that

> a scale of local government which makes it easy for residents to engage informally with their elected representatives is an important factor in strengthening local democracy. [11078]

7.57   One submitter observed that low turnout may reflect acceptance of current arrangements, and does not necessarily indicate that people are totally disengaged:

> A low voter turnout at elections does not mean that people are entirely divorced from participating with local government; by and large people will participate when they perceive the relevance to them of a particular issue or project and that they feel they can influence the outcome. [10702]

7.58   Submitters frequently spoke of the need to improve the voter turnout, for example by encouraging a broader range of candidates so councils had better representation of diversity.

7.59   The perception of local government as a "graveyard for the incompetent and unmotivated" had changed, according to one submitter, with the substantial increase in costs for local government. This was a compelling reason for citizens to become more involved: "With increased costs must come increased participation in local government. Otherwise any reforms to local government will not achieve their potential." [11269]

7.60   Some submitters wanted reform of the voting system to address the low voter turnout. One suggested a reduction in the number of elected bodies, to reduce the number of candidates citizens have to consider:

> This problem starts at the ballot box with simply too many different governing bodies to be elected. A large number of people are put off with having to choose from long lists of names with very limited information about who they are. This results in people making uninformed decisions and the result is we end up with councils that don't truly represent the community at large." [10556]

7.61   A related idea was to stagger elections so that voters could focus on the relevant issues more easily, for instance for one-third of all councillors to be up for election every two years; or in year one to elect community councils, in year two hold the regional council elections, and year three, central government elections.

7.62   Others suggested reforming the electoral system by introducing a bottom-up election process where the public would vote for the lowest local government level (i.e. community boards), and the community boards would appoint members from amongst their numbers to the territorial authority, and the territorial authority would appoint members of the regional council. However, most submitters supported direct voting for both the mayor and councillors at all levels, accompanied by full decision-making power at each level.

7.63   A number of submitters advocated the use of a variety of voting systems to improve democracy and accountability: mixed member proportional, single transferable vote,

or other proportional or preferential voting systems. Submitters said that proportional systems could encourage political groupings and create opportunities for improved minority representation, including Pacific and other ethnic peoples. They also felt that a proportional system would maintain honesty and accountability. Three submitters specifically urged the retention of the first-past-the-post electoral system.

7.64   In terms of electoral systems, one submitter noted successful cities in New Zealand and abroad – such as Wellington, London, Brisbane, and in Tasmania and Northern Ireland – that use the single transferable vote system of voting, and where far more voters participate. Another mentioned that in Germany a mixed member proportional system was used successfully at state and local levels.

7.65   Holding elections at least three-yearly (and up to five-yearly) was the mechanism most commonly put forward as the best way to hold elected representatives accountable. There was a suggestion that the term of office should be limited to four years.

7.66   Other submitters suggested changes to the system by making voting compulsory and including representatives from the Māori electoral roll on each of the city councils. There were calls for better representation for Māori, Pacific peoples, and ethnic minority groups to be represented on councils by one mechanism or another.

7.67   The term of election was mentioned by several submitters, and varied from two to five years. In some cases this was connected to their detailed models for a revised electoral system. One submitter begged the Commission to "Please, please, please recommend a 5 year electoral term". [11256] Several submitters suggested that there be a four-year electoral term, as the three-year term was too short to develop and implement changes of policy. One of the supporters of a four-year term suggested that half of the councillors could be elected every two years. A variation on this was for one-third to be elected annually. A two-year term for a directly elected chairperson was suggested by one submitter. Another variation to the current electoral system were that there should be run-off elections to ensure that elected representatives had over 50% of the vote. Some submitters criticised the postal voting system as diminishing the importance of local elections.

7.68   There was also a recommendation to limit councillors to serving three terms, because longevity of office was seen as stifling initiative and healthy renewal. "If they can't improve the area in 9 years, let them rediscover their family or learn to play bowls." [1144]

7.69   Several submitters specifically said that the ward system should be retained, but others thought that councillors would have more accountability to Auckland if they were elected by the entire city. Support for the ward system came from Hauraki Gulf submitters who consistently advocated for their councillors to be from their area. A common theme was disbelief that an urban-focused organisation could understand the unique character of the gulf, or make the best decisions in favour of its citizens.

7.70   A few wanted the multi-member ward system to be abolished. One wanted the "best people" elected no matter where they lived, and several wanted a system of preferential voting adopted. The reasoning for this was that if all councillors were elected

to a single member constituency only, then they would each be elected by a majority of voters, the number of candidates would be reduced to a manageable level for voters, and a more well-rounded council would be achieved, with fewer extremists or special-interest people.

7.71 The issue of party affiliations was raised several times. A frequent preference was for independent candidates. The Waitakere Pacific Board wanted all political parties and factions to be banned from contesting elections at the local and metropolitan levels, because it perpetuates the "politics of elitism":

> The current model ... acutely lacks accountability in its true sense. All elected candidates were elected on certain platforms and factions based along political beliefs/parties, certain beliefs and values, and all were dominated, tainted, influenced by the 'palagi' [European] values, beliefs, needs and aspirations. ... this does not truly reflect the needs and aspirations of the constituents because candidates who get elected would have to 'toe the party line' or the expectations of the particular factions, [at] the expense of the needs and aspirations of the population at large. In all cases, the political parties and faction groups have the financial resources and the might to influence/coerce voters during campaigns. In order that the constituents are truly represented, ALL candidates ought to contest the elections as true and purely on the basis of 'independents'. [11273]

Māori representation

7.72 Māori representation was an issue linked to electoral systems: submitters suggested a ward-based system, or population-based constituency seats on a regional council. (See Chapter 25, "Māori Representation", for a detailed summary of this issue.) Iwi[21] submissions called for iwi representatives to be involved in decision-making processes in local government structures and processes, such as standing committees. Another common suggestion was the establishment of a Regional Manawhenua Forum that would exist alongside the regional council as a local body of equal standing. One submission sought direct representation at the community level for local Māori by local appointment – separate from any constituency seats for mana whenua[22] at the regional level. Some felt that Māori representation could be delivered by means of a proportional system, rather than by special wards or electorate systems.

7.73 Submitters suggested that it was important to include guaranteed Māori representation on the regional body. In regard to numbers of Māori representatives, some suggested one councillor for each of the region's iwi. Others proposed election on the basis of the parliamentary electoral rolls for the Māori electorates, and suggested numbers such as four or five seats on the council to represent Māori.

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21 Tribal grouping.

22 Local Māori with ancestral ties to the land.

Community boards representation

7.74   Many of the general comments about local authority democracy extended to community boards. Some submitters addressed community board democracy separately. Forty submitters supported the current voting system for various reasons. Some said that elected community boards were readily available, recognisable, and accountable. Another reason given was that the current representation was fair and provided a voice for communities.

7.75   Auckland City Council included comments based on its own research about peoples' perspectives on community boards. The research identified that residents felt there was a need for more information about community boards, especially when it came to voting. Comments included

> Most people said that while it was good to be given the chance to vote, in practice the voting opportunity wasn't maximized as they knew very little about what or who they were voting for. As a result some randomly chose the names on the list they voted for. Others said they did not vote as they knew so little about the individuals and what their role was. [11181]

7.76   About 50 submitters suggested changes to the current voting system for community boards. Some advocated the adoption of a single transferable voting voting system. Others asked for specific Māori and Pacific representation, and one person advocated that older people should have good access to community boards.

7.77   Ten submitters advocated that the chair of a community board should be directly elected. Others argued for retention of the status quo where the chair is elected by other community board members.

7.78   In terms of numbers of board members, most people seemed satisfied with current numbers around five. A few advocated for higher numbers up to nine members. One person said that there should be six elected members and three qualified people (in planning and finance) who were appointed to the board.

7.79   While suggestions for numbers of community board members varied significantly, from three to 12, most submitters appeared to believe that five members was a good number. One submitter said that a board would become inefficient with more than nine members. Larger numbers of board members were suggested by some submitters, in the context of particular local governance models that they proposed. For example, one suggested 63 community board members should be elected.

Community board comments

7.80   Mangere Community Board advocated for a community board having five members, with the chair elected by the board. [10545] Clevedon Community Board recommended adopting a two-tier system of local government where the second-tier "community councils" (combining the roles of current councillors and community boards) should

ideally represent no more than 60,000 to 80,000 people. [11152] East Coast Bays Community Board said that a community board population should ideally be below 40,000 people. [10102] Eden-Albert Community Board suggested a formula of one elected representative for every 3,000 to 5,000 people. [10996]

Ward representation on community boards

7.81   There were various suggestions about the number and role of council ward members who would sit on a community board. Some suggested that all community board members should be ward representatives. Others suggested that the ward members should be separately elected; however, they should have the right to sit on the community board. Some suggested that the ward member should be a chair of the community board.

7.82   Others wished to limit the role of ward councillors, because they were perceived to dominate community boards. There were suggestions that they should have speaking rights but not voting rights. One submitter said,

> In [North Shore City] each of the eight boards has four elected members plus two councillors … This means that the boards can be dominated by the two voting appointed councillors, in my observation. I would prefer to see Community Boards independent and autonomous with two appointed observer councillors, one attending each CB meeting and carrying back to council the resolutions of the board and assisting them in debates but not voting. [10613]

7.83   Other suggestions were that they might vote but not have any position of responsibility on the community board. Some submitters suggested that regional councillors should sit on community boards. There were suggestions that ward councillors should not be directly elected but should be chosen from amongst community board members and appointed to councils.

7.84   The interaction with territorial authorities was discussed in other contexts. There was a suggestion that any petition from 10% of the local community should be able to overturn an unpopular community board decision. If a community board proved to be dysfunctional, then a regional council could call for an election.

Remuneration for community board members

7.85   Payment for community board members was referred to in submissions. Several suggested an increase in community board members' salaries to reflect their enhanced responsibilities under an altered governance system. One said that the pay scale for community board members should be revised upward, in recognition of the considerable "eyes and ears of the community" function of community board members and to attract

better representation. [10098] Contrary to this, some submitters suggested that community board members should receive only a meeting allowance and travel costs.

7.86   One submitter suggested that there should be at least one full-time elected community board member (e.g. the chairperson) who was provided with a local office within the community. One submitter argued that local representatives should not be full time, but should be able to continue employment or volunteer work to enable a greater connection with the community and ensure specialised input and advice from work experience.

Miscellaneous comments

7.87   There were suggestions for binding citizens' referenda and forums facilitated by electronic media, requirements for consultation with local "experts", and changing the name of community board members to "community leaders".

8. Community Boards

8.1   This chapter summarises general submissions about community boards, particularly their place in the current governance system. Many people gave recommendations for changes to the functions and powers of community boards; this issue is covered in Chapter 21, "Future Allocation of Local Authority Functions".

8.2   Over 500 submitters made submissions about community boards. Twenty-seven of the existing 30 community boards made submissions. Their submissions are noted in this chapter with the boards' comments separately identified under each subject heading.

8.3   Other identifiable groups of submitters included 102 submitters who signed a standard form submission about Rodney District. These called for creation of new community boards as a way of ensuring democratic representation. A group of 93 submissions from Great Barrier Island supported the retention of the Great Barrier Island Community Board.

Support for community boards

8.4   Nearly 400 submitters sought the retention of community boards as they are presently constituted, although most of these submitters also wanted the community boards to be given more powers. Submitters often mentioned the value of community boards to grassroots democracy, saying that community boards fulfil a vital democratic function. Other reasons given included that they represented communities of interest that otherwise would not be represented; they were more democratic than other council agencies; they were effective at what they did; and the members of community boards were much more approachable than other council representatives.

8.5   In regard to communities of interest, there was a general feeling that community boards could sort out local problems and achieve positive results. One submitter said that any population that wished to maintain a true sense of community needed the practical involvement of local representatives to create and keep an environment they could call home.

8.6   Particular support for their community boards came from Great Barrier and Waiheke Islands. A number of submitters considered that island communities needed special consideration for their special needs. A total of 75 submitters sent in a standard-format submission, supporting the continuation of the Great Barrier Island Community Board, and asking for statutory changes to increase the authority of the board and to guarantee its future existence. Reasons given included the isolation of Great Barrier Island, and the need for local representatives to interact with Auckland City Council and with the Department of Conservation, which controls 70% of the island. In terms

of effectiveness of community boards, this group of submitters was positive about their current board. One said,

> a place like Great Barrier desperately needs to retain a community board. The greatest go-forward I have witnessed personally on the Island … has been the period in which Ak. City has been involved with the Island and in the lifetime of the Community Board … It is imperative that the community board remains operating at its current level. [10418]

8.7   Other community boards particularly supported by submitters included Devonport, Onewhero-Tuakau, and the community boards of North Shore City and Waitakere City. One submitter supported the retention of all of the North Shore City community boards, commenting that community areas such as East Coast Bays made Auckland unique. Particular mention was made of the Devonport Community Board for its strong support and effectiveness:

> it has exerted considerable influence on [North Shore City Council] decisions relating to: sewer rehabilitation through the city (because Devonport was fixed first); ferry services; heritage building policies; and more recently the establishment of the Lake Road cycleway. In my opinion, without the "ears and eyes" and the determination of the [Devonport Community Board]: the cycle path might not have been built … ; more heritage buildings would have been demolished; it would have cost more and taken longer to get the best approach to cleaning up North Shore City's leaking waste water network. [10098]

8.8   Several submitters said that community boards knew the needs of their communities and could therefore work towards meeting them. Other supporters saw specific advantages in community boards, which could sort out local problems, understand diverse communities, and ensure that geographic and historical communities of interest were fairly represented. Some said that community board members were better able to identify with the local community because they were members of that community. Submitters said that they were doing a good job, particularly at the interface with the general public.

8.9   Many submitters calling for the retention of community boards referred to the fact that they were more democratic than most council agencies or bodies. The expression "grassroots" was used by many submitters in this context:

- These are our grass-roots democracy for local issues to be represented to main council. [10858]

- Community boards after all are at the forefront of grass-roots democracy. [10890]

8.10   It was felt that community boards could articulate local concerns and that they were "the voice of the people crying in the wilderness!!" [29] and "the only voice of the 'man on the street' …" [10092].

8.11   It was said that local participation could foster social responsibility and safer communities. By contrast, it was said that a bigger organisation would lead to more

time spent on administrative and compliance matters simply because of the larger geographical area and population covered. Community boards were said to represent democracy at its most efficient.

8.12   The value of community boards was also identified in the approachability of the community board members. One said that it was essential for there to be community boards to give ordinary people somebody to readily approach. The approachability of community board members was mentioned by many submitters. One said that community boards were the only way that ratepayers could approach councils and get a response. Another said that they were a vital link between people and governance. One said that although community boards had nothing to do with Auckland's problems, they should be retained as useful for consultation.

Community boards' comments

8.13   The community boards all supported the retention of community boards or similar bodies elected at community level. A typical comment was that the "local" in local government must be protected, and local communities of interest must be allowed to retain appropriately empowered representation of their choosing.

8.14   The principle of subsidiarity (discussed in Chapter 3, "Values, Principles, and Characteristics of Local Government"), came through in many of these submissions. For example, Manurewa Community Board said,

> The principle of subsidiarity is supported by this board. The principle suggests that what can be done well at local level should be done at local level, and that sufficient resources for that action to happen should be allocated (and often devolved). [11042]

8.15   Maungakiekie Community Board said,

> Decisions should be made at the lowest level of competency. The Board believes that this is the most important way to engage and involve people in the decision making process. This grass-roots decision making makes the best decisions for local areas. [10815]

8.16   Henderson Community Board considered that community boards had to remain because they were an integral part of the community, working at the grassroots level, acting as the voice of the local community and the contact point for residents' concerns. Within Waitakere City there were clearly defined communities of interest. [10524]

More powers for community boards

8.17   A consistent theme in a majority of the submissions on community boards was that they were presently underfunded and unempowered, and that they needed to be given greater powers, resources, and funding to take care of local issues more effectively. At present, the range of powers of community boards was at the discretion, and some would

say the whim, of local councils. Submitters wrote of the resultant tension and feeling of impotence on the part of many boards and their supporters.

8.18   The range of desired powers and functions for community boards is detailed in Chapter 21, "Future Allocation of Local Authority Functions".

Create more community boards

8.19   Fifty-seven submitters suggested the creation of more community boards than there were at present. These suggestions included the creation of community boards in areas where there currently were none (for example, Rodney District), and also the splitting up of areas already subject to a community board so that the parts would be individually represented by separate community boards. Grassroots democracy and local representation were typical reasons given by those who asked for more community boards to be created.

8.20   The creation of community boards in Rodney District was suggested by a number of submitters. Most did not specify the territories of the community boards, but the Hibiscus Coast and Mahurangi areas were mentioned by some submitters. Similarly, Franklin and Papakura Districts were suggested as needing more community boards (although some submissions suggested the opposite).

8.21   Recommendations for the number of community boards for the Auckland region varied from 15 to 50. Some submitters suggested a formula for the number of community boards based on population size, anywhere from 10,000 to 60,000 people. Some submitters thought that there should be a regionally equivalent population size for each community, within geographical constraints and communities of interest.

8.22   Changing the number of boards also raised questions about boundaries. Some submitters linked the setting of boundaries for community boards as purely related to communities of interest. These submitters opposed the use of electorate or ward boundaries, saying that these were not communities of interest and the boundaries were constantly changing. Those who sought the use of parliamentary or ward electoral boundaries for the definition of community boundaries did not give reasons for this preference. One submitter opposed this idea on the grounds that it would make local politicians more closely aligned to national political parties.

Community boards' comments

8.23   Waiheke Community Board said that it would be reasonable to divide some of the larger wards of Auckland City into smaller community boards, since they clearly contained more than one community of interest, and had larger populations than many New Zealand territorial authorities. [10368]

8.24   Howick Community Board said that Howick needed to retain the same boundaries as at present which followed the old Howick Borough boundary. Amalgamating Howick into a larger area would erode its sense of community. [11301] Onewhero-Tuakau

Community Board said that the size of its community was the outer limit of what was feasible for effective representation and avoidance of disenfranchisement. [764]

Abolish some or all community boards

8.25   Seventy-two submitters argued for the abolition of some or all community boards. They gave various reasons why community boards were either redundant, unnecessary, or had harmful outcomes and should be abolished.

8.26   Many of those who wanted to abolish community boards were of the view that they were ineffective, powerless, or simply irrelevant. One said that "all they do is sponsor a few playground and traffic calming devices". [10007]

8.27   Some submitters suggested that community boards were not representative of their community, nor were they as effective as was often claimed. One said,

> No one but local nut cases ever get a chance to say/participate in the 'Community Board' [at Waiheke Island]. [564]

8.28   Submitters noted that Rodney and Papakura Districts manage satisfactorily without community boards. Papakura District Council saw the community board model as "inherently flawed" because

> it is "pseudo democracy" as the community has an expectation that they are voting for a decision maker where, in fact, they are voting for intermediaries with the actual decision makers. [10537]

8.29   A common opinion among these submitters was that community boards were largely irrelevant and few people knew they existed. They had very limited delegated authority and less resource to implement anything. One submitter said that community boards should be abolished because they were just another unnecessary layer of governance.

8.30   Others saw direct disadvantages of community boards, especially in that they created another layer of bureaucracy and costs. A small group of submitters saw the costs of running community boards as a reason to abolish them. Another said that they were a misuse of resources and excessive representation. Others said that they were costly, time wasting, ineffective, and did nothing that ward members could not do more economically.

8.31   Another aspect of submitters' concerns was their perception that community boards were seedbeds of the "not in my backyard" movement, that they did not represent the community as a whole, they were too easily captured by activists, and they encouraged parochial attitudes. One said,

> Community Boards are a restricting conduit in the Local Body System. Seriously restricting transparency in the system and the dialogue and effective democracy formally operating at the unrestricted access and dialogue between communities,

elected members and Council staff readily available at Ratepayer and Resident meetings. [1131]

8.32   This submitter noted that the smaller number of community representatives on community boards replaced the unlimited number of people from communities who were previously able to attend ratepayer and residents meetings.

8.33   Many of those who proposed that community boards should be abolished also proposed alternative local representation mechanisms. Some felt that local interests could be adequately represented by councillors elected from within the community board area, and others suggested that they should be replaced by "councillor clinics" or other forums where councillors met the public on a regular basis.

8.34   A number of submitters thought that informal groups could better represent communities of interest than community boards did. One said that ratepayer groups should be encouraged to act as the contact with communities as these would be less likely to be politically infiltrated. Another suggested that increased funding of informal community groups, clubs, and societies should occur with the abolition of community boards. Other suggestions included having citizens' forums, councillor clinics, and three- to six-monthly referendums so that everyone could have their say on issues.

8.35   Some were not opposed to the concept of community boards but wished to see fewer of them. For example, one person thought that the six North Shore City community boards could be reduced to three.

8.36   Some made a distinction between urban community boards, which they thought should be abolished, and those in remote areas such as the rural areas and islands, which served a more useful function and should be kept.

Community boards' comments

8.37   Unsurprisingly, most community boards were in favour of retaining community boards or some other community representation, such as the community councils advocated by Auckland Regional Council in its submission.

8.38   Devonport Community Board saw community boards as providing a useful function in the local government structure, and provided examples of issues and meetings where large numbers of people became involved:

> Empowered community boards provide the catalyst or focal point, when there is a controversial issue within the community, for people with strong diverse opinions to constructively enter dialogue with each other, rather than using the media to score points against the local authority and each other. This creates opportunities that could lead to initiatives that satisfy most people. [11281]

8.39   Takapuna Community Board advocated for community boards to be retained but was prepared to accept that amalgamations could take place where appropriate. [730] Hobson Community Board said,

> "The challenge any CB has is clarifying and promoting the role of the Community board in the ward. Auckland City provides no branding or marketing of Community boards, which means word of mouth and networking are our greatest tools. [10898]

Cost of community boards

8.40   Many submitters commented that community boards were underfunded. There were calls for them to be properly resourced, and to have input into how council money was spent.

8.41   Increasing board members' remuneration was suggested by some, to encourage better qualified people to stand for community boards. A qualification to this was that if higher pay were given, board members should be held accountable and must contribute in a meaningful way. There was comment also about the current system whereby councillors and community board members were paid from the same pool, and that it would be better if board members' remuneration came from an independent pool. One suggested a salary of $15,000, and made the point that most board members do far more than they are remunerated for because they "care and are willing to invest their time to delivering a better community." [10259]

Community boards' comments

8.42   The chair of the Waiheke Community Board commented that the board itself was very cost effective, given that its representatives cost less than $2 per ratepayer per annum. [758]

Community boundaries

8.43   The most common view of community boundaries was that they should include consideration of communities of interest, which were described in a variety of ways: small areas clustered around centres with their own cultures and atmospheres, or communities with similar features and values. A few submitters suggested that non-geographical communities of interest (e.g. based on ethnicity) could also be recognised.

8.44   Others supported population size as the main basis for defining communities. These submissions were often aligned to the two-tier model advanced by Auckland Regional Council and others, which divided Auckland region among 20 or so community councils, on a roughly equal population basis. There was no consensus amongst submitters about the ideal population number.

Community boards' comments

8.45   Most boards supported the idea of boundaries based on communities of interest, because this would increase local resident participation and feelings of connectedness. They said that smaller communities felt more able to support, identify, and access local candidates as board members.

General comments on community boards

8.46   In spite of the largely supportive comments and anecdotal evidence, the Local Government Centre submission noted,

> There is very little current New Zealand research on the role and effectiveness of community boards or on how they are valued by their parent councils. [11078]

8.47   One of the Local Government Centre submissions drew heavily from a paper by Brown,[23] which observed a "lack of clarity in the expected role of community boards" nationally, and a resulting "variability of experience", from the disestablishment of boards (in Rodney), to well-established community boards with delegated powers (such as in Central Otago and Southland). Another academic paper[24] identified uncertainty over the mandate given to community boards under the Local Government Act 2002; it recommended that "community boards should negotiate their roles early in the new term of the council." [11078]

8.48   Auckland City Council included comments based on its own research about peoples' perspectives on community boards. The research identified that residents felt there was a need for more information about community boards, what they achieved, where they were located, and how to contact them. Comments included the following:

- Very few people were aware that Community Boards existed but when prompted, most recalled they are an elected entity. Only one resident mentioned seeking out a Community Board as an option available to them to engage with Council.
- Almost no residents knew how to get in touch with their local Community Board, or where it was located – though people did feel they could probably find out if they needed to
- Even amongst those business owner/managers aware of Community Boards, understanding was very poor about who their local Board members were, where they were located and how to contact them
- Very little is known about Community Boards. People guessed at their overall role, and generally guessed that they were responsible in some way for resolving local issues.

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23   Brown, E. M., *Is There a Future for Community Boards?*, Master of Public Policy paper, New Zealand [undated, circa 1993/1994].

24   Crawford, J. and Rowan, J., *Getting Value from the Local Government Act 2002 and the Resource Management Act 1991*, New Zealand Community Boards Conference Proceedings, June 2007.

- Some people knew that Community Board members were voted in as they had participated in their local elections [11181]

8.49   Connections between community boards and their councils were the subject of submissions. It was suggested that a councillor should chair each community board to link to the council, and that ward boundaries should be linked to community boundaries so politicians would be locally responsive and also work at regional level.

8.50   An iwi[25] submitter suggested that there should be consultation with tangata whenua[26] to determine the numbers of community boards. Another iwi suggested that there should be 30 community councils across five clusters. Another called for iwi representation boards similar to community boards.

8.51   One submitter suggested that consideration should be given to making school boards the policy-making body for neighbourhood parks, green waste schemes, primary health care, and other matters of local and city-wide importance.

8.52   Some submitters supported the local governance model proposed by Auckland Regional Council; this included the creation of new agencies called community councils to replace community boards.

8.53   A number of submitters suggested there was some need to have permanent geographical boundaries to communities. These would not follow ward or electoral boundaries but be more related to geography or communities of interest.

8.54   Other submitters suggested the need for community boards to have an office in their areas.

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25   Tribal grouping.

26   People of the land, indigenous people.

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9. Consistency, Coordination, and Collaboration

9.1   The Commission asked submitters to comment on the issues of consistency across the councils in the region; coordination of policies, services, and assets in Auckland; and effective collaboration between the councils, both across the region and with central government.

9.2   In the analysis of submissions, answers were divided into categories: the general need for consistency, collaboration within Auckland (including dispute resolution for councils), collaboration with central government, and funding. Nearly 300 people wrote on these topics. The specific topic of differing regulations and processes between councils, particularly in regard to the Resource Management Act, is covered in Chapter 12, "Planning and Regulatory Functions".

Support for consistency

9.3   The Committee for Auckland noted that the eight different councils in the region had eight different visions. This was described as a "form of competitiveness that is a direct result of the present system" and a strong reason "for the area to have a cohesive sense of purpose … united identity … and pride for Auckland to be a great city to live, work and play [in]." [11136]

9.4   The current lack of consistency within and between councils was clearly seen by submitters as a significant problem that needed to be addressed. A general theme of submissions on this issue was that currently seven different councils were addressing the same issues (such as asset management, urban design, water quality, energy supply, building consents, heritage areas, dog control, alcohol policies, Māori issues, the fencing of swimming pools, and traffic management) in different ways. It appeared to be the source of much frustration for many people, particularly those involved in the development and building industries such as the New Zealand Institute of Surveyors. One submitter described the current situation as follows:

> The seven local authorities have seven different District Plans, seven different resource consent processing systems, seven different sets of by-laws, eight separate rating information databases, geographic information systems, accounting systems, and structures for the ownership and governance of council-controlled organisations. [10897]

9.5   Some submitters outlined in detail all the competing and overlapping bodies and agencies that work in governance: eight local authorities, seven mayors and one chairman, a Mayoral Forum, 261 elected people, 30 community boards, the Chief Executive Forum, eight chief executives, 6,000 staff, seven building authorities, 11 water network operators, 15 transport bodies, 14 information technology and human resources

systems, as well as eight strategies, eight separate rating bodies, and eight plans and by-laws. [11259] One submitter wrote (with emphasis),

> dealing with "Auckland" in its current structure is almost impossible and … Auckland's status quo is most certainly "accidental" in that so few initiatives (positive or negative) ever get to see the light of day. [1476]

9.6   Many submitters were frustrated by inconsistencies, such as different Resource Management Act (RMA) processes and policies for different parts of Auckland, different interpretations of various Acts and regulations, and district plans that were contradictory. Auckland International Airport Ltd was one of several companies that were frustrated by this messy system of governance:

> There are many laws, regulations, by-laws, plans and planning processes, policy documents and strategies that the Airport must understand and comply with, at both regional and local level. The structures and planning arrangements are organised in complex and confusing hierarchies, and they change regularly. The Airport must constantly engage with these various entities to ensure it has the most current information on local government planning and activities that might affect the Airport. Also, such bodies constantly wish to consult with the Airport on various matters that they are working on, which is extremely resource-intensive. [11266]

9.7   There were many specific examples provided of the problems associated with inconsistency. Recurring themes were the inconsistencies with departments or personnel in the same council, between different councils, and particularly between local councils and the Auckland Regional Council (ARC), which were all seen as major factors in Auckland's problems:

> There is a lack of co-ordination and consistency between Auckland Territorial Authorities that hinders the development of key infrastructure items that then impacts the growth and development of the greater Auckland area. [10512]

9.8   The involvement of iwi[27] in the complexity of resource management and consent issues across council boundaries that did not relate to tribal boundaries was seen as burdensome by them. One submission described interaction with councils as "inconsistent, overlapping, uncoordinated and reactive." [777]

9.9   Some iwi urged the Commission to enforce collective consistency across the region, which would "minimise disruption and deliver operational efficiencies" for both iwi and local bodies. [11276] One iwi, impatient with the present system of governance, wrote,

> In terms of ease of engagement and cohesive regional policy that is responsive to Pare Hauraki needs and aspirations, one unified regional governance body in Auckland is preferred. [777]

9.10   The Ministry for the Environment also identified that inconsistent implementation of the Regional Growth Strategy adversely affected Auckland's ability to achieve

27   Tribal grouping.

good environmental, social, and economic outcomes. [11310] The range of negative consequences identified included delays, waste, duplication, and confusion.

9.11   A number of submitters made the point that consistency needed to occur at all levels: national, regional, and local. The lack of consistency was attributed to weak national and regional policy, too much latitude to operate outside these policies, different interpretations of regulations and by-laws, poor staff training, over-reliance on consultants, uncoordinated strategic planning processes, application of inconsistent methodologies and systems, and poor cooperation and communication.

9.12   A few submitters expressed resentment about different rates and charges from different councils, such as annual water meter costs, which, in one quoted example, varied from $500 in Waitakere City to $4,300 in Rodney District. Another submitter noted inconsistency in rubbish services: "Why should one area of Auckland have wheelie bins while others have to pay for regulation rubbish bags?" [10054]

9.13   A number of submitters did, however, identify areas where cooperation and greater consistency were occurring, such as libraries and recycling. Others felt that allowing room for local diversity, together with good communication and coordination, was more important than a slavish adherence to consistency. Most seemed to agree that councils needed to be able to do the best for their local communities, and one submitter noted that disagreements between councils could offer protection against the more marginal ideas.

9.14   Most of those who addressed the issue of consistency identified both business process and service areas where they believed consistency should be occurring. The business processes included alignment of regional and national policies, strategic planning frameworks, guidelines and standards, operational processes, application of best practice, and powers of enforcement. The service areas included resource, planning, and building consents; infrastructure such as public transport, water, and roading; road safety; basic services such as rubbish collection; rating and water charges; and crime prevention. There were several comments about the need for greater consistency in relation to heritage planning.

9.15   Many potential benefits were seen as arising from greater consistency. These included equality across the region, better and faster decisions, cost savings, business growth, greater certainty for ratepayers and service users, protection of the environment, making the system easier to understand and use, and avoidance of conflicts of interest. Others said that consistency would help Auckland become an internationally significant city, and also enable more meaningful research and evaluation.

9.16   What many submitters saw as the solution was one regional authority that could set direction, policy, and relevant regional standards across the region. There were several comments that one stronger regional body with "one ship, one captain" [10313] who speaks with "one voice" [10267] would be the best way to improve consistency. There was a call for a single body that could also effectively "liaise and work with central government to promote Auckland as a world-class city, or to ensure its regional, national and international competitiveness." [11266]

9.17   Taking the matter a step further, the Green Party and a few other submitters also identified that "a 'single voice' for Auckland with central government is [not] the only issue: central government also needs to listen with one set of ears." [10897] They went on to cite a series of examples where central government had provided inconsistent advice on a range of issues, particularly transport. They also noted that central government had undermined regional processes by allowing some local authorities to go straight to central government, thereby bypassing regionally agreed strategies.

9.18   A common theme with many submitters was that the key responsibility for a stronger regional body would be the development and oversight of an overarching regional plan that would align with national strategy and set out regional objectives so that "ideally all bodies [are] heading in the same direction." [10287] The regional plan would allow for local variation to meet local needs and, as one person suggested, make compromises only after community consultation had taken place. Generally, submitters sought regional cohesiveness; integration across national, regional, and local levels; and integration of policy, funding, and implementation functions. They also wanted recognition of local diversity, particularly of regions or communities with special status: "Good policy design creates a framework which allows flexibility according to local circumstances and situations." [1136]

9.19   Other suggestions to improve consistency included having some of the same representatives on both local and regional councils, reducing delegation of decision making to officials, and clearer delineation of roles and responsibilities. It was also observed that practices and circumstances changed, so the most important thing was having competent people in power.

9.20   One submitter believed it was important to make the distinction between what needed to be delivered regionally, and what needed to be coordinated regionally.

9.21   There was a call for consistency across the region in consideration of mana whenua[28] issues:

> Ngati Paoa support a consistent regime across all local governments especially in the area of resource consents and issues that impact on Iwi Maori, eg waahi tapu[29] designation. [11276]

Opposition to consistency

9.22   More than 50 submitters took the view that consistency between councils was either not necessary or necessary only to a limited extent. One said, "Consistency is not a sacred cow." [11000] Another submitter described consistency as "an administrative response to problems, not a substantive response." [10425]

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28   Local Māori with ancestral ties to the land.

29   Sacred place that requires special consideration, such as a burial ground, or place where significant events have taken place.

9.23   Many took the view that consistency was necessary only in matters of regional significance. There was a need to allow for difference in identities between individual councils and districts so that local councils could adjust policies and practices for their circumstances and character, particularly for rural areas, unique geographical areas, or heritage protection.

-   It is not important if there are differences and inconsistencies between individual local areas if these differences reflect local needs or preserve local character. ... It is after all the only way of reflecting diversity and will lead to interesting and vibrant communities ... . [11080]

-   Homogenisation, standardisation and expunging of local and individual differences should not be a purpose. There must be a reasonable balance between necessary or eminently beneficial consistency and local determinations of their requirements. [839]

9.24   Others said that consistency stifled individual expression of areas and worked against many issues that local communities valued. These submitters called for differentiation as a goal, because diversity ensured people "feel engaged and empowered in decision-making." Another advocate of diversity pointed out that the "core intent of the Local Government Act [is] to empower decision-making by and on behalf of communities." [1117] One council said that its discretion on how to exercise a power was the essence of local empowerment. [10537]

9.25   This decision-making activity was seen as an important aspect of community boards and the proposed community councils:

So long as a Community Council is responsible only for its own area, and provided its decisions were acceptable to its own electorate and did not impact adversely on other communities, then there should be no need for its practices to be consistent with those of other councils. [1517]

9.26   Auckland Regional Public Health Service ("ARPHS") warned that a loss of local autonomy in decision making could have social and health consequences:

Moving to a regional approach presents a risk that a local community cannot take localised decisions. For example, currently Manukau City Council has a free admission policy for swimming pools, other councils charge for access. This policy has been explicitly adopted by Manukau City Council and will be reflected and supported by more fundamental policy choices as set out in the council's revenue and financing policy. ... Without prejudging the result of moving this decision to a regional one, it is suspected that for the majority of currently local decisions moving them into a regional framework would tend to the mean of current policy settings, and that outliers such as the Manukau swimming pool admissions policy would be abandoned. [11258]

Collaboration within Auckland

9.27   Most submitters mentioned examples where collaboration was lacking and greatly needed, particularly between councils, between local councils and ARC, and between councils and infrastructure agencies across the region:

- The key word that springs to mind when considering the governance of Auckland as it exists now would be 'struggle'. From the point of view of individual citizens, concerned groups of citizens, resident and ratepayer bodies, community boards etc, it often seems to be a constant battle between 'us' and the 'council'. From an overall governance point of view, the struggle continues with constant and on-going bickering and fighting between a multiplicity of councils and officers, advisory groups and local authorities, governmental and quasi-governmental bodies etc … . [10426]

- The … Firth of Thames has 11 different authorities governing the waterbody. [11205]

9.28   The multiplicity of strategies, plans, and groups set up to enable regional planning and implementation were seen as confusing and ultimately ineffective. The *International Review of Auckland Metro-Region* (2006) report was referred to, with its list of the planning processes that were then in train: the Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy, Auckland Regional Economic Development Forum, Auckland Metro Project, Symposium for Auckland, Auckland Regional Growth Strategy, Auckland Regional Policy Statement, Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy, and what developed into the Auckland Sustainability Framework. One submitter said,

> The city is beset by a multitude of bodies with a multitude of strategies or plans, at the expense of real leadership and actual implementation. That is, there are a lot of people who do a lot of talking about a lot of strategies, which leaves them without enough time to implement those strategies. [11266]

9.29   The point was made repeatedly that in spite of all the different bodies and agencies, many of which were "regional", true regional planning was often lacking. One example to illustrate this was that of a designated clear route between the airport and the central business district, which was seen as

> a priority requirement and … of city-wide and national significance. However, there is no city-wide policy or guidelines on how this route should be developed, so it has been left to the Airport to advocate for progress. [11266]

9.30   Auckland International Airport quoted the proposed use of Whenuapai Airbase as a joint-use airport, or a fully commercial airport on the departure of the airbase, as an example of the tangled processes between local and regional councils; in this case a local council had power over the regional council:

> a perverse situation has arisen where WCC [Waitakere City Council] is the decision-maker under the RMA, and the ARC is a submitter in that process. Furthermore, ARC submitted in opposition to the Plan Change, while ARTA supported it. [11266]

9.31   Submitters were dismayed by all the different local bodies and politicians pursuing their own agendas, with little regard for regional needs or perspective:

> Auckland lacks one voice. Instead eight leaders compete for attention, often with markedly different visions for growth. Because various agencies fund or control major components of the Auckland regional infrastructure system no one agency has full responsibility and accountability for regional development. … Regional priorities are often subject to parochial interests. It is almost impossible to gain regional unanimity without substantial compromise on outcomes. [1476]

9.32   Examples of projects that were stopped because of parochial interests were regularly mentioned: the Eastern Transport Corridor, Eden Park, rail access to Auckland airport, Whenuapai, and the second harbour crossing. One submitter wrote that in Onehunga there was "no control or coordination between agencies" such as Auckland City Council, ARC, OnTrack, Transit New Zealand ("Transit"), Auckland Regional Transport Authority (ARTA), Transpower, and Watercare Services Ltd ("Watercare"); this was "symptomatic of a dysfunctional governance process …". [10296]

9.33   A few submitters also listed various examples of infighting between councils, such as the conflict between Waitakere City and ARC over the "Swanson Structure Plan", which had total costs of up to $2 million, and the dispute between ARC and Manukau City over land use next to the airport. [10123]

9.34   Many submitters were pessimistic about Auckland's potential for cohesive growth without change in governance structure. Aside from the possibility of a strengthened regional body, one suggested solution was that city-wide infrastructure, service, and facilities be owned by one organisation, which would enable consistent practices across the city.

9.35   Many submitters wanted a "united Auckland", believing this would give it "more 'clout'" [10016] with central government, through having "one Auckland voice". Other commonly mentioned reasons for supporting a united Auckland were streamlined communications with central government, the ability to "coordinate long range plans and … big-ticket items … " [10525], and resolution of rivalries.

9.36   There was general dismay about the bickering and conflict that occurred between councils. The current structure "provides a playground for petty leaders to throw insults across the fence without ever feeling the necessity to collaborate." [10218]

9.37   Some submitters had suggestions about mechanisms to improve dispute resolution between councils. The most common were to appoint an ombudsman, or to give ARC extra powers, such as the right to adjudicate between councils, or to veto developments, or have a casting vote over disagreements. Other suggestions included regular meetings for all council bodies, more decisive leadership to break stalemates between mayors and councils, appointment of Auckland commissioners, having a supervising facilitator for some dispute resolutions, and developing an assisted dispute resolution policy or binding mediation process. One submitter quoted a newspaper article in which Franklin District

Mayor Mark Ball said simply that "if all the players in local government would talk to each other, some of these problems could be sorted relatively simply." [10391]

9.38   There have been many attempts to increase collaboration in the region, and a few submitters pointed out that there were already good examples of cooperation and consistency of practice in the region: Auckland Regional Physical Activity and Sport Strategy ("ARPASS"), Auckland Region Contracts Group, Joint Purchasing Group, Local Network Group, regional Civil Defence Group, and others. The organisation Libraries for the Greater Auckland Region was mentioned positively by a number of submitters. However it was also noted that such collaboration was not always easy, and there were still limitations:

> ARPASS is evidence of a group which has successfully driven a regional physical activity strategy covering the seven Auckland [territorial authorities], ARC, SPARC [Sport and Recreation New Zealand], four Regional Sports Trusts and the Ministry of Health. … [It] has a mandate to plan regionally but no ability to enforce or enact the implementation of the regional recommendations. The recommendations or projects are left to the local agencies to deliver on. [10702]

9.39   The Ministry of Health advocated strengthening the engagement between district health boards ("DHBs") and local government in terms of their strategic planning processes, and developing increased clarity about the accountability of functions between DHBs and local government. It also suggested that some consolidation of council-based public health services might create efficiencies. It noted that a DHB will often have multiple territorial authorities in its region, and be consulted by each for their long-term plans. The desire to reduce duplication of effort was expressed. [11331]

9.40   Some submitters believed that the existing structure could work, as long as there was greater cooperation, communication, and consultation between councils, "singing from the same hymn book" [738], so that they could achieve strategic objectives and have local and regional consistency. "Alignment of outcomes, policies, funding and implementation is critical if Auckland is to move forward strongly." [10493]

9.41   However, submitters warned that the Government needed to help by getting "all its ducks in a row" to prevent "continuing disconnects" [10493] between policy, funding, and implementation. (This issue is discussed more fully in the next section of this chapter.) One submitter wanted the Commission to recommend binding collaborative arrangements for each of those activities whose functional boundaries extended significantly beyond the boundaries of the region. [11078]

9.42   The Green Party submission focused less on structural change than cultural change, because

> improving cooperation is not principally about reforming or recreating the structure of local government, but about changing the processes, institutions, behaviour and culture that will deliver cooperative and collaborative governance. [10897]

Shared services

9.43   Many submitters recommended that councils could share or buy services from one another as a cost-saving measure. The most commonly mentioned services were administration and computer services; others included fleet management, cleaning, security, rubbish collection and recycling, social services, libraries, pools, infrastructure management, shared ownership of council-controlled organisations, and roading. This sharing of services was seen as having cost benefits, through reducing duplication of systems and expenses. One submitter recommended,

> Better regional coordination could be achieved by all seven local councils adopting a 'sister city' approach to working together, sharing information and staff as necessary. [10564]

9.44   One submitter gave the example of DHBs in the Auckland region sharing services as a model to explore: Waitemata and Counties Manukau DHBs had

> set up a joint company that provides shared procurement services, information technology, finance and human resource services. … The joint management model has provided opportunities for synergies and efficiencies by allowing them to work together at all levels of service planning, capital investment, service delivery and administration. Further it has had the spin-off benefits of improving career paths for staff and reducing the "poaching" of staff between neighbouring areas." [10851]

9.45   A few submitters believed that such rationalisation and collaboration would achieve more cost benefits with less disruption than amalgamation of the councils, though it was noted that this approach did not always work because of the reluctance to share power and resources.

Suggestions for improving collaboration

9.46   Different bodies or structures were suggested to increase consistency and collaboration:

- the Mayoral Forum
- hui[30]
- a regular forum for regional issues (to be attended by all councillors or by regional, local, community, and government bodies)
- biannual conferences for community council leaders and representatives
- an Auckland Parliament
- an independent coordinating body with the regional council
- a separate regional environmental agency

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30   Meeting(s).

- a multi-party development agency (for projects such as Mangere Bridge)

- more pan-council committees (for areas such as transport and wastewater)

- a joint committee consisting of two Greater Auckland Authority members and community council members from a given area

- having electorates geographically consistent with parliamentary electorates

- a two-tier model with a single planning process, and a strict legal obligation for the regional council to consult with local councils and their residents, although the regional council would have the final say.

9.47   Other measures recommended were to align boundaries of services – such as DHBs, councils, police, schools, and non-governmental organisations – for consistent, sustainable services; for Parliament to develop legislation to ensure consistency; to have staff secondments between local authorities to ensure best practice; to use computer networks to standardise decisions; or for the Commission to recommend binding collaborative arrangements for each of those activities whose functional boundaries extended significantly beyond the boundaries of the region.

Collaboration with Government

9.48   The majority of submitters on this topic wrote about the need for either greater collaboration with central government or greater involvement by central government in Auckland's regional governance. As one submitter wrote,

> Auckland has such a huge effect on the economy and welfare of the whole country, … accordingly Wellington must take some degree of responsibility for what happens … . [10873]

9.49   Collaboration, consultation, liaison, and alignment between central and regional government was seen as strengthening government in all its forms, so that national policy would be actively and effectively implemented. In particular, some submitters wanted the regional issues and concerns of Auckland to be better understood and monitored by central government.

9.50   The classic Auckland-Wellington tension was blamed for some of the disconnects between the region and the capital:

> Auckland has had to struggle hard to get its fair share of taxes paid by Auckland being invested back into the area. South of the Bombay Hills there is a prejudice that Auckland gets priority treatment and the rest of the country subsidises Auckland. This thinking has undoubtedly influenced our central government representatives, and decisions on Auckland funding have needed constant lobbying and battling for. [10098]

9.51   A few submitters were frustrated that central government had not intervened in Auckland's governance issues earlier. One submitter pointed out that when Auckland City recently scrapped climate change initiatives, there was no comment from regional or central government;

> The present situation where the Minister will only intervene where there are serious and ongoing problems ... does not provide the community with the protection implied by the [Local Government] Act. [11122]

9.52   Some submitters saw the possible reform of local government structures as an opportunity for an improved evolution of the central/local government relationship, and for an enhanced commitment from central government to Auckland's issues.

9.53   Many submitters believed that successful regional development could happen only with the active involvement of central government:

- Government needs to become a fully signed-up partner in delivering compact city economic development outcomes in Auckland. [10101]

- [It is] vital that central government is at the decision-making table in Auckland, both because of Auckland's importance to it, and its importance to Auckland. Much is made of Auckland not speaking with 'one voice', but actually it is very difficult to get the government to speak and act with one voice in terms of Auckland. (10493)

- The suggestion that key government agencies have appointments on a regional council has enormous merit and one I support. This structure for decision making would allow the government's position to be integrated into funding decisions and allow for a much smoother access to central government support of government funded projects. [10603]

9.54   Central government involvement was widely seen as necessary so that regional decisions could be effectively aligned with government policy and implemented with their support, rather than getting caught in a "bureaucratic tangle". [10999] Government Urban and Economic Development Office considered that improved collaboration between central and local government was required to advance the shared and independent outcomes inherent in the world-class city objective. It was expected that central government "will increasingly seek to engage in Auckland's governance arrangements, particularly in relation to transport and economic development." [11294]

9.55   Several submissions said that central government actively needed to play its part in facilitating an integrated strategy for Auckland's development by integrating legislation, policy, and funding frameworks. As one submitter noted, the tasks of local and regional councils and agencies were made more difficult by the "roadblocks of legislation that promote statutory documents with different timeframes and requirements, and that are not consistent with one another." [10493]

9.56   Another submitter believed this lack of integrated policy frameworks exacerbated piecemeal approaches to issues:

> The lack of national level policy frameworks to guide local decision making means local body politicians may not be held to account for decisions that affect regional or national outcomes. The reality is that elected members can and do divert funding away from needed infrastructure into pet projects, or postpone hard decisions. [1476]

9.57   Some submitters called for legislative support to strengthen policy frameworks:

> Auckland has developed clear regional visions in key documents such as the Regional Growth Strategy, the Auckland Sustainability Framework, the Regional Economic Development Strategy, One Plan for Auckland and the Regional Land Transport Strategy. Unfortunately the non-binding nature of these has allowed some local territorial authorities to avoid following through with their implementation. Such important policies as these require a legal framework where the authority and ability to deliver on them is present. Simply changing Auckland's governance will not improve this. [10490]

9.58   The Green Party also raised the issue of legislative framework for local bodies, declaring that until all the relevant legislation was aligned in terms of requirements, time frames and consultation cycles, local bodies were limited in how cohesive their actions could be. These submissions called for a united approach by central government and its agencies, with clear incentives and sanctions for councils, so policies in the wider public interest were followed rather than those in local interests.

9.59   A few submissions were explicit in how such incentives and sanctions from central government would work. The submission from Forum for Auckland Sustainable Transport ("FAST") gave the example how transport funding in Auckland should be dependent on

> delivering agreed improvements for walking and cycling facilities, bus priority lanes, and the like. Lack of implementation should result in immediate funding signals, with larger funding projects being deferred or stopped. … funding streams should actively focus on supporting what is wanted (eg a shift to public transport and active modes) rather than simply continue the past. This also helps provide incentives for change. [10493]

9.60   However, other submitters cautioned about too much government involvement, urging the regional body to have "central government participation but not voting power." [1445]

9.61   For many submitters, there was a clear delineation between central and regional/local government responsibilities. Central government was seen as having responsibility for issues such as health, social welfare, education (including universities), housing, day-care, roading, law and order, defence, and social and cultural services, as well as national guidelines and policies. Many submitters did not want local councils involved in these areas.

9.62   One submitter believed that central government legislation (for instance on prostitution and liquor licensing) had caused problems for councils.

9.63   A key issue that was repeatedly mentioned as needing central government involvement was that of transport. Other issues that were mentioned less frequently were climate change, energy sources, immigration, housing, education, and civil defence. One submitter wrote that if central government responsibilities were devolved to local government, they should be funded by central government. Another wanted to separate out infrastructure from development, and make infrastructure the responsibility of central government.

9.64   Submitters repeatedly mentioned the need for clear guidelines from central government to be implemented regionally and locally, so that there could be national and regional consistency in standards and policies. There were many calls for national policy statements, or national standards (e.g. for wastewater or building standards).

9.65   Involvement from some specific government ministries was seen as presently lacking yet critical for future planning: the Department of Conservation, in terms of regional planning, and for governance of Great Barrier Island; the Ministry for the Environment for urban growth planning; and the Ministry of Education, in terms of district plans and local needs when designating land for schools.

9.66   In its submission, Waitakere City proposed that there should be a partnership agreement between a newly formed, strengthened regional entity and central government, which would be enshrined in legislation and require the two parties to meet at least three times per year. Central government would be represented on the regional entity by two non-voting members. The regional entity should enter into partnership with central government in developing an urban development authority and agreeing on areas for priority development. [11121]

9.67   A few submitters were quite explicit in their belief that regional government should "keep Central Government out of any decision-making" [1504], because their "interference impacts on and often inhibits Auckland's growth and development …" [10372]. One submitter wanted central government agencies such as Transit to have no functions inside the Auckland region: "they would deliver infrastructure to the city fringe and then the Greater Auckland Council would take over." [10296]

9.68   Another submitter wanted complete separation from central government and Auckland to have its own Parliament: "Make the whole Auckland region an independent state. … Wellington has too much control …". [22]

Funding

9.69   There were some clear calls for government funding or financial assistance in the governance restructuring process.

9.70   Other submitters believed that extra funding was needed for Auckland's infrastructure and services because it was the country's "powerhouse".

10. Consultation and Communication

10.1   The consultation process was another topic of interest for the Commission, particularly the costs and time involved in the process and whether it was justified by better decisions. Submitters were invited to detail any other forms of citizen involvement they supported for council decision making. A total of 328 submitters commented on these questions and other aspects of council communication, consultation, and citizen involvement.

Community consultation and engagement

10.2   A wide range of contrasting opinions was put forward by submitters in regard to consultation. Opinions ranged from those who said that elected representatives should be able to get on with the job of governing to those who felt that democracy was a continuous ongoing process where the public ought to be involved at all stages of all decisions.

10.3   A majority of submitters favoured consultation. They said that consultation needed to be real and democratic, to see that local government heeded public views. Inequalities and access to consultation needed to be addressed; an example given was that businesses had more ability to participate in consultation during work hours, which led to a disproportionate representation of interests. Some submitters felt that it was important to consult on everything because differing issues were important to different people.

10.4   For many submitters, the process of consultation was linked to principles such as democracy, accountability, and transparency:

> We have more and more instances of major decisions being made, supposedly on our behalf, without any consultation with the local people who are the ones who are most affected. It seems to be a catch cry of our times whereby we "have in place systems of checks and balances, transparency in all undertakings, etc." The reality is quite the opposite. The Public Relation systems tell us we are getting one thing, the people who wield the power do something completely different. [10393]

10.5   There was a feeling amongst pro-consultation submitters that present consultation processes often seemed to be "going through the motions" [10650]. They said that consultation must be used correctly to inform and justify decisions made, not just to say "we have followed the process" [11263] when minds had been made up long before. Eastern Bays Community Board had participated in consultation processes but doubted their usefulness:

> As provided for in Section 52 of the Local Government Act, the Board has prepared annually and presented a submission on the council's annual plan. The Board has the clear perception that it is a waste of time. It is very seldom that the annual plan is ever amended as the result of any boards' submissions. The consultation is going

through the motions. It is too late. Seldom is the full number of councillors present, or for all the presentations by the boards. This makes a mockery of consultation, and if boards are to be encouraged to participate in this process the legislation needs to be tightened. [10372]

10.6   There were calls for consultation to be open, honest, easy to understand, and reflect fair and inclusive processes for all. One submitter said that local government must engage with communities to understand local needs and preferences, and noted that people would participate when they believed they would benefit from their participation. [11279]

10.7   Submitters also saw consultation as being useful and effective in terms of planning and use of resources. Great Barrier Island Community Board considered that when consultation was not done properly, however, it could prove extremely wasteful:

Our Board believes that in local government poor consultation leads to poor decisions and outcomes. Our experience with our district plan is an excellent example of this. Local input and views were largely missing in the draft plan. This led to thousands of local submissions opposing the plan and huge unnecessary costs to the Council and the local community. Had genuine consultation taken place prior to the draft notification of the plan, this would not have arisen. [10430]

10.8   These submitters saw a need to encourage and strengthen local community participation in all decisions that might affect them.

10.9   Consultation was also seen as an alternative to litigation:

it is better to spend time on consultation at both the community board and council levels to provide the best solution, than to spend time and money on litigation. [2225]

Reasons for less consultation

10.10   A second group of submitters argued for less consultation. One said that better decisions could be made by less but more effective consultation. Consultation was said to have delayed major projects, causing cost overruns and budget problems. There was a view amongst this group that consultation processes needed to be rationalised. One said that public participation should be largely restricted to voting for council and community board members. Decisions for important regional and infrastructure arrangements should be taken by elected councillors, and public participation in these decisions should be limited because councillors could be swayed by individual or local interests, rather than thinking about benefits for the region as a whole.

10.11   One submitter opposed to consultation said that consultation had become out of control. Everyday proposals should be processed quickly using common sense. Others who felt similarly argued that there should be representative democracy most of the time; for example, representatives should make decisions on the community's behalf and not ask residents about every issue.

10.12   Submissions indicated that the business sector was both weary and frustrated by all the demands and costs of consultation with the myriad local and regional bodies and organisations in Auckland:

> Consultation is becoming an industry in itself, meaning decisions are delayed or sometimes not made at all. The Airport's impression is that the various agencies in Auckland are themselves consumed by the consultation requirements arising from the complex framework. This can mean their availability to the public, whom they serve, is seriously diminished. [11266]

10.13   Some of those arguing for reduced consultation noted that few people participated. They said that the real preferences were unlikely to be disclosed by consultation. They suggested that there should be no more consultation on "waffly things like 'community values'." [11080] Others did not like some of the methods used or proposed:

> I do not have a high view of the worth of public forums, town meetings or scheduled meetings called for public discussion. All these are open to major manipulation and often seek to give the impression of participation without any substance or informed input into the occasion. Such public meetings have a long and honoured tradition but are not very effective means for dialogue and informed input. [10089]

And one submitter believed that about Waiheke Island in particular:

> a few "nutters" … hijack the "democratic" process so that ordinary people can't get a say anyway as they have work to do/taxes to pay. [564]

10.14   One submitter observed that in New Zealand we loved to have a say, and that although it was generally good that people felt included in the decision-making process, it definitely slowed down decision making at a regional level. A number of submitters noted that consultation delayed vital public works that were for the long-term benefit of the majority.

Consultation topics

10.15   For those who sought a compromise position, there were various suggestions as to what particular kinds of activities ought to be consulted on and activities that should not be consulted on. The lists presented by different submitters overlapped significantly. For example, about equal numbers of submitters said that water supply and wastewater treatment were matters that did not need consultation, or definitely did need consultation. Similar disagreements were evident in regard to public transport, reserves, roading, local roads, and routine matters such as health and building controls. Two matters on which there seemed to be little disagreement were planning and resource management matters, and significant large-scale new expenditure; both were seen as needing consultation. Various suggestions were made for the need to consult on

council proposals for art works and landscaping, rates, and strategic planning. One iwi[31] submitter called for consultation in all cases of decisions that impact on iwi.

Costs of consultation

10.16   In regard to the costs of consultation, there were two points of view evident amongst the submissions. The first was that the money and time incurred through consultation was well spent as it was an essential part of the democratic process. One submitter pointed out that the effects of many major decisions would last for hundreds of years and hence "due care and consultation" was not wasted. [10430]

10.17   Most supporters of consultation felt that the real issue with consultation was not the cost and time taken, but the effectiveness of it. These people felt that the costs and times were justified if it led to better decisions. One submitter said that consultation increased costs and delays, without necessarily increasing the quality of decision making or improving public confidence in local governance.

10.18   In the middle ground were people who said that consultation could be valuable and could also be time consuming, flawed, and wasteful.

10.19   Improving the performance of council consultation processes was important to some submitters, who suggested better methods and training for those who were consulting with the public. Councils should be able to consult well and then "get on with the job". [10843] Similarly, submitters called for consultation to be done well and sparingly, to avoid consultation fatigue and encourage community involvement.

10.20   Auckland International Airport Ltd also called for consultation to be streamlined, efficient, and timely. [11266] The company said that consultation was resource-intensive and could produce overwhelming amounts of reports and drafts reports, all of which involved costly consultation. This consultation process was often completely beyond the resources of individuals, meaning they could not participate in decision making that affected them.

10.21   A further group of submitters opposed consultation because of the costs in a more direct fashion. One said that the benefits of the excess consultation currently done were rarely demonstrated, and the track record showed that minds did not often change after consultation. Another said that consultation had been

> entirely over the top … creating confusion and indecision or enabling special interest groups to overly influence the politicians making the decisions. [10066]

10.22   Another concerned about the costs of consultation said that rather than consult on everything, it would be better to make a set of rules that were accepted by the public, restricted from further discussion, and signed off at four-yearly intervals.

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31   Tribal grouping.

Processes of consultation

10.23 There was a theme amongst many submitters that current consultation processes should be improved. A common theme was that councils appeared to have prejudged the merits of their proposals and rarely changed their minds, irrespective of what might be said by the public. It was suggested that the timing of public input processes was wrong, because it occurred after councils had made up their minds and there was then no point making submissions. Another submitter said that consultation was adequate up to the point where employees of the council analysed the results; too often the outcome reflected the council's original position and public input was largely ignored. [10464]

10.24 Others commented on the post-consultation processes:

> while the requirement for public consultation during the formulation of … policy is extensive, once that policy is finalised, the consultation and accounting to constituents/ratepayers is sadly lacking. We believe that however burdensome dialogue with the community may be for councils, it is the only way to ensure that government is delivering the services the public needs and is entitled to. [738]

10.25 One submitter suggested that the outcomes of consultation should not be overridden by politicians "pursuing the interests of their constituents." One idea was that the outcomes of public participatory processes be discussed by citizens and councils in a citizens' assembly, to create a "direct mechanism for accountability". [10913]

10.26 There were expressions of dissatisfaction with the overall result of consultation processes as currently practised:

> Citizens feel disempowered. … Complex consultation processes seem to be insincere, irrelevant and ineffectual as a vehicle by which citizen influence may be achieved. [10436]

10.27 One critic of current consultation processes said that at present it was an expensive farce. Decisions made in council were hardly ever changed as a result of having hired professional consultants; this wasted time and money and caused resentment among those who had been consulted. [1120] This submitter favoured referenda or other binding decision making rather than consultation.

Council communication

10.28 Many submitters commented on council communication. Most were in favour of councils communicating as much as possible with their citizens, using a wide variety of media. Much of the comment related to the in-house council publications. One said, "A strong press is essential to keep people informed as in-house press releases are treated with scorn and derision." [10582]

10.29 However, submitters said that local bodies should issue regular newsletters and keep their websites updated, as well as make better use of local community newspapers.

10.30 One submitter said that too much was spent on communication and consultation, the benefits of which were rarely demonstrated. Many were more positive about council communication efforts, however, saying that communication was the key to making it easy for the public to become involved and more aware of council issues. Others called for the greater use of technology for information and feedback. It was suggested that more participation in democratic processes could be achieved through use of telephone and internet technology. Citizens' referenda using telephone, internet, digital television, and texting were other recommendations. Submitters believed that such technology would ensure transparency and visibility of decision making. Live television broadcasts of council meetings were also suggested.

10.31 In terms of council publications, there were calls for annual plans to be plain, simple, and multilingual. One submitter commented that a vast amount of paperwork was mailed out by councils – most was ignored. Councils should consider sending printed material only to those who requested it.

10.32 There were suggestions that budgets and reports should clarify expenditure in a way that a lay person could understand. Many submitters urged that voters be kept informed by their councils as to what was happening with their money. Some said that in the past, they had to aggressively seek out information:

> It is simply not acceptable for a local body to be allowed to choose when it wants to communicate with constituents. When the news is bad, we still need to hear it. We are entitled to participate in government and to do that we need a free flow/exchange of information. [738]

10.33 Some felt that there was not enough information given about local government candidates in elections. Many submitters said that having all information widely available promoted inclusion and democracy. User-friendly council minutes and manuals were called for.

10.34 In terms of meetings and forums, various suggestions were made for changing existing processes. There were calls for council workshops to be made open to the public. Other ideas included a call for citizens' referenda and forums facilitated by electronic media, six-monthly ward meetings, and mobile meetings to allow attendance in different areas. One popular idea was that ratepayers should be able to require referenda on major issues. As noted previously, there were suggestions that binding referenda and forums could be facilitated by electronic media, including telephone, internet, and digital television. One submitter said that there should be a proscribed list of things that a council could spend money on without referral to the public, and any other items should be voted on by the public at large. [11082]

10.35 A small number of submitters referred to communication between councils as needing improvement; similarly with communication between councils and the Government.

Miscellaneous points

10.36 One submitter said that participation in local government appeared to be reducing and this needed to be addressed by alternative methods of engagement.

10.37 There were calls for improvements to mechanisms for engagement between councils and iwi and hapū[32]. One submitter suggested four principles: face to face, chief to chief, staff to staff, and a meeting in the place of Māori choice.

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32   Tribal grouping and sub-tribe.

11. Rates and Finance

11.1   The *Call for Submissions* document did not specifically ask questions in relation to rates or local government finance. This reflects the fact that there was a separate independent inquiry into local government rates conducted in 2007, the findings of which were required to be taken into account by the Commission under its terms of reference. Nevertheless, 255 people made submissions that touched on rates and finance.

Rates

11.2   Ninety submitters advocated that there should be one regional rates collection system, administered by the regional council. One advantage of the single rates collection system was seen as saving money by avoiding duplicate collection systems. Another advantage would be to enable information about where rates were spent (e.g. locally and regionally) to be set out in one bill.

11.3   The majority of these submitters envisaged that the rates would be collected by the regional body and redistributed to other local government agencies according to a formula. Submitters differed as to the appropriate formula, some advocating a distribution on the basis of population and others preferring distribution on the basis of current valuation models.

11.4   A few submitters took the view that territorial authorities should levy rates on behalf of the regional body, rather than the regional body levying rates directly. These submitters felt that there was value in local rates collection. One said,

> Rating needs to be retained at a city level to ensure that a form of competition exists. As an illustration, if one city was to double the rates for the top 20 percent of properties or for commercial properties, there would be a tendency for some home owners and investors to move to another city so providing a brake on rating for non-economic reasons. [10803]

11.5   Over 100 submitters from Waiheke Island urged that rating and expenditure should be under local control.

11.6   The Employers' and Manufacturers' Association suggested that in its proposed two-tier system, the regional council would be funded by a regional rate. Local councils should have powers to levy general rates, targeted rates, uniform annual general charges and/or uniform annual charges, and user charges; however, their primary funding should come from an allocation by the proposed Greater Auckland Council ("GAC") from its region-wide rate on a per capita basis – the allocation to be higher in areas with greater need. [10813]

11.7   The position of business ratepayers was mentioned by some submitters, saying that businesses pay high rates but have no representation and no voting rights. One submitter

said that businesses would become less competitive if rates increased above inflation. Another said,

> Our business people recognise the partnership that must exist among all ratepayers to have a successful city. Too often we feel like cash cows. Examples of unfair and obfuscating policies to which we in East Tamaki have been subject are … [businesses] subsidising residential waste water tariffs by 23.8% … . [10832]

11.8   Auckland International Airport said it paid millions of dollars in rates and charges to Manukau City Council, Manukau Water, and the Auckland Regional Council (ARC), even though the airport itself

> operates a variety of infrastructure services that would normally be the responsibility of the local authority, ie road maintenance, stormwater, internal water and sewage reticulation and refuse removal. The issue is not only whether the Airport is being overcharged, but whether local authorities are held accountable for the efficiency of their charging and investment, in the same way as private sector sole providers. [11266]

11.9   Some submitters were unsympathetic to business ratepayers. One suggested that city rates should be struck on major concentrations of commercial and industrial land uses only. Another submitter referred to the large revenue stream that could be derived from a business area, suggesting that this should be taken into account in setting council boundaries, to ensure councils have a rating base that can finance their responsibilities. [10769]

11.10   One rural submitter said,

> At present many farm owners have to subdivide to keep on their land due to extortionate rates. Under the current system of governance for Auckland there will be no large farms left under private NZ ownership close to Auckland as most farm owners will be rated off their land. In addition there will be no large farms left close to Auckland as the owners will be forced to subdivide into lifestyle blocks. Lifestyle blocks are often very infrastructure intensive with the residents having many vehicles, outbuildings, swimming pools etc so it makes sense from a district plan level to try to keep large farms intact and to have a farm assessment of rates based on actual usage rather than land cost. [11118]

11.11   A number of submitters referred to the effects on rates in the event of reorganisation of local government boundaries. One said that debts in North Shore City were smaller than those of other councils and the submitter did not want to pick up other councils' costs through rates rises as a result of amalgamation.

11.12   Similarly, submitters expressed concern about the ageing infrastructure of Auckland City and the risk that the costs of replacing it would be spread across the region after reorganisation. One submitter, arguing against having one rating system for Auckland region, felt that Papakura District residents were rural and not affluent, and uniform rating could significantly affect them.

11.13 A number of submitters had comments to make about the rating system in general terms. Some submitters called for the rating system to be overhauled:

> To collect rates only from property owners harks back to old English customs. With the increase in rental properties, the number of people using community facilities is growing disproportionately to the number of ratepayers, and the cost of maintaining the city infrastructure is becoming prohibitive. [1132]

11.14 Many submitters called for a cap on rates to be introduced. One said that the Rates Inquiry had found that rates had been increasing faster than inflation and were unaffordable, and urged amendments to the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 to address this and to cap rates at the rate of inflation. Many submitters wanted to keep rates increases to the level of inflation. Some said that councils should be able to have an increase larger than inflation only after getting approval through a referendum. Capping of rates was seen as desirable to trim down bureaucracy and encourage financial discipline. One submitter said,

> My feeling is councils see rates income as an endless source of funds; they seem to act as if they have the right to raise taxes dramatically without a corresponding responsibility to spend the money efficiently. [10859]

11.15 Submitters with an iwi[33] perspective referred to the particular aspects of Māori land rates that raised issues for them. One iwi submitter was concerned that rates arrears associated with some Māori land blocks meant that these lands were not serviced by councils to the same level as other land. [11329] Another iwi submitter suggested that a percentage of rates and charges should go to a Mana Whenua Regional Forum to fund marae[34], the rationale being that rates had long been used for funding community halls but not marae:

> Over the years millions has been spent on Community Halls whilst Marae have struggled in constant uncertainty. This has hindered marae, hapu, iwi and cultural development at all levels. Yet Marae serve similar if not arguably more functions in the community. [11280]

11.16 One submitter saw the amendments to the Local Government Act 2002 as contributing to the "chronic double-digit inflation of rates" as local authorities were given extra responsibilities and faced with a "bewildering range of choices" of what to do in their communities. The submitter considered the duplication of function between local and central government, such as delivery of social services, needed to be sorted out. [10101]

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33   Tribal grouping.

34   Tribal meeting house(s) and buildings.

Alternatives to rates

11.17   Many commented that the rating system was unfair and over-complicated. Submitters argued for various changes to the rating system to make it fairer. Suggestions included switching all rates to a land value basis, or to a rental value basis, or to a flat fee per household. Others argued against uniform annual charges. Many submitters had the perception that their rates were steadily increasing but the services that they received from councils did not increase year by year.

11.18   There were many suggestions for alternative systems of local council financing. Submitters argued for a poll tax, more extensive use of development contributions, profits from regionally owned companies, cost recovery for services, local body tradable loans, tax-free municipal bonds, road congestion charges, and regional petrol and sales taxes. Encouraging private investment in utilities and publicly owned assets was another suggested source of revenue.

11.19   Many submitters were attracted to the idea of local government being funded from a share of the central government's goods and services tax ("GST") revenue. Some advocated a pay-as-you-earn system for rates where rates were levied according to the person's ability to pay.

11.20   One submitter urged the adoption of demand side management, which uses pricing mechanisms to manage demand of scarce resources in response to supply conditions. The submitter said that demand side management offered councils an alternative source of revenue. Others argued for all water and wastewater services to be charged for on a user-pays basis. One saw a levy on liquor sales as an additional source of local government revenue.

11.21   The New Zealand Planning Institute said,

> We generally consider, given the enormity of the task of local government (especially in Auckland given its role and function in the national economy and the number of people who live and work there), that local government rating is not an appropriate way to fund all or most of local government functions – e.g. infrastructure (storm water, wastewater, local roads, etc.). Alternative funding sources are needed, be it new revenue streams, greater central government funding and/or development of new funding tools – e.g. sales taxes, etc. [11112]

Other financial matters

11.22   One submitter suggested creating an ombudsman or auditor for finance to ensure that money was spent efficiently for allotted purposes. Some submitters asked for disclosure of salaries, contracts, and time frames. They wanted council annual reports to be provided in summary to all ratepayers, with six-monthly progress reports outlining success against sustainability and well-being outcomes or targets.

11.23   Others referred to the investment policies of councils; for instance, one submitter advocated limiting the powers of councils to invest in shares. A few submitters were concerned about funding arrangements for council-controlled organisations (CCOs). One suggested a new agency, "One Auckland Investments", should be established to control Auckland's CCO investments. Another wanted a system that would enable prudent financial management and accurate reports of all council expenditure:

> So that the public have an accurate report of council expenditure including subsidies, Council Controlled Organizations (and CCTOs) should all hold council debt equal to the value of their assets as verified by the Audit Office, [and] not be overloaded nor subsidised. [10660]

Future scenarios

11.24   Some submitters had ideas about how investments and funding might work in a new governance structure. Auckland City Council proposed there be a new regional council, the GAC, which would have a division called GAC Investments. This would be the division responsible for the management of key investments currently held by the ARC and territorial authorities, including Ports of Auckland (100%), Auckland International Airport (22.8%), property investments, managed funds, and other investments. [11181]

12. Planning and Regulatory Functions

12.1   More than 1,000 submissions made comments about regulatory functions of councils. The majority of these referred to planning under the Resource Management Act, and many submissions expressed great frustration, anger, and even despair over the present situation.

12.2   This chapter summarises general comments made about planning, and then considers the submissions about other regulatory functions including building consents, by-laws, and health-related controls such as food hygiene controls. Submissions about consistency in planning regulations between councils are summarised in the final section of the chapter.

General comments about planning

12.3   Comments on governance arrangements for planning tended to overlap with comments about the merits of a particular council's policies and administration, and the merits of the Resource Management Act (RMA). Submissions about changes to legislation are summarised here separately, although the themes merged in the submissions.

12.4   The most common submission theme was the complexity of the planning system, which includes separate regional plans and district plans made by regional and territorial authorities respectively. Numerous suggestions were made to simplify the system, especially to address the confusion that arises because of the

- multiple regional and district consents required
- multiple planning documents that can apply to a particular development
- different district planning controls that apply in adjoining districts.

12.5   These considerations gave rise to suggestions for changes to the system of planning governance, which are discussed below. These changes included the following:

- transfer all planning and RMA functions to regional councils
- transfer all planning and RMA functions to territorial authorities
- create one district plan for the whole region, administered by regional and territorial authorities.

These are discussed below.

12.6   One company that regularly deals with consents from various councils wrote,

> Making multiple applications to different bodies, under different plans and involving different personnel, obviously has cost and timing implications, whilst not creating any substantive benefit. In fact, in many cases it can create a fragmented assessment

without any one authority looking at the whole of a proposal and assessing the overall effects and benefits. [10965]

12.7   Submitters who referred to the requirement for separate regional and district consents for particular developments called for all aspects of a proposal to be processed and considered by one agency, not in separate applications to the regional council and the territorial authority. There were various suggestions as to which level should manage the consents. Many favoured having one agency to do all planning, but submitters differed as to whether the agency should be national, regional, or local.

12.8   One submitter said that all building and resource consents should be given to a national body applying national standards; Land Transport New Zealand was given as an example with national standards for warrants of fitness for vehicles, which reduced costs, streamlined processes, and increased consistency. Another suggested that some resource consents might be classified as regionally significant and handled at a higher, presumably regional, level. Yet another said that decisions on development should be made at the level appropriate to the range of its effects and no higher.

12.9   Many submitters felt that planning administration (especially resource consent applications) was overly complex with overlaps and undue bureaucracy. One said,

> The current system does not deliver timely service, is uncertain, both in terms of timeframes and applicable planning rules, and is inconsistent between councils. There is a lack of accountability when councils fall short of statutory or good practice requirements. [10965]

12.10   Several saw problems, not so much in the legislation, but in the interpretation:

> Inefficient and varied interpretation of the Resource Management Act has the impact of confusing businesses, slowing down development, increasing costs of development and thereby strangling the growth of the Auckland Region. [10838]

12.11   Others were more critical of council staff:

> I have consistently seen the advice given to councillors as being totally designed to protect the administration and the processes of regulatory control they design. I have strong views that councils should be subject to at least three yearly audits to test the level of efficiency and unnecessarily high levels of regulatory control and approvals it administers. [10603]

12.12   Submitters commented that there was not enough specialist expertise in planning or governance because the various councils needed to maintain a large number of offices. This resulted in incompetent, inconsistent decisions. To address this skills shortage, one submitter suggested that all technical governance functions be consolidated into four centralised planning offices dealing with various aspects of planning and management: inner city, suburban, rural, and coastal and harbour. [10818]

12.13   Some submitters saw the planning system as unduly restricting economic growth. Rodney Economic Development Trust said,

> The inability of the ARC to grasp the importance of economic development is reflected in the way they go about assessing resource consent applications. … they have never produced a planner's report that comments on the economic or social consequences associated with an application. [546]

12.14   Economic growth was said to be restricted by delays and application fees. There was also some criticism of obstacles to events like V8 Supercars. Property Council New Zealand referred to costly delays attributable to the current governance:

> In 2007, Property Council surveyed its members on their experience of local government consent processing and charging in lieu of the cost of growth. The overwhelming number of responders (73 per cent of whom do business in Auckland) noted that they experience long and costly delays in councils processing building and resource consents …. [11137]

12.15   The Employers' and Manufacturers' Association (EMA) described the Manukau Harbour Crossing project as having taken eight years from commencement of consultation to the start of project. This was because of delays arising from the consenting process, which needed to be coordinated between five organisations (Auckland City, Manukau City, Auckland Regional Council (ARC), Department of Conservation, and Transit New Zealand). When it was time to decide the composition of the RMA hearing panel, the parties could not agree, resulting in considerable delay. (The submitter noted that the project was proceeding even though two of the 17 consents required were still outstanding.) [10813]

12.16   Resource consent application fees in Auckland were said to be too high. One submitter described a cost comparison made by a forest company that operated in three regions:

> A consent application was made to all three [regional councils] to harvest trees. The application fees from Northland and Waikato were under $4,000 while the Auckland Regional Council was over six figures. [546]

RMA and the Government's role

12.17   The role of the central government was referred to by submitters who said that central government must provide a workable legislative framework for the consenting process. A review of resource management, building, and environmental health laws was called for. The New Zealand Planning Institute in its submission suggested amending the RMA in various ways, including ensuring that local planning gave effect to regional policy. This could be achieved by requiring all district plans to be approved by the regional governance agency to ensure they "delivered" or were aligned with the regional planning policy in their district or city. [11112]

12.18 Others argued that changes to governance had to be accompanied by amendments to the RMA. One said,

> The problem facing the Hauraki Gulf and the Hauraki Gulf Islands is not the structure of the governance of the Auckland Region. It is development pressure which is undermining and in many instances destroying the ecological, environmental, cultural heritage, visual aesthetics and character of the Islands. … If any significant change is to be made in terms of improving the management of Auckland, processing efficiencies and protecting the environmental and cultural features of Auckland, the RMA needs to be reviewed. [10809]

12.19 One submitter suggested that there should be other considerations underlying planning apart from the environment:

> the consequences of pursuing an environmental agenda, without appropriate consideration of social and economic consequences, is a significant reason why the planning system has been unresponsive to market demand from the growth of Auckland. [11129]

12.20 The role of the Environment Court was referred to by a number of submitters. Some felt that difficult cases should go directly to the Environment Court, rather than being the subject of local hearings. Others viewed the Environment Court less favourably, suggesting that local planning issues should not be resolved judicially but by alternative dispute resolution.

Regional planning

12.21 There was majority approval of the regional council continuing with the current regional planning functions, including managing air and water quality, coastal development, biosecurity, and regional growth. Opposing views were that territorial authorities could deal with the environment; the regional council should stick to the parks and transport functions for which it was created.

12.22 In regard to coastal issues, many submitters distinguished coastal planning from beach control. Many who were happy for the regional council to control the coastal marine area were in favour of a local council being responsible for regulation of beach activities. A group from Waiheke Island proposed that all of the island's coastal marine area be managed locally.

12.23 Others asked whether the regional council could do justice to its development functions as well as its environmental protection functions. Stevenson Group in its submission referred to the dual responsibilities of the ARC for regional development and environmental management:

> We simply cannot understand how this duality of often competing roles can be reconciled … the role of the ARC in managing the issues around the Drury Quarry comes into stark reality when you are considering such an environmentally deleterious

activity such as quarrying, in the context of its strategic importance to the region's current and future infrastructure requirements .... [1476]

12.24 Auckland International Airport Ltd in its submission stated a preference for ARC to give its primary focus to city-wide economic development, saying that ARC was instead currently focused on mitigating environmental effects under the RMA. [11266]

12.25 Foodstuffs (Auckland) Ltd gave a different example of "incompatible" roles of ARC that can cause internal tensions:

> For instance, an applicant will often need to apply to the regulatory arm of ARC for regional resource consents on technical matters such as storm water and contaminant discharges, and a different arm of ARC could make a submission on the application in relation to broader policy matters. Foodstuffs is concerned that this creates a conflict between the two roles internally and can also cause confusion for an applicant as to which part of the ARC it should be dealing with and how matters can be resolved within both facets of the organisation. Foodstuffs considers it unnecessary and inefficient for policy and regulatory functions to be exercised by the same body. [10965]

12.26 Partly in response to these issues of competing roles, several submitters called for the creation of an environmental protection agency, similar to those in the United States and Australia. Such an agency was visualised as being independent; executing research, environmental programmes, and consents; recommending policy; ensuring consistency and application of national guidelines; and unifying consenting compliance and enforcement processes.

12.27 One submitter said that the regional council environmental responsibility should go back to central government, including standards for air, noise, dust, smoke, water, and coastal planning. Noxious plants and pests could go either to a local council or to a separate body administered nationally.

12.28 The desirability of regional leadership and coordination of the planning system was referred to by several submitters. This extended to plans under the RMA and also to the related engineering codes, application fees, and development contributions. Several suggested a split between the regional body making policy and the territorial authorities implementing that policy. Reasons given for favouring more regional control of planning included that it would ensure sustainable development and improved processing efficiency. One said that a "one stop shop" for consents could offer applicants a greater level of certainty and be more efficient.

12.29 The New Zealand Planning Institute in its submission favoured a strengthened regional governance agency, having a strategy/planning function as well as an implementation function, particularly in terms of transport, infrastructure, land development, regionally significant open space/parks, and others. [11112]

12.30 The institute also suggested that consideration should be given to central and regional government funding and representation for an inter-regional growth forum to deal with strategic planning and development issues for the upper North Island. This

forum of the regional councils of Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, and Northland regions would consider where future urban growth was to be concentrated. Funding for territorial authorities should be "explicitly dependent on their policy documents being in line with strategic regional documents". [11112]

12.31   There were 196 submitters who thought that all planning and RMA matters should be dealt with by regional councils. Reasons given included economies of scale and efficiencies, which submitters thought would be yielded from simplification and reduction of duplicated effort. Submitters commented that each council writing separate policies was a waste of money and resources. One said the region should be planned for regionally, as there were no natural boundaries within Auckland region.

12.32   Twenty submitters called for one resource management plan to be prepared regionally to cover the region and all districts, incorporating the regional policy statement, growth strategies, and regional and district plans. Submitters said this would streamline the multiplicity of planning documents, and administration was expected to be simpler and cheaper. One said it would "deliver the 'big picture'." [1384] (See more on the single district plan idea below under "Consistency".)

Territorial authority planning

12.33   Some 110 submitters proposed that all RMA decisions should be made by territorial or other local authorities. These submitters often referred to the need to plan for the unique land forms of each district: "the beauty of Auckland region is its diversity … ". [10532] Many felt that locally elected councillors would best understand the needs of their community, saying that the closer decision making was to individuals, the better.

12.34   The New Zealand Planning Institute's submission favoured retaining a role for territorial authorities similar to their current role, with an emphasis on local area planning and urban design, in terms of land use and subdivisions, as well as building consents and by-law issues. Local identity and public participation were important reasons for this. Adequate resources were necessary to carry out this role. [11112]

12.35   Federated Farmers of New Zealand submitted that territorial authorities should be solely responsible for making decisions under sections 6 and 7 of the Resource Management Act, to protect landscape, coastal environment, wetlands, and amenity values. The example was given of ARC's Policy Statement Change 8, which addressed the management of the Auckland region's natural, cultural, and geological heritage and landscape. Controversy with ARC about restrictions on farming practices was eventually resolved, but Federated Farmers considered that territorial authorities would have been better suited to managing the issues:

> The Federation considers that far better decisions in the drafting of district plan provisions would be made if those plans were to be drawn up and decided at the local authority level of governance, rather than at regional authority level. [11059]

12.36 Many submitters qualified their support for local level planning:

> Land use and infrastructure decisions should be made locally by a locally appointed body but there needs to be over-arching guidelines in place to ensure there is a structure and a plan to development that is transparent to the general public … . [10112]

12.37 Similarly, submitters suggested that district plans should use common definitions and terminology prescribed by the regional body. One said,

> My view is that district plan style, layout, chapters and most of the basic rules could be uniform throughout the region. For example Residential 1 Zone could have the same meaning everywhere. Councils could still put their own flavour into it and create special zones e.g. Residential 1A, as character or conditions required. At present it is far too difficult to prepare applications for identical resource consents in the various cities and districts. [1203]

12.38 Some submitters thought that standardisation of plans, mandated by the regional body, could produce improvements and reduce variation across borders better than a single plan. (See more on the single district plan idea below under "Consistency".) Titirangi Ratepayers and Residents Association said,

> The District Plan should remain a local issue. The Waitakere District Plan is only just settling down after many years of development and a "fresh start" is not warranted. To renegotiate and relitigate the current plan would impose considerable chaos on the local community. The recently enacted Waitakere Area Heritage Act 2008 also mandates that the current plan be preserved rather than changed. [10724]

12.39 Some who supported local-level planning said that the ARC was difficult to deal with and took an overly regulatory approach to planning. These people preferred district planning to stay with the (smaller) territorial authorities. One submitter commented that the bigger the organisation, the more complicated the process. Another said that ARC currently had too much influence over land use planning.

12.40 Some of these submitters saw regional council involvement in the planning process as being the source of problems, especially the requirement for separate regional consents:

> We believe that significant streamlining can be achieved by the elimination of Regional Council in such matters as planning, stormwater and earthworks controls. We believe that local authority consent to these is adequate and the additional procedures do not add to the quality of the decisions or the final outcome. [1371]

12.41 A similar concern was put forward in an iwi[35] submission: that a centralised body controlling resource consents may not consult properly with mana whenua[36]. In order to address iwi concerns, it was suggested that the scope of planning instruments should be widened to encompass social, economic, and cultural aspects of development in the light

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35   Tribal grouping.

36   Local Māori with ancestral ties to the land.

of local authority responsibilities for the four well-beings of their communities (i.e. social, economic, environmental, and cultural).

12.42 General reasons for wanting the local councils to retain planning control related to the differences between districts and the local circumstances that needed to be taken into account. For example, one submitter from Great Barrier Island said,

> the majority of the resident population here rely on wood-burning stoves ... It is absolutely imperative for the inhabitants to be able to cut such firewood as is necessary ... The stress on the residents brought about by the Resource Management Act together with the District Plan, which seeks to virtually abolish the right to cut such firewood, is simply intolerable. [699]

12.43 A group of submitters suggested that community boards should deal with resource consents in their areas. Most of these submitters were from the communities of Great Barrier and Waiheke Islands. Using a printed form submission 23 submitters from Waiheke Island called for local control over environmental protection, including the coastal marine area.

12.44 Submitters called for a simpler governance structure that allowed the RMA to operate yet not stifle economic progress that could result in jobs and improved community well-being. There was a general theme amongst submitters that governance arrangements should support the achievement of better environmental outcomes. A small number took the view that in urban areas, human needs and desires should take precedence over nature.

Other regulatory functions

12.45 A total of 581 submitters commented on other areas of council regulation, including building consents, health inspection, animal control, and noise control. Of these, 139 were non-standardised, original submissions. The remainder were pre-formatted submissions sent from Papakura District (324 submissions) and Waiheke Island (95).

12.46 Most submitters in this context referred to building consents. Of the original submissions, 32 suggested that building inspection and control should be done at territorial authority level, 30 were in favour of the regional council doing it, and five were in favour of community boards taking over that responsibility. One submitter suggested that building consents could be handled at regional level with applications able to be made at local offices, suggesting a mix of responsibility for the building control function.

12.47 The Papakura District standard-form submissions called for building consents to be issued locally. The Waiheke Island standard-form submissions called for building and sedimentation controls to be devolved to local level.

12.48 Submitters who called for common building regulations did not always distinguish building controls under the Building Act from those under district plans (hence governed

by the RMA). Despite the uncertainty in some cases about which controls were referred to, the plea for regulatory consistency between councils was clearly made.

12.49 In regard to health inspections, submitters were fairly evenly split in suggesting that health inspections should be done locally, regionally, or with a mixture of regional and local responsibility.

12.50 In regard to animal control, seven submitters suggested local responsibility, three suggested regional responsibility, and one suggested a mix of regional and local.

12.51 In regard to noise control, a few submitters referred to this activity and most were in favour of this function being done locally.

12.52 Papakura District Council advocated regulatory functions such as liquor, gambling, and dogs to remain local so councils could retain discretion about how they used their powers. [10537]

Consistency

12.53 Submitters were clearly polarised about the extent, if at all, that councils should follow consistent practices in their planning and other regulatory functions. Many argued for greater consistency between councils, but there was a strong counter-argument that diversity was more important than consistency. (General submissions about consistency in local governance, including the tension between consistency and diversity, are summarised in Chapter 9, "Consistency and Collaboration".)

12.54 Many submitters called for greater consistency in all regulatory contexts. These included by-laws as well as building regulations and engineering standards. One submitter said,

> a large amount of time and effort was spent by businesses in the Auckland City area who in 2007 objected to the proposed Sign and Billboard Draft Bylaw and only a few months later, similar changes were proposed by the Manukau City Council, that saw businesses in that area incurring more costs to debate the same arguments. [10539]

12.55 Submitters urging consistency often pointed out that there were inefficiencies that resulted from people having to deal with up to seven separate territorial authorities and one regional council in the Auckland region. These submitters predicted that greater uniformity of processes resulting from regional control would improve processing times and assist with compliance with current legislative time frames. Many submitters took the view that it would be more efficient to have a consistent system. The submitters in this group suggested that consistency of by-laws and regulations and building codes would lower business costs and promote overall efficiency of council activities. These submitters predicted that applications and consents would become easier and quicker as the result

of consistent practice. The reduction of duplication and transaction costs was important to improved efficiency. One said,

> It is the variations / the differences between standards required for building and other contractors which has a sad adverse effect on the real AUCKLAND CITY. [11302]

12.56 The submitters who advocated a consistent approach included those who considered that the best way to ensure consistency was to amalgamate councils. (For their arguments about consistency, see Chapter 9. Submissions concerning reorganising local government are summarised in Chapter 22, "Proposals for Modifications to Present System".)

12.57 Those submitters who wanted greater consistency without amalgamating councils tended to focus on the practice of councils in regard to plan making, resource consent, and other consent applications. These included suggestions for publications, applications, plans, and documents to be standardised across Auckland. New Zealand Institute of Surveyors said,

> The general feeling of our members is one of frustration in having to work with so many different systems in a relatively small geographical area. The variations of land form, vegetation, ecology, built environment, land use and population factors across the region do not necessitate the number of different systems that are in place today. These systems include regional plans, district plans, engineering codes, development contributions policies, annual plans, etc. [2226]

12.58 The advantages of a single district plan across the region were urged:

> There should be one planning document for the entire Auckland Region, with harmonised zones and rules that reflect the differing needs of the different local communities. This will ensure consistency and reduce the confusion of many property owners and developers regarding the rules in different parts of the region, particularly those with cross-city holdings and/or projects. [10585]

12.59 An iwi concern was that resource management consent processes and the operation of district plans place heavy demands on iwi Māori, and the submitter called for a single regulatory consent process or one set of plans for the whole region. [11276]

12.60 One of the reasons commonly given was the unfairness of different rules and regulations for different parts of Auckland:

> It is not reasonable to have differing regulations, or differing interpretations of regulations within the Auckland Regional Boundary. … Competitive developments and activities are treated differently, usually giving a benefit to one over the other … . [10838]

12.61 However proponents of diversity had contrary opinions:

> a single planning model cannot hope to meet the differing needs of different communities in different areas. … Many planning problems are the result of the

Resource Management Act, not necessarily governance problems in Greater Auckland. [10430]

12.62   Others opposed the idea of a single district plan covering the region for practical reasons. One commented that the Franklin District Plan was already large enough, containing rules particular to various parts of the district that would need to be retained. This submitter predicted that a combined plan would be "huge and no doubt expensive". [10391] Similarly, Forum for Auckland Sustainable Transport (FAST) said,

> FAST has some sympathy with business concerns about different councils having different approaches to their district plans, and the costs this can result for business and consumers. FAST considers one district plan for the region would be very large and unwieldy, given the length of the seven district plans, and the thousands of submissions received on them. It would be a nightmare of a process. [10493]

12.63   Devonport Heritage also opposed the single plan:

> The North Shore City Council's heritage rules have evolved over a longer period of time than anywhere in the country, and are generally working well. The last thing we want is to have these hard-won heritage rules watered-down or lost in a regional District Plan. [11080]

12.64   Some submitters who did not wish to see a single district plan across the region called for best practice guidelines to be created by the regional body or by Government, for councils to follow. The suggestion of a national body issuing building and resource consents is noted earlier in this chapter. Other suggestions were that a code of practice could be produced by Local Government New Zealand or by Standards New Zealand. In relation to building consents, one submitter called for more consistent building consent and inspection processes, including standardised processes and requirements and shared agreed solutions, thereby simplifying transaction costs to the residential building industry.

12.65   Similarly, there were calls for a regional framework to facilitate consistent practices and decision making on resource consents. One said that consistent practice could still allow local preferences. Submitters suggested that regional plans should create a tool box to be used by local-level zoning and site development criteria. Getting rid of repetitive, confusing, and contradictory provisions of district plan documents was called for. Submitters said that a number of issues have regional commonality – urban design standards, engineering standards, water quality, and energy supply and use, for example. There were some services and facilities that needed to be of the same standard across the region (e.g. water quality), and these should be consistent.

12.66   New Zealand Institute of Surveyors called for all consents to be obtained at one level, and for regional control of district plans to ensure uniform district plan style, layout, chapters, definitions, basic rules, and interpretation. [2226]

12.67   Others advocated consistent enforcement of tree protection rules, urban design, landscaping, and traffic management requirements. These were said to add time and cost to applications and there was no need for distinctions between territorial authorities.

12.68 The argument presented by some proponents of consistency about the costs to the building industry of differing controls was addressed by one, possibly ironic, submitter who favoured variation: "It keeps it interesting for trades people to find out and apply – too much uniformity results in a malaise." [855]

12.69 Submitters with a tangata whenua[37] perspective mainly advocated for a consistent, rather than diverse, approach by councils. A single regulatory consent process or one set of plans for the region to be applied across the entire region was called for by one Māori submitter. This submitter said that Māori issues were currently dealt with in different ways by the eight Auckland councils. [11276] Others echoed this position. They said that local authorities currently had an inconsistent and ad hoc approach to interactions with tangata whenua, and that tangata whenua representation at all levels should be provided to ensure consistency.

12.70 One submitter called for consistency, not between councils but within councils between their different functions. This submitter advocated coordination of decision-making processes on natural resource management with public land administration, and community and economic well-being.

12.71 There was a theme amongst some submitters that consistency is required not so much in the written policies of councils as in the interpretation, which can vary between individual staff. One said,

> This problem is even worse when the advice and opinions of one officer is accepted, acted on, and where this requires further information, on returning the application and dealing with a different officer the rules can change in an instant and result in yet more delays, frustration and costs. A single-city set of rules would not prevent this far more annoying problem of interpretation than the inconsistencies between councils that have been raised. [10603]

12.72 There was a strong call for consistent practices and standards across council boundaries, especially for infrastructure services, planning, and building. Submitters advocated common processes for applications for resource consent and building consents and common standards for land development and network services. A uniform reporting system was called for by one submitter. Training for councillors and council employees to facilitate consistent practices and decision making were called for by several submitters. Some submitters felt that staff were not necessarily as well trained within some councils as others. Strengthening of networks between councils was regarded as important to improve staff performance.

12.73 A number of submitters suggested consistency to the extent of common minimum standards, which councils might exceed where they wished. The minimum standards could be imposed either nationally or regionally. These submitters stopped short of requesting a common district plan for the entire region. A number of submitters called for vertical integration, which meant central government producing clear guidelines, and the

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37   People of the land, indigenous people.

regional council ensuring that they were followed by local councils. Consistent planning terminology and definitions were advocated by several submitters.

12.74 One council submission suggested applying the 80/20 rule: around 80% of rules and processes should be the same across the region, with allowance for around 20% variation to reflect local circumstances. [10315]

12.75 In regard to other regulatory functions, there were similar calls for a regional process to set community outcome indicators to be adopted by each council. This was predicted to produce "levelling up" rather than an acceptance of the lowest common denominator. Common regulations and processes for by-laws, food premises, dog control, building codes, and heritage areas were called for. Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) said,

> Food premises grading is an area where ARPHS would like to see consistency across the region. At present, an A-grade premise in one council may only be a B-grade in another council. This makes it difficult for the public to make an informed decision about where to purchase their food. ARPHS believes there is merit in having a regional standards framework so that for food safety and other issues where there is not a pre-existing national framework, residents and stakeholders can more easily compare performance. [11258]

Strategic policy and planning

12.76 Over 300 submitters made comments on strategic planning and policy development functions of councils. New Zealand Council for Infrastructure Development offered this overview:

> A review of strategic and operational planning across each of the councils in the Auckland region shows a litany of best laid plans sitting on shelves. Experience shows that even with the best will in the world, governance and funding structures are not enabling delivery of the agreed vision. While progress is being made, those that are achieving results must work around structures which inhibit rather than enable the outcomes that have been collectively agreed as priorities for the region. [11259]

12.77 There were a variety of views as to what constituted strategic planning. Many spoke generally about strategic planning and policy without naming particular functions or activity areas. Those who did name specific functions included some or all of the following:

- economic transformation
- transport, broadband, water
- climate change, discharge of contaminants, waste
- land use planning, growth management

- tourism, major events

- regional parks and facilities

- art and culture, major sports and recreational facilities.

12.78   A clear majority of submitters thought that a regional agency should be responsible for high-level strategic planning and policy development. Reasons given included that a regional agency would have the ability to derive economies of scale, achieve regional consistency, eliminate duplication of services, take a wide regional view, ensure continuity in planning projects, and integrate economic development, infrastructure, and land use. Other reasons were that a regional agency could align infrastructure investment with desired policy directions, and would deal with central government better than territorial authorities.

12.79   Some submitters thought that a major constraint to good regional government at present is the focus on short-term goals, particularly in relation to low rates. This had led to poor long-term decision making and reluctance to invest in critical infrastructure. These submitters advocated a stronger regional policy-making body to overcome these disadvantages.

12.80   A number of submitters advocated the adoption of a single regional spatial plan or regional strategy to control urban sprawl. Auckland City Council wanted to see a proposed new Greater Auckland Council (GAC) produce a regional spatial plan that would set out a 30-year strategy and vision for the region. Under this scenario, area committees would develop 10-year area plans, and neighbourhood boards would work with them to create 3- to 5-year plans for each ward. The GAC would also be responsible for a 10-year prioritised investment programme for capital and operational expenditure. [11181]

12.81   One submitter said that much of the land use development taking place outside the immediate boundaries of the Auckland region was driven by, and should be integrated with, developments inside the regional boundary. Submitters called for governance arrangements to ensure alignment of function and service. Transit's submission supported the creation of a regional growth strategy within a robust framework, the implementation of which would be binding across the region. [1545]

12.82   A regional councillor wrote of the "transport-centred culture at the heart of the region's planning", and called for the Regional Land Transport Strategy to be expanded to include regional land use, urban design, and water and energy planning; thus it would become a "Regional Development Strategy". [10098]

12.83   The need for implementation for the Regional Growth Strategy was commented on by New Zealand Council for Infrastructure Development:

> The strategic use of infrastructure investment to promote compact development has been limited by the lack of an effective mechanism to coordinate the wide range of providers and funders. … there is a critical need for better alignment of policy, funding and an urgent need to accelerate implementation across councils and with central government. [11259]

12.84 The metropolitan urban limit with a green belt surrounding the city was seen as a critical governance issue by a few submitters. Many wanted this to be a function of the regional body, but for one submitter, it was one of the determinants of the next form of local government:

> Any consideration of the form of governance should surely take account of the ongoing debate between those who claim metropolitan urban limits directly cause excessive home ownership prices, on one hand, and those who assert that our propensity to regard Auckland's surrounding rural belt as simply, 'urban development about to happen' is an unsustainable, wasteful use of finite resources. …
>
> …
>
> Addressing this aspect of governance is of huge importance in a country of falling industrial indicators and where the bulk of overseas trade is in the agricultural area
>
> … even if Auckland seems yet to have not received that message! [10119]

12.85 There were comments about continued development outside the metropolitan urban limit, which undermined public transport investment. A role for central government was seen in coordinating implementation. Transit suggested that national and regional transport strategies needed to be developed to support growth strategies dealing with future land use and economic development. If this process did not happen, investment in infrastructure would guide where land use development took place. [1545]

12.86 Submitters who argued for territorial authorities to be responsible for strategic planning and policy development emphasised the local political content of many policy decisions. One said, "all decisions about land use and development must be made locally, because land use drives the nature, shape and character of our local communities." [10079]

12.87 Some submitters went further and suggested that community boards should have a greater role in matters of strategic and long-term planning. A large number of submitters from Waiheke Island argued for strategic and long-term planning being at community level.

12.88 Some submitters argued for a mix of local and regional councils being involved in strategic planning. EMA proposed a new two-tier structure in which decisions on regulation, planning, and building consents, including by-laws, environment, waste, civil defence, and animal policy, should be a shared responsibility, with the final determination left to the proposed regional GAC. [10813] Other submitters argued for overall policy directions to be set by the regional council with implementation at local level. Others emphasised the need for a holistic approach to policy making. One suggested that all levels of governance and staff and the community should be involved in policy development. Others said that large infrastructure development should not have to negotiate two levels of decision making.

12.89 A number of new institutions were suggested for strategic planning and policy development. A regional urban development authority was recommended to be responsible for managing the implementation of a regional development strategy. Other specialised agencies were suggested, including a regional growth forum, a chief

executives forum, and an enhanced ARC. Submitters felt that there should be one overall strategic development authority that had a coordinated vision and economic development direction that drove coordinated infrastructure and strategic planning. In its submission, Ontrack supported an Auckland regional planning entity with a formal relationship with national network operators. [11253]

12.90   Rather than having a narrow focus on transport issues alone, a submission from a councillor advocated using the "Perth-style Master Plan" approach to planning transport and infrastructure projects, which takes into account all planning modalities, such as land use and economic development ramifications around transport routes. This wider perspective is efficient and effective when "all details of all parts of the project [are] firmly agreed in advance of commencement, budget lines [are] in place, and dates for delivery committed to by all parties." [10098]

12.91   A common theme was that there should be a greater degree of mandatory policy that bound the various other agencies. One submitter said that governance in Auckland had suffered so far because the primary strategies in the region were non-binding, making it difficult for all branches of governance to act with one voice. [630]

12.92   One submitter suggested,

> in essence the problem is one of strong local authorities, a relatively weak regional council, poor community representation and engagement, and the disconnected role of central government in funding and investment. [10897]

This submitter also said that local authorities were required to develop strategies and plans within a welter of overlapping legislation. Legislative reform was called for.

12.93   A few submitters suggested a wider mandate for local government, apart from the traditional functions. New functions suggested to be undertaken by local government, at least at the level of policy setting, included tertiary education, animal stock management, public health, and strategies for the elderly. Another submitter suggested that there should be a Pacific strategy to address key Pacific issues.

Long-term council community plans

12.94   A number of submitters commented on the process for making long-term council community plans (LTCCPs), and in particular, the formulation of community outcomes. The theme of these submissions was that there was little value and much duplication in the current system of seven local authorities and one regional authority all identifying community outcomes separately, and using different processes.

12.95   One submitter noted that strategic plans formulated at the regional level, even when they had been agreed or endorsed by territorial authorities, were more or less systematically ignored when those councils developed their LTCCPs. This submitter suggested that there was a need to ensure that elected representatives were participants in the strategic planning and decision-making processes.

12.96 One submitter suggested that there should be a single regional LTCCP, complemented by local community plans. Another suggested that LTCCPs could be reduced to a targets-type document only. Too much emphasis was placed at present on the contents of the LTCCP, especially the 3- to 10-year forecasts.

12.97 There were some suggestions that LTCCPs should focus more strongly on outcomes and associated performance indicators, against which local government would report, and be monitored. This could be based to include specific realistic targets, and an assessment of the extent to which the targets had been successfully achieved. There was one suggestion that Auckland needed a 100-year vision, with 10-year goals and associated targets.

13. Environment

13.1 Although the *Call for Submissions* document did not pose specific questions about the environment, many submitters approached the question of local governance by referring to the importance of environmental concerns and values in developing a world-class city, or to the beauty of the natural features and landscapes of Auckland.

Natural features

13.2 A number of submitters referred to specific natural features of the Auckland region including volcanic cones, harbours and waterways, the Waitakere Ranges, and the Hauraki Gulf. Parks and reserves, built form, urban design, and heritage were other subjects referred to in submissions with a generally environmental theme. There are overlaps between submissions on these themes, and some submissions on land development, urban sprawl, and the environment, which were summarised in Chapter 12, "Planning and Regulatory Functions".

13.3 Submitters said that the Waitakere Ranges, the Auckland volcanic field, the Hauraki Gulf and the Manukau Harbour were environmental icons that gave Auckland its unique identity, and they should be recognised and protected in any governance reorganisation. Some thought that current city councils were not up to the task of protecting this natural heritage or developing its natural features:

> One mark of a great city is the distinctiveness of its iconic structures. For Auckland this lies in its geographic setting between two great harbours, and set among its volcanic cones. This is seen to great effect from the summit of Mount Eden … Instead it celebrates a gambling casino as the most distinctive element in that skyline. That of itself underlines the priorities of successive Auckland City administrations. [10089]

13.4 The need for environmental awareness and sustainability was a consistent theme in submissions. It was seen as crucial for a liveable city, and for governance issues:

> Cities do not exist outside nature and the recommendations from the 2003 World Park Congress [International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)] are essential to consider in the governance of Auckland. [10876]

Volcanic cones

13.5 Volcanic cones were prized as iconic natural assets of the region. Submitters said that there was currently no uniform level for protection for volcanic cones across all territorial authorities, and recommended that the volcanic cones, in particular, might be better managed by larger units of local government. A common proposal was for the

volcanic field to be managed under one agency, and that tourism and other uses on that land be carefully monitored. One submitter commented,

> Maungawhau is a heritage site of international significance yet we see uncontrolled tourism and other use, cases of private encroachment, erosion, scheduled weeds covering the site and a confused management and governance structure that is not dealing with implementing the management plan ... The Waitakere Ranges and Hauraki Gulf now have their unique legislation and decision-making process with an active involved community. On the other hand, the volcanic field of greater Auckland is divided under many agencies and legislation. The volcanic field and landscape urgently need an acquisition plan to ensure stabilisation of existing cones as well as acquisition of significant volcanic landscapes to benefit the community. The volcanic cones need to be in one agency with elected officials and staff with the expertise and skills to work with the community to manage these heritage sites. [10876]

13.6   One submitter wanted a review of the local body management of volcanic cones, given that the cones are in the process of consideration for nomination as a World Heritage site under the Unesco convention:[38]

> There is some tension between such potential international status and local management, as the latter tends to concentrate more on local recreational utilisation. [1369]

13.7   Specific suggestions for management of the volcanic cones included management by the regional council, and, under the Treaty of Waitangi, co-management agreements for cones such as Maungawhau with the relevant iwi[39]. The Friends of Maungawhau group suggested establishing a region-wide park ranger or kaitiaki[40] service, along with citizens and volunteers, to manage Maungawhau, volcanic cones, regional parks, and other significant parks. [10876]

Harbours and waterways

13.8   The beautiful harbours of Waitemata and Manukau also stirred strong feelings of protection amongst submitters. "The Waitemata is ... the jewel in Auckland's crown." [10496] There were repeated recommendations that these harbours also be managed at a regional level, although one submitter thought that a single South Auckland-focused council of the areas that border the Manukau Habour would have a better stewardship/ caretaker role.

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38   The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage was adopted by Unesco in 1972. It seeks to encourage the identification, protection, and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity.

39   Tribal grouping.

40   Guardian.

13.9   For one submitter the consistent management of the Manukau Harbour was the critical issue for local governance:

> There are issues of environment, heritage, recreation, transportation, land use and economic development … a Greater Auckland Authority that had responsibility for the above would be our recommendation. [10359]

13.10   Another submitter believed Manukau Harbour, in particular, should be more of a feature because it welcomes visitors coming from the airport:

> At present visitors' first view of the Manukau Harbour as they cross Mangere Bridge is of hideous power pylons and industrial sites – hardly conducive with New Zealand's "clean green" image. More of an effort should be made to preserve and beautify this once magnificent harbour. [10496]

13.11   There were similar calls for greater protection and care of the Āwhitu Peninsula. One submitter wanted strengthened community boards, so that there would be stronger voices representing its interest in council structures. A member of the Awhitu Peninsula Landcare Group called for one Auckland-wide regional authority with responsibility for the Manukau Harbour and Āwhitu Peninsula, with mandatory input from local Māori:

> We think there should be full consultation with the 12–15 tribes around the region, and they should determine their own form of governance for decisions on environment and heritage (the rich heritage of this Peninsula is poorly protected at present – except for Ngaati Te Ata and the local historical society, with support from ARC). [10498]

13.12   In regard to the Hauraki Gulf, submitters recommended that the gulf should be given special heritage status. Special planning for sustainability, heritage, infrastructure, and marine protection, as well as tourism, was required for the gulf. Dozens of the standardised submissions from Waiheke Island mentioned the Hauraki Gulf:

> the Gulf Islands have special ecological and environmental values that need to be properly protected and provided for. There must be recognition of the regional and national importance of the Hauraki Gulf and the final decision must provide for the holistic and integrated management of the Gulf. [1441]

13.13   One submitter said that heritage areas lost their essential character if they were urbanised, and the charm of the gulf islands was their difference from the rest of the city. Waiheke Island Sustainable Development Group advocated that the governance of the Hauraki Gulf within the Auckland Region be ascribed to a separate governance structure that recognised the pristine worth of the gulf, and was more aligned to environmental management, conservation priorities, and integrated water management protocols. [604]

Parks and reserves

13.14   Nearly 400 submitters made submissions about governance of parks and reserves. The majority favoured continuation of regional parks under the control of a regional agency, with local parks under territorial authority management. Small numbers of submitters favoured all parks being managed by either the regional or the territorial authorities.

13.15   Those who favoured all regional and local parks being run by the regional council said that this would eliminate duplication of services, and produce cost reductions, a regional view on decision making, and consistency in planning and policy. Other reasons given for regional control of all parks included consistent management, economies of scale, sharing of expertise and resource between parks, continued public access and ownership, and fairness of funding. One submitter expected that regional management would ensure sustainable development of the parks.

13.16   One submitter wanted all Auckland City parks to be the responsibility of the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) because they said Auckland City Council had been neglectful, especially in Albert Park.

13.17   Governance arrangements for regional parks were not discussed by most submitters. A number of submitters commented that the ARC was currently doing a good job of managing regional parks and reserves. A few submitters suggested that a specialist body was needed to manage parks, and several proposed an autonomous regional organisation that might have other functions as well, such as management of water quality, coastal environment, and natural and cultural heritage. Other suggestions for governance were that there should be a management unit run under contract by private companies, or an executive and independent board reporting to the Mayoral Forum, or that park administration could be done by a council-controlled organisation of the regional council. Ngāti Whātua was concerned that there was an assumed right of regulatory management and decision making over reserves, without including mana whenua[41] in such decisions.

13.18   Submitters who argued for local control of parks generally thought the advantage of this was to localise both the costs and benefits of the parks. The majority seemed to believe that this would be more efficient than duplicating the provision of parks on a regional and local basis. One submitter said that local management was appropriate because 90% of people who utilised parks and reserves, including regional parks, were local people. One argued that local community decisions in Waitakere areas of parkland were appropriate; for example, in protection of trees and native forest areas and control of subdivision. One submitter said that regional parks would no longer be able to function on a regional basis with the demise of private transport caused by peak oil.

13.19   Those submitters who argued for local control proposed that parks should be run either by existing local councils or by community boards. Over 100 submitters from Waiheke Island advocated local control over reserves on the island.

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41   Local Māori with ancestral ties to the land.

13.20   The majority of submitters who expressed a preference for a particular governance arrangement argued for a mix of regional parks administered by the regional body and local parks administered locally. They did not provide detailed arguments for this preference, possibly because they were supporting the status quo. One supporting a regional/local mix said,

> Regional Parks have been always accepted, and acclaimed, as a truly worthwhile regional body responsibility. I expect there will be little contention that this should be changed. [10603]

13.21   One submitter saw a need for a "one park strategy for Auckland region, not the multitude of open space and park plans now being seen in the various councils of greater Auckland, regional council and Department of Conservation". The submitter pointed out that despite a regional policy, there had been no follow-through:

> ROSS [Regional Open Space Strategy] under the Regional Growth Forum was created to develop a regional approach to all types of public parks and "open space", but its lack of success is illustrated by having no officer or staff full time working on it. The situation has been dominated by each council producing their own Strategy. [10876]

This submitter called for the formation of a separate trust or commission with a clear strategy. There was, however, still a role for community boards to deal with local parks, sports fields, and playgrounds.

13.22   Several submitters suggested adding new areas on to the existing regional parks network. These included volcanic cones, Department of Conservation parks in the Auckland region, the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park, natural reserves, waterways and foreshores, and green belts.

13.23   Ngāti Pāoa supported the targeted acquisition of significant sites for the region and Māori, such as the Pūkaki Lagoon and explosion crater, and retention of the Otuataua stonefields in Manukau. They also said they wanted to "explore options for co-management, ownership and/or control of assets through joint ventures or strategic partnerships." [11276]

13.24   The Cornwall Park Trust Board, a privately owned charitable trust which administers Cornwall Park freely for the public, expressed concern about the degree of intervention in the operation of private parks by councils, saying the current level of regulatory control under the Resource Management Act (RMA) seemed unnecessary and inefficient:

> The extent to which the Board is required to obtain regulatory approval and is subject to regulatory oversight and supervision in day to day matters such as the trimming of trees, configuration of footpaths, minor earthworks, alterations to buildings and farming and stock operations is a source of some frustration to the Board in its management role. ... The Board has considerable management, arboricultural, planning and other expertise available to it from its staff and other resources, and ... is more than capable of administering and developing the park in accordance with Sir John Logan Campbell's wishes, the purposes of the Resource Management Act and the principles of recreation reserve management. [10558]

13.25   Two submitters suggested that regional parks should be taken over by central government. The reason for this was that they were regarded as national assets and should be funded by central government and operated by the Department of Conservation. One submitter, supporting this, said that at present there was a local burden in regional parks:

> Regional Parks are desirable BUT they are NATIONAL ASSETS which are principally used as recreational playgrounds for tourists and residents of the greater Auckland Region being of little use to Rodney Ratepayers. As National Parks they should be funded by Central Government and operated by DOC as is done elsewhere throughout NZ. Many thousands of hectares of these are in Rodney and were formerly generating rates. Under the ARC, they do not! To our detriment the ARC expects Rodney ratepayers to fund roading access, tar-sealed, to these parks. This is a big ask when nearly half of Rodney's rural roads are unsealed. (The Rates Inquiry recognized this also and made recommendations). [33]

Heritage

13.26   Submitters who mentioned heritage felt passionately about it. Heritage referred to both natural and cultural heritage, both the geography and built form of the region, as well as its historical and tribal connections. One submitter noted that when cultural heritage is protected, cultural identity is protected. It was suggested that the heritage sector needed recognition as being a crucial part of a "world-class city".

> We believe that it is vital that at the heart of governance should be local processes that support, enable, and make the most of Auckland's heritage buildings and put them at the centre of the regeneration agenda. Achieving an historic environment that is well-nurtured, well-understood, and well looked after, should be a vital part of the Commission's agenda for governance reform. We want to see governance arrangements that ensure Auckland understands, values, cares for, and enjoys its heritage. [11010]

13.27   Many submitters found present heritage policies inadequate and muddled, and advocated more robust and comprehensive measures to protect the region's heritage:

> Rules for calculating heritage are confused, inconsistent and to a large extent outside any public gaze. Local authorities within New Zealand lag well behind their counterparts overseas, particularly Melbourne and Sydney. Where are the local heritage overlays, precincts and streets? Why are there almost no listed heritage homes in the higher density zones, in areas such as Remuera and Epsom, where some of Auckland's finest homes are to be found? Why is it that even today, historic Maori Stonefields and localities, which should be considered Waahi Tapu[42], are at risk of subdivision and commercial development? [1473]

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42   Sacred place; sites of particular historical or spiritual significance, such as burial grounds, historic marae sites.

13.28   Submitters were divided on whether heritage governance belonged with regional or local bodies. It was noted that although each local authority had authority for historic heritage management under the RMA, they all had different regulations for heritage activities and controls. One submitter made the point that while other issues required consistency, heritage was defined by locality. However, a few other submitters believed the opposite: that heritage planning controls needed to be consistent across the region. The Civic Trust was concerned about the minimalist approach of many local councils and advocated that "a large regional authority is better able to secure regional heritage."[1473]

13.29   The New Zealand Archaeological Association commended both the ARC and Auckland City for their performance in historic heritage in their area, but noted the wide range in funding and resources available to other local councils:

> The disparity in attention to historic heritage between well-resourced and poorly resourced councils is considerable. Having more resource available to the management of the present areas of Rodney and Franklin Districts would greatly enhance outcomes for historic heritage for the region. [1369]

13.30   In terms of a regional overview, some submitters wanted a regional council like the ARC to oversee areas such as water and air quality, land and coastal management, environmental protection, natural heritage conservation, and biodiversity, so that there could be coordination across all such issues. A Regional Heritage Strategy was proposed to provide more heritage protection across the region, as was an executive and independent Heritage Board, which would report to the Mayoral Forum, or a Regional Heritage and Parks agency. Another suggestion was that all councils should draft a Historic Heritage Cultural Plan to protect taonga[43] and significant sites.

13.31   Others thought environmental and heritage matters should be managed locally. Almost all wanted a strict heritage policy. One idea was for specialised environmental and heritage planning teams to be established for the region, which would encourage different parts of the city to develop their own special character. [1149]

13.32   Natural heritage assets were seen by submitters as including the Auckland volcanic field, the Hauraki Gulf, the Manukau Harbour, and the Waitakere Ranges. There was a call for recognition of special regions, such as the Waitakere Ranges Heritage Area, which has since been recognised in law. As mentioned earlier, a few submitters also saw potential for the volcanic landscape of Auckland to have World Heritage status. [10876]

13.33   One submitter believed the charters of the International Council on Monuments and Sites had implications in the governance of Auckland; for instance, the Stockholm Declaration, which outlines the main principles of heritage and human rights.

13.34   In terms of other heritage assets, submitters mentioned areas such as Devonport and historic and colonial buildings, as well as the zoo, museum, and stadia, which are utilised by all residents of the region and visitors. The Ministry for Culture and Heritage noted the funding for some cultural institutions (such as the Auckland War Memorial

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43   Precious assets, valued resources.

Museum and the Museum of Transport and Technology) is enshrined in local legislation. Some submitters referred to this as a successful model, and suggested this example be followed for other institutions, which often struggle for funding. The Archaeological Association requested that the Commission not disturb the status quo arrangements regarding the museum in any governance changes:

> It would in our view be a great mistake to draw the Museum governance entirely from within local Government, break the 'interested community' connection or in particular the wider iwi relationship. [1369]

13.35   The Archaeological Association also noted that there was some overlap between the roles of local government and central government in managing historic heritage, particularly through the Historic Places Trust. The association argued that despite this duplication, the role of the Historic Places Trust was vital and should not be changed by the Commission:

> In our view having some organisation with a national view is very important. A single organisation looking at the region's historic heritage may well become separated from knowing what is of national importance. [1369]

13.36   In terms of present heritage governance, one submitter said that council resource consent staff usually will address only the "hard planning content" and ignore the environmental and heritage chapters, objectives, and policies, which often results in unsustainable urban growth decisions.

13.37   There was a general call for more coordination and funding for heritage activities. One submitter wanted less reliance on volunteer organisations for this important work:

> The burden of protecting … our heritage, albeit a labour of love, has fallen largely on volunteer groups and organisations. [1558]

13.38   One submitter suggested that with community boards of four people, there could be four other appointed experts, for instance in heritage and other specialities.

13.39   However, a few submitters questioned whether councils should be involved in matters such as culture and heritage. One said,

> there are decisions made by local authorities that, from a business point of view, are clearly imprudent and would not occur in the business world if they could not be afforded. I speak of such things as free concerts…heritage and art; as an example of expenditure that councils currently support, and hide behind, by blaming central government that they are obliged to (reluctantly) take on board. … I believe local government needs to become stronger in its ability to stand up against central government demands on local government, by local government being able to use the rules of 'business competency' as a defence. [10603]

Architecture and urban design

13.40 The urban design aspect of our environment was mentioned by many submitters, usually lamenting the present state of Auckland's architecture and asking for more attention to be paid to aesthetic aspects of the city.

- Normally a great city is defined by its buildings. This is not the case in Auckland which has no distinctive urban landscape of artistically creative buildings ... its public architecture is by and large a public disgrace. It reached its worst in the authorizing of the Sky Tower. It is a building that serves no purpose in furthering the commercial life of the city or enhancing its skyline ... Decisions made in Auckland City administration have seen the redevelopment of major city areas as incipient slums because of lax administration, refusal to commit to developing a world-class modern city, collusion with unprincipled developers and lack of vision ... The Auckland City Council has demonstrated that it has no abiding commitment to creating a stylish modern city ... Botany Downs is a disgrace. Its town centre has managed to cut corners wherever possible to save space so that it is not a stimulating townscape. ... The concentrations of housing developments [in Manukau City] have not made for attractive or stimulating environments. ... North Shore City has a skyline which speaks volumes of a failure to consider the architectural impact of the decisions being reached. ... The failures in architectural imagination in the Auckland region have been major. [10089]

- I wish that those who govern local areas listened to people in terms of a natural human wish to live in an attractive environment and to feel safe. Many people do not. They feel at the mercy of outside interests that drive a materialistic and money orientated view of life... . [10143]

Submitters wanted the city councils to be committed to an inclusive vision of how the city environment influences the development of civic awareness and pride, which required the willingness to commit funds to town planning and development.

13.41 There was an impassioned plea from a few submitters to preserve some of the old architecture and heritage buildings, including colonial houses in suburbs such as Ponsonby.

- Last year I was taking a visitor around central Auckland and Queen St was just a visual disaster. I ... would make a plea that some of the older and very beautiful buildings that give Auckland character be protected. People who buy these houses would then know that there was little they could do to them, that they would not be allowed to remove them and thought would be given to Auckland's heritage. This then builds community with character and gives a sense of belonging in a particular environment." [10143]

- We are quite unsatisfied with the governance of the centre of AK which has led to the slow death of the centre of Auckland in terms of design standards of structures etc, the almost complete destruction of the Centre's heritage [around the once charming Queen Street etc] historic and natural qualities. ... The Auckland City Council's

absurd and destructive shaping of the inner city for the motor car instead of for public transport, and pedestrians. The fact the centre of the city is not a 'peoples' place is, I believe, a consequence of the governance of [Auckland City Council]. [10615]

- New Zealanders travel abroad to seek out historic architecture and culture and yet in our own backyard, our local councillors are signing off on applications from property developers to demolish heritage buildings. We should be encouraging preservation rather than allowing contemporary replacements – often visual monstrosities – which in many instances offer little aesthetic value. [10496]

13.42 The New Zealand Institute of Architects saw urban design as critical in council decision making. The institute wanted there to be a tighter grouping of urban design professionals with stronger leadership, a higher profile, opportunities to apply lessons learned, and a coordinated vision across the region. [650]

13.43 Waitakere City Council proposed that a new regional entity enter into partnership with central government to develop an urban development authority, and agree on areas for priority development. [11121]

Environmental governance

13.44 Submitters who referred to the environment in their suggestions for governance of the region made a variety of points. A starting point for many was that the governance structure should include integration of sustainable development principles or at least a high degree of environmental concern. Some submitters referred to the purpose of the Local Government Act 2002 as they expanded into the other "well-beings", saying,

> Any regional structures should be economically, socially, culturally and environmentally sustainable and should make decisions that are consistent with these four well beings. [10815]

13.45 Many submitters were happy for the regional council to continue with its existing environmental protection role, and to acquire a greater role. Some thought that the ARC had an important balancing function with the territorial authorities by acting as an environmental champion. Some called for enhanced powers for the ARC to direct and limit growth, and to supervise the environmental protection activities of territorial authorities. Suggestions included amending the powers of the regional council to take over all environmental and planning functions, with or without the other development and infrastructure responsibilities of the council. Some argued for a dedicated agency to protect the environment, as discussed below.

13.46 A number of submitters argued for territorial authorities to remain involved in environmental management. One submitter said that Waitakere City was an eco-city that had implemented sustainable development as a key part of its city vision and philosophy. It had a viable, working, sustainable model of management that other cities should emulate.

13.47 In contrast, Waiheke Island Sustainable Development Group argued against the involvement of territorial authorities in environmental protection, saying,

> governance cultures supporting the [Auckland City Council] are unlikely to ever willingly prioritise environmental management issues and integrated waters management issues. [604]

13.48 A number of submitters proposed that a regional environmental agency be created, separate from the current ARC. Several suggested that this should be an environmental protection agency, as was established in Australia and the United States. Submitters saw such an agency as a more efficient means for delivering sustainable natural resource management, arguing that the role of regulator did not sit easily with the ARC. The agency would be under central government jurisdiction (or an appointed board with senior staff from local authorities, not politicians) and would unify the consenting, compliance, and enforcement processes into one nationally regulated body. All consents would be issued by the environmental protection agency with regard to regional policies and plans, applying the same service and national guidelines in each case.

13.49 One iwi submission quoted the Commission's acknowledgment that "the protection of the mauri[44] of natural and physical resources is of particular importance to Maori", and expressed concern about the pressure that development is putting on the environment. Ngati Whatua noted as a matter of concern the assumed right of decision making by councils over reserves, coastlines, and seabeds, without consultation and inclusion of mana whenua and acknowledgment of their partnership role under the Treaty of Waitangi, or of their kaitiakitanga[45] role as mana whenua.

13.50 The Green Party argued that there should be a strategic plan for sustainability, rather than restructuring:

> We believe that restructuring is the wrong solution because it will not address the underlying issues. In all likelihood a restructuring will be a costly and time-consuming exercise that diverts attention and resources from the environmental, economic and social issues that are much more urgent. [10897]

13.51 Other submitters argued for a monitoring agency and an environmental ombudsman to be appointed to safeguard the environment.

13.52 Some submitters referred to the rural environment as being different from the urban environment and requiring its own governance institutions. A few stated that the rural environment is more suited to a rural council.

13.53 A number of submitters urged that more decision-making powers should be given to community boards, particularly in terms of environmental protection, community well-being, and strategic and long-term planning.

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44   Essential life force.

45   Guardianship; the responsibility for caretaking.

14. Social Services and Community Development

14.1   Over 220 submitters commented explicitly on the provision of services related to promoting social well-being. This included statutory obligations and non-statutory activities. Submitters addressed both specific service areas (such as housing, public health, and education) and the related council processes.

14.2   This chapter summarises general comments on these issues. It looks first at general matters of social well-being, equity and equality, local responsibility, and regional responsibility. It then deals with certain specific issues: housing, education, public health, migrants, and elderly care. Submissions on cultural and recreational amenities are addressed in Chapter 19, and those on civil defence emergency management are addressed in Chapter 20.

Social well-being

14.3   By comparison with the volume of submissions on other council functions, a very small proportion of submitters focused on the area of social well-being. Of those who commented, many identified their desire to see strong, healthy, and safe communities with a new governance structure that would support improved outcomes in this area. A number of submitters felt that improving the quality of life is indeed the raison d'etre for local government, with one submitter commenting, "<u>A city is a machine for the creation of human betterment, not an eco-zoo</u>." [11303, author's emphasis] Others identified improved social well-being as an important facet of Auckland becoming a "successful world-class city". (See also Chapters 2, "Future Auckland", and 3, "Values, Principles, and Characteristics of Local Government".)

14.4   Several submitters expressed their concerns about poor social outcomes across Auckland, often highlighting a range of inequalities. They pointed to the burden that this placed on Auckland, and the constraints it placed on Auckland's development. (See also the following section.) The organisation Champions for Auckland commented,

> All of Auckland is carrying an increasing cost of community dysfunction and poverty as it flows through to the cost of health, social housing, social correction and support services. [10964]

14.5   Overall, social well-being appears to be an area of concern for submitters, and there was a desire for local government to be more involved and proactive. Ideas varied, however, about how, at what level, and which service areas should be involved. Champions of Auckland commented on existing approaches, describing these as "individual silo-based planning, funding and delivery" by councils who had quite "different policies and approaches to social service delivery and uncertainty around priorities and funding." This resulted in "inconsistent outcomes on … issues such as housing, education, poverty, and the like." [10964]

14.6 There was widespread recognition of the diversity of Auckland communities and their needs, and the requirement for social services to be appropriate and responsive to these needs. One submitter sought the following outcome for the new local government structure:

> Greater social cohesion: greater participation in tertiary education, reduced discrimination particularly in employment, no ghettos, positive framework for community participation and service provision. Reduced violence and crime, and improved levels of personal safety … . [10436]

14.7 Another argued,

> in shaping the future of local government in Auckland, attention needs to be given to how local government bodies interact with education to provide for future skill needs, to address poverty and disadvantage, and to enhance the broader social, economic, cultural and environmental landscapes of the region. [11184]

14.8 After reviewing many academic papers on the subject, the Local Government Centre from AUT highlighted the importance of local government in dealing with social issues:

> Neighbourhood governance is also now seen as critical for addressing many of the so-called 'wicked issues' associated with poverty, poor housing and other aspects of social disadvantage. Much of the knowledge about how disadvantaged neighbourhoods function, much of the potential leadership needed to develop and deliver solutions and much of the commitment required is based not in agencies of government, but in the affected neighbourhoods themselves. [11078]

14.9 A number of problems were identified in relation to local government's role in social services. Submitters generally endorsed the "social well-being" purpose of councils under the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA 2002). However, one submitter said,

> The 21st Century amendments to the Local Government Act have resulted in local authorities being faced with a confusing plethora of options in terms of 'things to do' in their communities. … The duplication of functions between local and central government (such as the delivery of social services) that has resulted from the reforms, makes no sense in a country with such a small population. Local authorities now face a bewildering range of choices, which will only serve to magnify inefficiencies and dilution of resources. The mandate and focus of local authority intervention has been obfuscated, for the ultimate detriment of all communities. [10101]

14.10 Quite a few submitters identified the need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of central government in relation to the provision of social services, including in some cases stronger statutory direction from central government and greater collaboration. Submitters identified the need for liaison between central government and both regional and local government in relation to social issues, but with the regional body taking a stronger lead than it does currently. (See also Chapter 9, "Consistency and Collaboration".)

14.11   Misaligned geographical boundaries of local and central government agencies were identified as a barrier to collaboration, particularly in regards to police, district health boards (DHBs), and not-for-profit community organisations. Some submitters considered that the current arrangements increased complexity and resource requirements because of the need to manage relationships and liaise with several councils in relation to the planning, funding, and delivery of intersectoral initiatives. This slowed down decision-making processes, created gaps and duplication, and presented accountability challenges.

14.12   A few submitters observed that there had been "a growing trend to get involved in social issues such as housing [and this] should be left to central government." [10781] Another noted that social services such as police, education, and health had been devolved to local authorities in many overseas jurisdictions; the submitter did not want to see this happen in New Zealand. [10830]

14.13   The majority of those who commented on social well-being, however, did not appear to agree with these comments. For example, one submitter noted that as greater Auckland is New Zealand's biggest city, it should be proactive in health, education, sports, and social welfare, and not just leave such matters to central government. [10919] Another added a proviso that if central government delegated responsibility for social issues to local government, then this should be accompanied by funding. A further submitter made the following recommendation:

> any changes to regional governance have to enhance the engagement of the people of Auckland in education, and strengthen the linkages between local government institutions and local government strategic goals. A criterion for assessing structures for governance in Auckland must be: how will it deliver on the vision for an "educated and knowledgeable people"[46]? [11184]

14.14   Submitters made various suggestions about social services and the role of local government, including whether or not responsibility should primarily lie at the regional or local level. As noted above, they tended to highlight the primary role of central government in this area, and the need for collaboration and communication between central and local government to be occurring nationally, regionally, and locally. A number of submitters noted the important contribution of the not-for-profit sector, the need for councils to work closely with these organisations, and the need for council funding of these organisations to continue.

Equity and equality

14.15   A small number of submitters commented directly on the need to address and improve inequalities across the Auckland region, with some noting that this was an

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46   *Tomorrow's Manukau – Manukau Āpōpō – A Vision for Manukau into the Future 2006–2016*, p. 2.

extremely important issue if Auckland were to become a "successful world-class city". For example,

> a world-class city will have the necessary … processes to ensure that a large population can live in close proximity … have its health and well being protected and promoted [and] be free from communicable disease. It will also have the smallest possible proportion of residents suffering from inequalities in terms of income, education, housing, [and] access to employment opportunities, education and social services. [11258]

14.16   Papakura District Council said that equity required that everyone should have access to good-quality drinking water, clean air, and transport services, and that such services should be consistent across the region. [10537]

14.17   Most of the submitters who addressed the issue of equity were government or community agencies that work in the area of social well-being (such as the Salvation Army [11133], the Auckland Regional Public Health Service [11258], and several iwi[47] and Pacific community groups). Other submitters with a broader or more economic focus also commented on the need to address social deprivation across the Auckland region. They recognised that social polarisation would impinge on economic growth because poorer communities generally had lower health and education status, and therefore lower levels of productivity.

14.18   Strong views were expressed that the needs of the "poorest Aucklanders" had largely been ignored by central and local government [11133], and that equity should now be of primary concern to the Commission. These submitters implored the Commission to pay "sufficient attention to issues of social need and social justice in its deliberations" [11133] and to consider "the impacts on population health and inequalities as one of the pre-eminent factors that it uses to inform its deliberations and eventual recommendations to Government" [11258]. One submitter noted,

> It is important in building communities that the provision of essential services be done in a way that does not penalise poor people, rather than providing services through agencies that make a profit. [10414]

14.19   The Salvation Army submission included data that highlighted deprivation and social polarisation issues relevant to the Auckland region. This evidence showed that single-parent households, households reliant on benefits, and Aucklanders generally experience greater levels of hardship compared with the rest of New Zealand. The neighbourhoods with both high concentrations of beneficiary and/or single-parent households, and high deprivation indices were concentrated in a handful of communities within the region – Mangere, Otara, Manurewa, Tamaki, and Papakura. The Salvation Army described poverty as not only deeply embedded in these communities but also becoming more concentrated. [11133]

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47   Tribal grouping.

14.20 Submitters thought that local government could play a significant role in reducing inequalities. For example, the following council service areas could impact on health and social inequalities between population groups:

- access to council facilities and services (through pricing and location)

- potential role around affordable housing (which would be strengthened by the successful passage of the Affordable Housing: Enabling Territorial Authorities Bill)

- regulatory role around sale of liquor, gambling, and prostitution (there are higher concentrations of alcohol and gambling outlets in poorer areas)

- access to services, education, and health (through transport)

- access to education (through provision of libraries; reference, learning centres, and internet)

- policies and practices

- collaboration on intersectoral initiatives focused on improving social well-being

- direct funding of community organisations

- collection and analysis of population data that informs policy, funding, and service delivery decisions.

14.21 Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) said,

> Local authorities have considerable influence over the ability of individuals and families to mitigate the impact of low income and education by accessing employment and educational opportunities. While local authorities roles around affordable housing have to date been limited it is clear from the majority of the region's council community outcomes that housing affordability is something that local authorities should be working on if they are to meet the objectives set out in section 10 of the Local Government Act.[48] [11258]

14.22 Strong views were expressed that councils had not done enough to provide leadership and advocacy in relation to promoting social well-being, particularly for their most disadvantaged communities. In its submission, the Salvation Army provided data relating to access to early childhood education to illustrate this point. Across Manukau City, there were places available for an average of 43% of children under five; but within the city's localities, the figure was 71% availability for Howick and Pakuranga, and only 33% for Otara. It was apparent that in this case a city-wide view had averaged the social fortunes and masked the "real inequalities beneath these averages". The submission also cited crime data as a measure of community safety and access to police protection, comparing rates of reported violent crime against resolution rates. In this case the

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48   Section 10 of LGA 2002 says that the purpose of local government is (a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and (b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities, in the present and for the future.

Manurewa area had high reporting rates and low resolution, compared with Rodney District's relatively low reporting rates and high resolution. [11133]

14.23 The Salvation Army pointed out that Manukau City Council's strategic plan (*Tomorrow's Manukau – Manukau Āpōpō*) identifies access to education and freedom from violence as strategic outcomes. The conclusion drawn was that because these problems have been known for some time, it was apparent that Manukau City Council "has not been an effective advocate for the affected communities". The submitter added that local councils had an important role to play advocating for the most vulnerable groups within their community, and the present governance arrangements "have not provided the advocacy and leadership which poor communities within the region require and deserve." [11133]

14.24 Other submitters raised concerns about the lack of representation for poorer communities, and conversely, favouritism for the more affluent and historically powerful communities. The need to establish "inclusive, accessible and responsive" [11273] political systems that enable "the marginalised" [11262] to be involved in decision-making processes was also identified. These failures had led to the concerns of disadvantaged citizens being overlooked, and perpetuation or exacerbation of inequalities. It was also noted that the different approaches to reducing inequalities taken by different councils could also create inequalities across the region.

14.25 There were many comments that local government should work for all of its citizens, not just the elite areas with the highest socio-economic groups, and that all citizens had the same rights and obligations. One said, "It is about everyone having a say. And it is about equitable outcomes." [10787]

14.26 Others emphasised that reducing disparities would contribute to strong, sustainable communities in a variety of ways including better environmental and economic outcomes. A more equitable approach by councils would also mean that communities would be able to access the facilities and services they needed at a fair cost to them. [10734]

Local responsibility

14.27 In terms of whether social issues should be addressed by a regional or local agency, some submitters argued for local responsibility. At the local level, submitters saw the focus being more on implementation of strategy and related operational matters. They did, however, want strengthened governance over these matters locally, including more community consultation and capacity to fund local initiatives. They also saw a local role for community advocacy and promotion of community events. The Salvation Army commented,

> local councils have an important role to play in being an advocate for their community and particularly for the most vulnerable people and groups within their community. It is the Salvation Army's opinion that the present governance arrangements in

Auckland have not provided the advocacy and leadership which poor communities within the region require and deserve. [11133]

14.28 The kinds of social services submitters wished to see managed locally included community recreation and cultural facilities, community development projects, events, cemeteries, policing, safety and crime prevention, neighbourhood support, social services such as youth workers, and Citizens Advice Bureaux. Although there were some dissenting voices, particular communities such as Waiheke Island generally sought full control over policy, funding, and delivery of social services.

14.29 Various reasons were cited for addressing social issues at the local level. These included the ability to respond to the distinct characteristics of a community, the fact that often not-for-profit agencies were the most effective service providers and they did not always operate regionally, and that regional approaches tended to concentrate their efforts on local areas of deprivation anyway. The Local Government Centre pointed out,

> The research evidence makes a strong case for effective neighbourhood or local governance, both as a means of improving community engagement with the local authority itself, and as almost a prerequisite for dealing with a number of the more complex issues now confronting communities in areas such as housing, social inclusion, antisocial behaviour etc. [11078]

Regional responsibility

14.30 Many submitters on this topic called for a regional approach. They wanted to see stronger leadership and advocacy on social initiatives, with policy and management functions such as strategic planning, funding, evaluation, and monitoring of service delivery generally being carried out at the regional level. There were calls for a holistic regional strategy for social and community development to articulate a clear vision and to facilitate "outcomes-based collaboration" and "joined up commissioning". [10964] Some saw the regional body being responsible for development and monitoring of such a plan, with implementation occurring more locally.

14.31 City of Manukau Education Trust argued for a regional strategy with implementation through an intermediary, which might be regional or local:

> this submission argues that the education infrastructure of the Auckland region requires a more committed approach to development and support for education than is generally applied by individual territorial authorities. An intermediary approach through a Council-Controlled Organisation has been the preferred mechanism in Manukau, where the effect of educational underachievement is most marked. The intermediary approach can sit at the regional or city level, but is likely to be inefficient at the community board level. However, the philosophy of intermediaries operating at the social interface has to be supported at the regional level. [11184]

14.32 Several submitters highlighted the importance of adequate participation of Māori in these social and community development processes and of incorporating the Treaty of Waitangi. Other considerations to be addressed in a regional plan included meeting the needs of a growing older population [e.g. 10497], ensuring appropriate community participation, and supporting communities to be self-sustaining in education, health, security, and justice.

14.33 Submitters identified a range of benefits that would accrue from a strengthened regional approach. These included greater synergy, reduced gaps and duplication, more effective collaboration, more resources, more equitable sharing of the costs across the region, and better outcomes for citizens.

14.34 Some submissions included an outline of the benefits that would be derived from a strengthened regional approach for their particular area of interest. For example, Auckland Regional Physical Activity and Sport Strategy (ARPASS) sought a regional structure that included a mandatory function for the strategic planning and policy development for sport, recreation, and physical activity sector in greater Auckland. The submission highlighted the sizeable challenges associated with implementing a regional strategy because "there is no assurance that these outcomes will be implemented as the delivery is left to 14 individual strategy partners." [11015]

14.35 A number of submitters highlighted the relationship between social well-being issues and other outcome areas such as economic development, noting that poor social outcomes could constrain development in these areas. For example, Committee for Auckland cited education in low-decile areas, workforce skills, child health, and housing affordability as performance gaps that needed to be addressed regionally if economic outcomes were to be improved. [11020] Others emphasised the importance of considering social well-being when developing broader environmental, infrastructure, or economic policy, such as urban planning or public transport. One said,

> economic strategy development cannot be divorced from social conditions. Both regional and sectoral strategy development processes have highlighted the need to include social factors when considering business growth. [11184]

Housing

14.36 Among submissions on the more specific issues of social development, several emphasised the need for affordable housing of a decent standard, particularly for older people and emergency situations. One submitter provided copies of media articles about the poor quality and shortage of State housing in Auckland, and highlighted the links between unaffordable housing, overcrowding, and a range of negative social outcomes. The importance of considering adequate housing as a critical part of growth planning was identified. There appeared to be a preference for housing to be managed regionally with standards to be set by the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) or a regional body. For example, one submitter sought "A regionally adequate, coordinated and coherent system

to provide affordable housing and good urban design, in intensified liveable communities."
[10473] Another, however, said in relation to housing, "we can't have someone from South
Auckland making a decision relating to North Auckland." [10791]

14.37 Affordable housing is a ubiquitous problem for most large cities in the world. One
of the Local Government Centre submissions looked at successful examples in the US
of community land trusts, which focus on building affordable housing, and community
development corporations, which work to improve physical and social infrastructures in
disadvantaged neighbourhoods. A local example that was discussed was the Queenstown
Lakes Community Housing Trust (modelled on North American community land trusts),
which was initiated by the local council, and is supported by Housing New Zealand
Corporation, to deliver affordable housing to the community. The Local Government
Centre described this trust, and the Opotiki Community Trust, as two initiatives that

> illustrate the potential which New Zealand local government now has, through
> the flexible use of council powers, to promote quite innovative community-based
> initiatives, drawing significantly on skills and resources in the community, whilst
> at the same time protecting the ratepayer against the risks that would result if the
> activity were undertaken by a council or council entity as such. [11078]

Education

14.38 There were some submitters who saw a stronger role for local government in
education. In particular, they emphasised the important contribution of tertiary education
to economic development, and the contribution of early childhood education to long-term
positive social outcomes.

14.39 City of Manukau Education Trust gave a strong reminder that "the place of
education must be addressed in the new governance structure for Auckland, and this is
particularly important for the southern city." It noted that the historically poor aggregate
achievement outcomes from some schools in South Auckland, West Auckland, and central
Auckland (which was associated with high levels of migration, diversity, and relative
poverty) affected skill levels in the adult population, and consequently regional growth.
The submission argued that new kinds of responses to education needs were required in
order to integrate education infrastructure into local government planning at the regional,
local, and community levels:

> the potential is significant for local government to act as a broker, facilitator or co-
> ordinator in addressing local education problems and issues, resulting in desired
> community outcomes; and as a contributor to strategic goals in the education
> sector. In return, engagement in education offers local government mechanisms for
> addressing pressing issues that underpin the four well-beings. [11184]

14.40 The University of Auckland [10850] described how tertiary education brought
money, people, employment opportunities, innovative research, and business into a city,
and how the whole region benefited from top-class educational institutions. Accordingly,

the university sought a governance structure that supported promotion and investment in education, research, and innovation in Auckland.

14.41   As mentioned earlier in relation to early childhood education, the Salvation Army cited marked sub-regional disparities in access to childhood education centres (with potential for long-term consequences). For example, Manukau City had places available for 43% of children under five years, whereas North Shore City had places for 66%. [11133] These statistics serve to highlight the existence of educational disparities within the Auckland region.

Public health

14.42   Both the Ministry of Health [11331] and ARPHS [11258] described the key role of local government in contributing to public health outcomes, noting that any changes in governance arrangements for Auckland would potentially impact on the health of the region's residents. Accordingly, they urged the Commission to consider the impacts on population health and inequalities when forming its recommendations, and suggested that a formal health impact assessment on the Commission's final recommendations be undertaken.

14.43   The role of local government was seen as including statutory obligations that were health-specific (such as those related to sanitation, environmental health, alcohol, and gambling), and those that were broader but had significant influence over the wider determinants of health. The submitters pointed out that local government initiatives often had direct or indirect community development or health-promoting objectives. For example, local public health units were consulted on Resource Management Act planning and consent processes because of the relevance to health outcomes and community well-being.

14.44   The agencies identified that there might be some opportunities through the restructuring process to clarify functions, reduce duplication, increase efficiencies and free up resources, enhance the delivery of statutory obligations, and strengthen engagement, particularly in relation to strategic planning processes, development of aligned community outcomes, and carrying out community needs assessments. Both agencies, however, also warned that there might be a risk of undermining some of the positive achievements of councils in relation to public health. These achievements included conducting health impact assessments as part of planning processes, and contributing to health-promoting and community development initiatives.

14.45   ARPHS recommended an increased role for local government in standard setting, and the development of a regional community outcome indicator framework to guide strategic direction in relation to social well-being (including health) and to improve assessment of progress. A recommendation was also made to consider embedding the Auckland Sustainability Framework in statute. Another suggestion involved reviewing international models of collaboration between local government and public health (social

well-being) sectors, such as those established in Victoria, Australia, and in the United Kingdom. [11258]

14.46 Both agencies referred to the strong drive to increase collaboration between health and other sectors. They sought a governance structure that would support greater clarity about responsibility for functions and delivery of services, more formalised inter-agency planning, and enhanced accountability mechanisms. A key issue identified was that of misaligned boundaries, and the additional burden this created given the extent of collaboration and consultation. For example, maps provided by the Ministry of Health show that the Counties-Manukau DHB district overlaps with areas of Manukau City, Papakura District, Franklin District, the ARC, and Environment Waikato.

Migrants

14.47 The Auckland Regional Migrant Service ("ARMS") described the challenges associated with implementing the Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy and Action Plan. The strategy involves most central government departments, the councils, and key community agencies. It is based on broad consultation and inter-agency collaboration. However, in its submission ARMS identified the need for a governance model that provided greater leadership on such key social and economic initiatives, observing,

> Despite considerable buy-in from settler communities, strong support from its numerous constituent agencies, a comprehensive foundation report, and Cabinet approval, this Strategy now lacks the necessary momentum and leadership at the local council level to ensure its success … a key weakness is that no one organisation at the local Auckland level "owns" this Strategy and Action Plan … ARMS currently finds itself having to negotiate with 8 separate local authorities, keep informed about 8 different council plans, and work with officers from councils all with varying levels of commitment to social and economic issues such as effective settlement and integration and maximisation of migrant talent. [10847]

Elderly care

14.48 The need for elderly care of the aged from Polynesian communities was the sole focus of one submission, which asked that the Commission recommend a retirement village for Samoans be built in the Auckland region. This village would be culturally developed with local communities and councils, staffed by Samoan doctors and health workers, and would also serve as a refuge for battered women and children, children and parents with no homes, as well as for the needs of other ethnicities.

15. Economic Development

15.1   This chapter focuses on submissions that advocated that councils should be empowered and structured to undertake particular programmes to advance economic development. First, however, it offers some perspectives on the subject of Auckland's economic advancement in strategic terms, as well as submissions on increased incorporation of economic analysis into local government activity and governance.

Economic strategies for Auckland

15.2   Many submitters wrote of the need for Auckland to flourish economically, for the benefit of the wider region and of the country. Typical of this perspective are the following excerpts from submissions, the first from the Growth and Innovation Advisory Board submission, and the second from the New Zealand Council for Infrastructure Development:

-   Internationally it is recognised that cities are important drivers of economic growth, with their critical mass and power to attract investment and skilled labour. Cities, not countries, have become the important players in the global economy; companies and individuals choose to locate in London, New York or Sydney, not Britain, the US or Australia. While small by international standards, Auckland is the only city we have that is big enough to compete, drawing in talent and connecting New Zealand with the rest of the world. … Economic strategy for Auckland and economic strategy for New Zealand cannot be seen in isolation. Any decision-making for Auckland involves national, as well as regional and local interests. [10947]

-   Auckland could be the primary engine of growth for the NZ economy. It contains the largest agglomeration of people, businesses, education, health, and every other facet of life in New Zealand. In population terms, Auckland is the third-fastest growing city-region in Australasia. Auckland supports two-thirds of population in New Zealand and grows at double the national rate. However … it only generates 35% of New Zealand's national income. It could, and should, do more. [11259]

15.3   Property Council New Zealand said its members were collectively responsible for around $14 billion of commercial property investment in Auckland, and paid a substantial amount of the property rates that funded the expenditure of councils throughout the region. They called for an "investment-friendly Auckland, which is complemented by an unfettered market and a modernised governance model, …" [11137]

15.4   The issue of economic development is inextricably linked to other issues, such as governance, infrastructure (including the three waters, electricity, and transport), community development, and social issues (including migrants and housing). Concern was expressed about the probable rate of Auckland's future growth compared with its

potential, which was being hampered by its inadequate infrastructure, housing and income issues, loss of residents (often to Australia), and skill shortages.

15.5   Concern was also expressed about our general economic competitiveness internationally. Property Council New Zealand quoted the World Economic Forum's *The Global Competitiveness Report 2008–2009*, which ranked the top three barriers to doing business in New Zealand as inadequate supply of infrastructure, high tax rates, and "inefficient government bureaucracy". This submitter regarded governance of the Auckland region as causing "fragmentation and costly delays", particularly in the areas of processing building and resource consents. [11137]

Economic analysis of local government activity

15.6   Apart from submissions on specific economic development programmes, there were two other main groups of submitters who referred to economic issues.

15.7   First, there were submitters who considered that all local government activity might have positive or negative effects on the economy, and that therefore changes to governance arrangements should be considered with the economic consequences in mind. These submitters argued for local government structuring on the basis of predictions of positive economic spin-offs. For example, the question of whether council amalgamation would achieve economies of scale was mentioned by many submitters. (See Chapter 22, "Proposals for Modifications to Present System".)

15.8   Second there were submitters who sought a mechanism to ensure that economic analysis was incorporated into everyday local government decision making. Auckland International Airport Ltd called for improved economic focus in decision making and said that at present

> There is no effective mechanism that allows, or requires, sufficient or transparent economic analysis or consideration, as an everyday part of council decision making. Economic issues, in particular those which require consideration of key city-wide infrastructure, are simply not properly debated, or are debated or considered in only a superficial or cursory way. [11266]

15.9   One submitter noted that most single-interest organisations emphasise economic development benefits only in terms of their industry, such as real estate or construction, and usually only for the short or medium term. Greater sophistication in these measures would include green space provision, quality public space provision in downtown areas, cultural amenity, active amenity, and transport modes.

> it is rare to hear in Auckland of the long term economic development benefits that accrue from efficient development of land and infrastructure – measures such as GDP/hectare, employees/hectare, investment/hectare by area, income/capita by area, and similar, assess this. These are the sorts of measures used in cities interested

in the relationship between compact urban form, economic efficiency, sustainability, and city productivity in the long term. [10098]

15.10   Submitters in the second group did not usually ask for specific economic development programmes, but referred to general local government activities and the contribution these could make to economic well-being and development. For example, it was suggested that improved public transport and other key services would enhance the economy of the region. (The Employers' and Manufacturers' Association said that a 2004 survey of time costs for travel to and from work established an "opportunity cost" of $4 billion annually. [10813]) Many of these submitters considered that all local government decisions should facilitate economic growth where possible and at least avoid obstructing growth.

Local government economic development programmes

15.11   A large group of submitters dealt with the subject of empowering and structuring councils to undertake particular programmes for economic development. This group comprised 240 individual submitters and more than 300 who signed the standard Papakura District submission form.

15.12   Most of those who made submissions on the economic development functions of councils were of the opinion that local governance mattered in terms of economic performance of the city and region, and some saw national importance in its performance.

15.13   In the *Call for Submissions* booklet, the Commission said, "Auckland's prosperity and well-being are essential to New Zealand's prosperity and well-being." The Commission's Open Letter to the People of Auckland (*Call for Submissions*, page iii) included the words, "When Auckland thrives, New Zealand thrives." These statements were debated. One submitter said in response to the latter,

> The reality is that Auckland is largely the thermometer of the country's economic health which is overwhelmingly the result of the pastoral sector, forestry and tourism. Auckland is not the chief generator of the nation's economic wealth and if that is the driver for any proposed "reforms" then it is a false premise and no amount of reorganising Auckland will ensure that position. [839]

15.14   More submitters shared the Commission's view. One said that Auckland, as the biggest city in New Zealand, "is one of the most vital parts of the nation. It is a critical economic engine room." [10436] Economist Brian Easton wrote,

> My perspective is that New Zealand needs a global city, and that the only possible primary node is Auckland.
> …
> success for a New Zealand which has a wider industry range than just resource-based industries requires a thriving Auckland. [11305]

15.15   Whatever the true importance of Auckland to New Zealand's economy, most people felt that Auckland could do better economically and contribute more than it does now. To improve the position, the majority of submitters on economic development considered that economic development programmes ought to be undertaken by local authorities. (The exceptions are referred to below.) Property Council New Zealand was typical in calling for a mixture of private sector and local government initiatives for economic growth:

> A robust level of private investment, business and consumer confidence, and business development are common denominators [and] are the recipe for delivering and sustaining a vibrant regional economy. Within this context, Property Council considers that [a regional agency] has an important role to play in encouraging productivity-driven economic growth. [11137]

15.16   Enterprise North Shore said,

> As economic functions operate at different levels sub-regionally, intra-regionally, nationally and internationally, governance arrangements need to reflect multiple levels that add value to each other with strong connections between and across them. It is noted that the region is not performing economically as well as it must and, for its size and its sphere of influence both nationally and internationally, it needs to be doing better. [10585]

15.17   There were a number of suggestions as to what councils might do to promote economic development. Few submitters other than specialist bodies referred to the Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy (2002), the Regional Economic Development Forum, or the economic development agencies, whether at a central government level (Government Urban and Economic Development Office), regional level (Auckland Plus), or local level in terms of agencies and councils.

15.18   A wide range of activities were mentioned by submitters in connection with economic development. A general role for councils in providing a positive and competitive business environment to encourage new investment was mentioned by a number of submitters. The most commonly mentioned specific economic development programmes that could be undertaken by councils were the Rugby World Cup and V8 Supercars events. Developments that would support tourism were mentioned by many submitters, including better cruise ship facilities, convention centres, and public transport including central business district-airport connectivity.

15.19   Other activities mentioned as being part of economic development functions included regional branding, regional promotion, a business land use strategy, coordination of regional economic development, waterfront redevelopment, trade development, business attraction, main street programmes, urban intensification and revitalisation, economic development strategy, business development initiatives, strategic industry sectors and clusters, and skills training.

15.20 Some submitters took a broader view of economic development, connecting it to social programmes. One submitter said that housing improvement could make an economic impact as well as improve social well-being. Another said,

> Social polarisation is likely to impinge on Auckland's economic growth in part because poorer communities generally have lower health and education status and consequently lower levels of productivity. [11133]

15.21 An iwi[49] submitter suggested that there should be an economic development agency established to increase economic well-being of Māori in Auckland. [11276]

15.22 Rather than undertaking specific programmes, one submitter suggested that local government in Auckland should have two roles in regard to economic development: first, to support workforce development through networking, skill development, and lifelong learning, and second, to be an exemplar as a major employer. [10787]

Regional management of economic development

15.23 A total 150 submitters favoured regional management of economic development, giving several reasons. Some felt that a regional body should be able to coordinate with central government and ensure that the financial burden was shared equitably across the region. Others felt that economic development was a pan-Auckland matter important to the national and regional economy, which was best managed regionally. Others recalled how projects in the past (for example, the waterfront stadium and cruise ship facilities) had been complicated by intra-regional parochialism and would be better done by a regional body. Another opinion was that regional management was a better way to protect the environment, maintain urban limits, and promote efficiency.

15.24 Most submitters who favoured regional management of economic development advocated that the regional council should be responsible. However, other agencies were also suggested: separate agencies or council-controlled organisations under the regional council, a private company under contract, or an arms-length delivery body modelled on State-owned enterprise principles.

15.25 One submitter suggested that the business element should be managed by experts appointed by the regional council. A regional tourism promotion and trade development body was suggested to deal with those matters. Auckland International Airport said,

> Tourism Auckland is voluntarily funded on a contractual basis by three territorial local authorities: ACC [Auckland City Council], MCC [Manukau City Council] and NSCC [North Shore City Council]. …
> In the Airport's experience, while Tourism Auckland endeavours to promote the needs and objectives of Auckland, it is inherent in the funding structure that sub-regional agendas will receive priority. … This is an undesirable situation as, although

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49   Tribal grouping.

outcomes may be achieved that are in the interest of the city as a whole, there remains an overall lack of city-wide focus. [11266]

15.26   The Local Government Centre considered that the functional boundaries of regional economic development almost certainly extended as far as Whangarei, Hamilton, and Tauranga. It saw a need to ensure the formal structural provisions for this function and for these boundaries to be properly and formally aligned. [11078]

15.27   However, Waitakere Enterprise was adamant in its opposition to a regional focus taking the form of any sort of "super city" or "super council":

> Should there be just one super-council only, the local economic development dynamic and the value it adds in terms of knowledge, reach, scale, innovation, identity, channel to market of initiatives and ability to deal with locally significant economic development related matters is at risk of being lost. This will produce a sub-optimal result with respect to Auckland becoming New Zealand's first world class city. [10853]

Local management of economic development

15.28   Thirty-five submitters favoured local councils managing economic development. They gave various reasons, including that ratepayers should have a say in local events, that there should be a localised voice, that community and cultural events facilitated community identity and well-being, and that the job could be done better locally. One said, "Locally led initiatives have a track record of making bold, transformational economic development investments." [10853]

15.29   Examples were given of successful local initiatives in the past including Henderson Valley Studios within Waitakere City. It was also suggested that the underground rail at New Lynn would not have happened without local impetus. Other examples given of local economic development activities were main street programmes, and community events. Proposed agencies to promote local economic development included territorial authorities and community boards, especially for local cultural and sporting events.

Mix of regional and local management

15.30   The majority of submitters (350 including the Papakura District group) favoured a mixture of regional and local management of economic development activities. These submitters included a number of specialist bodies working in the field. One said that as economic development had functions at national, regional, and local levels, collaboration and coordination was needed between levels, and across public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. At the regional level it was suggested that appropriate activities would be economic development strategy, policy, integration into decision making, major events,

and advocacy. At the local level, business development initiatives, business retention, the encouragement of innovation, and local skills and education should be addressed. [10970]

15.31 Enterprise Franklin made the following observations:

> Regional economic development, it is argued here, should tackle problems of regional significance; hard infrastructure – roads, ports, broadband, urban design etc., and soft infrastructure that build systems of and for collaboration and critical mass; such as increasing skills and human capital, working to mitigate against weaknesses in the labour market, regional positioning and branding, strategic [inward] investment, and identifying and supporting clusters and strategic industry sectors that are either fundamental to the regional economy or have the potential to be.
>
> What is noticeably missing from these activities however, is the one to one work with businesses (such as business support services, business retention and expansion programmes, training and advice etc), endogenous development opportunities (such as building on natural, cultural and social capital inherent in the locality to provide economic opportunity), working with communities to mitigate structural problems within, and improve access to, the labour market and local economies, making the necessary local business connections to embed exogenous investment in local economies, building and supporting clusters, supply chains, local innovation with global opportunity or significance, entrepreneurship and so on. All of this work is mostly needed at the local level dealing with people in small groups or on a one to one basis. [11024]

15.32 Another submitter suggested that key strategic issues for economic development needed to be addressed with a twofold approach. Issues to be addressed regionally included international representation, the range of regulations in local governance, skills and labour market issues, and input into strategic land use planning. Issues to be addressed locally were those concerned with individual businesses – skills training, access to capital, and the like. This submission indicated that the tertiary education sector was especially important to economic development. [11086]

15.33 Auckland University in its submission emphasised the ongoing economic value of universities to a city, from the initial attraction of foreign students to the development of projects and companies by students and graduates:

> Our own internal research supports the importance of the urban environment in student decision making; perceptions of the quality of life and lifestyle offered by a city can strongly influence prospective tertiary students. …
>
> It is critical that the Auckland region is collectively able to put out the 'welcome mat' for students coming into the region, including appropriate and affordable housing, access to high quality transport and facilities at a reasonable cost, a safe and attractive urban environment, and opportunities to transition … into the Auckland workforce. [10850]

15.34 The potential contribution of all levels of education to economic development was emphasised by City of Manukau Education Trust, which said, referring to the Auckland Regional Economic Development Strategy,

> Current efforts in Auckland to address skills development as a fundamental of economic growth, including those of the Auckland Regional Council, have been frustrated by poor connections to the education sector and fractured and highly localized leadership networks. [11184]

15.35 A number of submitters endorsed the idea of a regional economic development plan with local implementation. Local politicians would promote local development initiatives within the strategy. These submitters felt that capable agencies were needed to implement programmes at a local level in a collaborative manner. At the regional level there was a raft of central government business development programmes that needed to be resourced, coordinated, and driven regionally.

15.36 The printed form submission from Papakura District recommended that tourism and economic development should be done regionally, and local events should be managed locally.

Opposition to economic development programmes

15.37 A few submitters who commented on economic development opposed the involvement of local authorities. One submitter said that subsidisation of tourism or economic development was not a core role of any government. Another cautioned that it was necessary to balance any expenditure with considerations of whether it wasted ratepayers' money.

16. Infrastructure

16.1　This chapter is the first of four chapters about infrastructure. The next three chapters summarise submissions specifically about transport, water, and facilities. This chapter summarises submissions generally about infrastructure management, as well as particular categories of infrastructure including solid waste, telecommunications, broadband, and energy distribution. There are other sections on infrastructure in this volume: Chapter 2, "Future Auckland", summarises submissions that referred to infrastructure as a component of a "world-class city"; and Chapter 12, "Planning and Regulatory Functions", contains many references to infrastructure planning.

Perspectives on infrastructure problems

16.2　Many submitters said they were unhappy with current governance arrangements for infrastructure. Commonly mentioned were water and wastewater (especially financing); roads and public transport; facilities such as sports stadiums, and regional growth planning (often associated with infrastructure), amongst other things. One submitter commented,

> the renewal and extension of basic infrastructure … has been neglected or put off for too long. People should not underestimate the cost of basic city services such as water and sewerage reticulation and the renewal of essential services. The problem has been that some have tried to deny that the city has a primary responsibility to a vision of the quality of life in an urban environment. It has always been difficult to get Auckland City leaders to see beyond the financial burdens of large enterprises. They have little interest in the quality of life of people in an urban environment and what is needed to enhance that. [10089]

16.3　The most commonly identified problem across all categories of infrastructure was the number of separate organisations involved in policy making and implementation. Ports of Auckland Ltd ("POAL") said,

> Insofar as POAL must interact with local authorities and other governmental bodies, the efficiency of POAL's business activities will be enhanced by any reduction in the number with which the company has to interact. One aspect of this general point is governance arrangements relating to the provision of public infrastructure, and in particular transport infrastructure. … Currently about 15 different organisations are involved (for example Transit, LTSA, ARC, ARTA, TLAs, ONTRACK). POAL has advocated rationalising this to one, with clearly defined efficiency and businesslike criteria by which it must operate. The thinking has been that this would assist to unblock the malaise affecting provision of roading and resolving traffic congestion, which is a problem directly affecting POAL's business. [10866]

16.4   A second area of dissatisfaction was with local government decision making. Auckland International Airport Ltd said,

> The short-term nature of decision making by territorial and regional authorities too often fails to take into account the long-term nature of infrastructure investment and the economic costs and benefits of the decisions being considered. … Economic issues, in particular those which require consideration of key city-wide infrastructure, are simply not properly debated, or are debated or considered in only a superficial or cursory way. [11266]

16.5   Another perceived problem with decision making was that unrepresented and unelected groups had too much power in the current decision-making process. These groups (including those that provided engineering and economic analysis advice to councils) were said to obtain direct or indirect benefits from infrastructure projects and to be far from impartial.

16.6   For the functions with which submitters were dissatisfied, a clear majority of submitters who expressed a preference were in favour of taking all aspects of those functions from city and district councils and placing them with the regional council.

General approach to infrastructure management

16.7   There were 190 submitters who made general comments about infrastructure ownership and management.

16.8   A clear majority wanted local governance changes, as a response to infrastructure problems. A small minority, referred to below, thought the underlying cause of the infrastructure problems was not governance but was lack of capital for investment, and geographical constraints. Many of those who wanted governance changes acknowledged the financial issues. New Zealand Council for Infrastructure Development was one that linked the financial challenges to the need for new governance arrangements:

> The level of investment required to complete [roading, water, and fibre optic] projects is unprecedented since the last programme of capital investment in the 60s and 70s. Not only will this place immense pressure on the region's capacity to fund the investment required, it will require a marked improvement in the decision making and governance processes that surround the infrastructure development programme. It will require strong alignment between central and local government to determine priorities, agree funding, approve projects, and ensure their completion on time and on budget. [11259]

16.9   Another said there was a lot of catching up to do after "decades of under-investment in infrastructure brought about by the present multiple councils failing to agree on infrastructure issues." [10804]

16.10   Most submitters saw the bulk of infrastructure problems as stemming from governance issues. One submitter gave a list of major mistakes made in Auckland, ranging

from the limited capacity of the Harbour Bridge to Eden Park, the Aotea Centre, and Britomart, saying,

> these mistakes could have largely been avoided with good governance and a long term objective view. Too many Councils in the past have taken the quick short-term option to the detriment of the region in the long-term. [10854]

16.11   A clear majority of submitters favoured regional governance of infrastructure planning and construction. Most comments referred to the management of network infrastructure generally and made no distinction between regional networks and smaller local infrastructure. A few submitters suggested that if large networks (water supply, wastewater treatment, and arterial roads) were managed regionally, then local networks such as stormwater drainage and local roads and footpaths could remain with local councils.

16.12   Reasons for favouring regional provision of infrastructure included the belief that economies of scale could be obtained from regionalising functions and that the current replication of services was inefficient:

> The current arrangement limits the design, planning and funding of these essential services from such [a] holistic viewpoint and leads to inefficient service delivery and costly duplication of effort. [11115]

16.13   Submitters also saw decision-making advantages in a regional organisation. There was a strong feeling that regional leadership could be applied to develop new infrastructure efficiently and effectively, which was not occurring currently. Having fewer players was seen as an advantage:

> Regional councils should look after infrastructure covering the whole region to enable big projects to progress which benefit everyone and not to be held up by one dissenting voice. [10457]

16.14   Although many submitters asked for regionalisation of infrastructure, there was little agreement as to the exact method of ownership and management. Rodney District Council proposed special-purpose agencies (replacing the Auckland Regional Council (ARC)) to undertake regional transport, water supply, wastewater, and energy. These agencies would

> be run on a commercial basis, conform to world best practice governance models and have high calibre board members appointed for their ability to govern such organisations. Territorial councils would have shareholding in these companies according to the value of assets transferred to or created within each agency. These organisations will deliver within the framework of the Regional Policy Statement and District Plans. [11022]

16.15   Papakura District Council favoured having major regional services in arms-length entities to ensure they were managed by boards with expertise, while the regional organisation focused on leadership and policy rather than operational issues. These

boards would be accountable to the regional organisation, and have transparent financial and business practices. [10537]

16.16   Other submitters also suggested stand-alone organisations that would manage network services and would be accountable to a new regional body.

> We see network services best provided by stand-alone city-wide organisations that have a singular function managed by technically competent management and operating staff. For example, an Auckland regional water, sewer and wastewater organisation has been mooted for years. Similar organisations can be created for roads, public transport, and park and open space. [11269]

16.17   The Committee for Auckland called for empowered, arms-length delivery bodies, modelled on State-owned enterprises, to cover all major water networks, waste management and minimisation, and broadband networks. [11020] Others suggested that Auckland Regional Transport Authority (ARTA), Watercare Services Ltd, and Auckland Regional Holdings should become council-controlled organisations of the regional council.

16.18   The need for a new organisation that had a business or commercial ethos was mentioned by a number of submitters. Some suggested that there should be task-specific units, and others thought that all regional infrastructures should be combined into a single organisation. One said,

> All regional infrastructure should be combined into a publicly owned business unit whose governance should be by directors appointed on merit and not by any political, or electoral college process, and be accountable to its public ownership by way of a service charter." [11177]

16.19   Many submitters wanted continued public and democratic ownership and control of public assets and public services. Reasons given were that infrastructure assets are often natural monopolies, and abuse of these monopolies would be avoided under public control. One said that public assets were more efficient, effective, and accountable when retained in the ownership and democratic control of the public. [10787]

16.20   Some submitters were concerned about profit making from services. One asked for a water pricing regulator to be appointed. Another said,

> ownership of … essential services [public transport, bulk water supply, sewerage, stormwater, electricity supply] must remain in public hands so that public good considerations are not compromised by private profit-making commercial pressures. [10471]

16.21   In its submission, Civic Trust was clear that planning for the future of utility services should be a fundamental activity of the regional authority, so it could be managed in a non-profit manner. It saw the present system as an "infrastructure cash cow", saying,

> Regional and local authorities find it difficult to avoid dipping their fingers into the surpluses created by utility infrastructure companies, whether they are separate entities or departments. The creation of separate utility organisations has produced

the need for separate management structures and has increased management overheads. More importantly, these organisations are required to make a profit, which itself increases the cost of providing the service. [1473]

16.22 A compromise between a commercial approach and public control was suggested by one submitter who advocated that a board of directors should manage infrastructure companies with elected representatives on each.

16.23 Several submitters suggested that management and, in particular, ownership of transport and water infrastructure should be in "vertically integrated" organisations, meaning that one organisation should undertake water collection, treatment, storage and distribution, and retailing. A smaller number argued for "horizontally integrated" organisations (meaning one organisation for bulk water collection and treatment, another for distribution and retailing). Sharing of services between councils, and sharing of services between councils and central government was also proposed. (See "Shared services" in Chapter 9.)

16.24 Waikato Raupatu Trust asked for co-ownership and co-management of council infrastructure (including Watercare Services ("Watercare"), Manukau Harbour facilities, and Auckland Airport) with provision for Waikato-Tainui to have an active involvement in addressing the adverse effects that those infrastructures have on the taonga[50] of Waikato-Tainui. [11288] Examples of impacts given were extraction of water from Waikato River and discharging of waste and stormwater into Manukau Harbour.

Funding of infrastructure

16.25 Some submitters believed that the fundamental problem confronting the construction and management of infrastructure in Auckland was its financing rather than its governance. Some stated that central government had a responsibility to fund infrastructure, and that if funding was provided, governance changes would be unnecessary. Waitakere City Council said,

> With network infrastructure, the scale of major improvements needed in transport, water, waste, information technology and power will only be possible if more funds can be sourced from central and local government and this in turn will only occur if it is clear that there are region-wide binding agreements in place on what is needed and that both partners have been engaged in the decision-making process. [11121]

16.26 Submitters recommended giving regional agencies a greater discretion over funding and policy through bulk funding by central government of various regional functions such as transport and other infrastructure. One submitter suggested assignment of the urban renewal functions of Housing New Zealand to the ARC, which it said would enable public transport infrastructure to be funded from the intensification of new towns and railway station environs, without overstressing the petrol tax fund.

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50   Precious assets, valued resources.

16.27   Rodney District Council envisaged new regional infrastructure organisations being able to borrow and raise capital, and use mechanisms such as infrastructure bonds. These organisations would be governed by statements of intent that would make explicit their focus on delivery, not profit making. The goods and services tax (GST) content of road user and fuel charges derived from the Auckland region should be added as part of the funding of the transport infrastructure company. [11022]

16.28   Manukau City Council considered that ownership of shares in Auckland International Airport Ltd should be transferred to a new regional body. It claimed the airport was no longer a regional asset, as only 22% of the shares were held by local councils. Also, equity issues would arise as a result of the share transfer. [11041]

16.29   Property Council of New Zealand advocated developing an infrastructure plan that would drive "One Auckland's treasury and funding policies." [11137]

Public participation in infrastructure management

16.30   The question asked by the Commission of whether there were council functions where participation by the public was less important drew a variety of responses. Of those who commented, the greatest number suggested the three waters and major reserves were functions that did not need much public participation. One said Watercare, Ports of Auckland, and regional parks were examples of functions very well handled without public participation from the ballot box. Against this, other submitters said that public participation in water supply and wastewater decisions was most important, saying it was a fundamental service, and there was currently a lack of effective consultation on these. An iwi[51] submitter asked for iwi participation in decisions on water. Conflicting opinions were also advanced about the need for public participation on other functions such as roading and public transport.

16.31   Most submitters on this topic recommended that specialised organisations, such as Ports of Auckland, Watercare, and Vector should be in public and regional ownership.

Ports of Auckland and waterfront area

16.32   Submitters who wrote about POAL often mentioned the waterfront area as well. POAL activities and ferry services dominate the waterfront area of the central business district, but many submitters wanted further services such as a cruise ship terminal and facilities, public parks or amenities, and a conference/exhibition site.

16.33   A few advocated that the focus of POAL stay as a competitive business, with a separate entity to manage it. One suggested that the ports be managed by the Ministry of Transport. Another submitter proposed that there be a single port and harbour authority

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51   Tribal grouping.

to control the ports on both the Waitemata and Manukau Harbours. This authority would be under the control of the new regional body. [11263]

16.34   A submission from a regional councillor criticised the present arrangements, which allowed POAL to

> narrow its activities down to being a high volume container port and become a cash cow for public transport projects while ferry terminals and other port activities decay under inconsistent management and control. [10098]

He recommended that the roles and responsibilities of POAL be extended from a concentration on container traffic to the wider sector of wharves and ferry services infrastructure.

> POAL needs to be taken from ARH [Auckland Regional Holdings], transformed into the Ports of Auckland Authority, with its own Board of Directors, and placed under the control of ARC. Its roles and responsibilities need to be expanded from pure containerisation to include ferry wharves, other public wharf structures (such as those at Tank Farm) and cruise ship wharves (such as Princes Wharf and the proposed Queens Wharf Terminal). Auckland needs one Harbour and Port Authority – not a proliferation of entities. [10098]

16.35   Another submission further argued,

> Auckland's waterfront development is an urban regeneration project that should be delivered by a Development Agency – with Government, Regional Government and Auckland City government representatives at the table at least. ... Public support should be a prerequisite for agreeing a Master Plan clearly stating all economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives, and spelling out any trade-offs that might be proposed. [10098]

16.36   One submitter noted,

> it is important the correct balance between public access to the foreshore, and the long term viability of the ports facility, are reached. Also not to be overlooked is the less important port facility at Onehunga. It also deserves the same level of long term planning for it is expected to always remain an important port requirement on the west coast, particularly for coastal and trans-Tasman shipping. [10603]

16.37   Many submitters wanted greater portions of the waterfront area of Auckland to be opened up for public access and use, with a variety of projects proposed.

16.38   Committee for Auckland used the waterfront as one of its case studies, declaring that, amongst international cities, Auckland's Waitemata Harbour had unsurpassed "beauty and accessibility." It detailed a timeline of developments on the waterfront over the past 25 years. Some of these were regarded as successful, such as the inner wharf area, which hosted the Whitbread event in 1993, the development of the Viaduct Harbour for the America's Cup events, the commercial development in the area, the "partial success" of Princes Wharf, and the possible success of Britomart. [11036]

16.39 The frustrations and "failures" of the process were listed as the abandoned waterfront stadium proposal for the Rugby World Cup in 2011, the lack of planned clear transport corridors and allied infrastructure, the lack of connection between each part of the waterfront, and the lack of successful development of the old Railway Station and Quay Park precinct. Overall, these were seen as the consequence of the "absence of an agreed long-term plan" for this area. [11036]

16.40 Committee for Auckland saw some of this planning confusion arising from lack of clarity in governance arrangements:

> the ARC is conflicted in its two roles of being responsible for the strategic development of its land holdings and in its role as the environmental protection agency. These roles should be clearly separated. [11036]

16.41 Recommendations from the Committee for Auckland were to have a strong regional organisation with a clear strategy for development of the waterfront, and an "empowered single purpose vehicle as the Development Authority for the larger waterfront area …". [11036]

16.42 In its submission, POAL outlined the importance of its business to Auckland, noting that it is New Zealand's biggest port, supporting 155,000 jobs and adding over $11 billion to Auckland's economy. POAL said that it had the best port infrastructure in New Zealand and had averaged growth of 8% per year for the past 15 years; future growth is expected to be 5–6% per year. The submission explained that POAL is presently owned by Auckland Regional Holdings, an entity established by the Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act 2004, and accountable to the ARC; and it described the legislation to which POAL is subject. POAL is bound by the statement of corporate intent (section 9 of the Port Companies Act 1988), and noted the tension created through being a competitive business required to provide commercial information to Auckland Regional Holdings at times and in ways that may be at odds with its own planning and reporting processes. It asked to be exempt from the requirements of the statement of corporate intent:

> The other major ports including in particular POAL's main competitor, Port of Tauranga, are listed companies not required to comply with the statement of corporate intent provisions. For there to be a level playing field, POAL should also be exempted, and be subject only to the accountabilities imposed by the Companies Act 1993. [10866]

16.43 POAL asked that any changes recommended by the Commission uphold POAL's focus on commercial enterprise:

> In respect of any changes to institutional arrangements or the structure of local government, which may arise from the Commission's deliberations, POAL considers it is most important that in relation to POAL, the separation of political and commercial roles and decision-making is preserved or enhanced. [10866]

16.44 POAL also requested that continuing provision be made for the appointment of directors of the port company, who were appointed for their commercial skills and experience and not to serve any political purposes. It noted that interposing an entity

between the elected council and POAL, with that entity having the right to appoint POAL company directors, was a means of achieving this.

16.45   In its submission, Auckland City Council proposed a future regional council, the Greater Auckland Council (GAC), with an investment sector that would manage key investments such as the ports. In this scenario, the GAC would retain its 100% shareholding of POAL, but would investigate the "landlord port model", where the region retained ownership of the ports, but the ports would be operated by a private cargo operator. [11181]

Broadband

16.46   Of the many submitters who wrote about broadband, there was a unanimous call for increased speed and range of broadband services. Submitters were impatient with the lack of progress in developing broadband services, the poor coverage for many urban areas, and the drag it generally created for the economy of Auckland and New Zealand. Many people saw the provision of advanced information and communication technology services as crucial for being world class, or even for Auckland to have a serious presence internationally.

> Broadband infrastructure provision is extremely poor and even dial-up is poorly serviced and slow compared to dialup in our town and Auckland city. For a modern rural economy to function broadband provision needs to be ubiquitous. Ubiquitous coverage in the same way we expect electricity to reliably come out of a power-point in every household whether or not they live in the town or country. [10654]

16.47   Twenty-four submitters recommended that the regional council should take over telecommunications, especially the overview and planning for broadband technology and networks. Some suggested that this should be in conjunction with private companies, but others seemed to contemplate the regional council undertaking the full service provision of this infrastructure, including funding and delivery. The Property Council proposed that, by using transport agencies and corridors, local government should

> champion the roll-out of broadband; develop a fibre development and cooperation plan, which will then be incorporated into other asset development plans. Any fibre laying organisation will be given the opportunity to benefit from planned excavations and One Auckland utility planning. [11137]

Electricity

16.48   A few submitters pointed out the vital place of electricity supply in regional infrastructure. Counties Power made the point in its submission that the "need for an adequate and sustainable supply of electricity to service the needs of Auckland city" is one of the key aspects of infrastructure for a world-class city. [11018]

16.49 The electricity utility company Vector noted in its submission that security of supply into Auckland was under considerable pressure driven by high demand growth for electricity in both residential and commercial markets. The company advised that significant new investment in transmission and generation was required over the short and long term to ensure reliable and secure energy supply to the region. [11332]

16.50 ARC noted that a major challenge for Auckland was securing a long-term, continuous, and reliable energy supply, especially during times of peak demand. Currently, 75 per cent of peak-load electricity was sourced via the national grid along a few critical pieces of infrastructure. Demand for energy had increased significantly and was likely to continue to grow, raising questions of where additional energy supply would come from, on what scale, and with what impacts, and how demand management measures could be introduced. The submitter highlighted a degree of urgency noting that immediate decisions were required on how to move towards more renewable sources of energy, and whether to reinforce electricity transmission in Auckland central business district and the North Shore to secure power supply to these areas. [11250]

16.51 Manukau City Council noted that in future addressing climate change would require Auckland to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as part of New Zealand's commitment under the Kyoto Protocol. The submitter contemplated that this would present challenges in terms of regional transport, energy production, and also the region's agricultural industry. [11041]

16.52 Genesis Energy, an electricity generator, submitted that regulatory decision making on major infrastructure projects should not have to navigate both regional and local levels and their associated planning regimes. [11214]

16.53 Submissions revealed differences in views over electricity companies and their costs and control. In terms of responsibility for electricity and energy supply, a few submitters were in favour of that being managed by a single regional council; others suggested it belonged with local authorities generally. Security of supply and greater efficiencies were given as reasons for local government to undertake electricity supply.

16.54 One submitter spoke scathingly of the "gravy train" around water and electricity supply and wanted the system to be restructured, with central purchasing of electricity:

> As a bulk buyer of electricity – nearly one-third of the national uptake – favourable (to ratepayers) 10-year contracts can be secured. Should suppliers fail in this environment, Auckland PowerCo will be created, with profits limited to 3% per annum. [10329]

16.55 However, other submitters did not expect the Commission to review or change present arrangements. Counties Power's submission noted that the transmission of electricity to Auckland City passed through its area of Franklin and Papakura Districts,

> and is in the hands of Transpower Limited, a government owned entity responsible for operating the national electricity grid … We do not envisage the Commission to propose any change to this arrangement. [11018]

16.56   Several submitters made comments about the lines company Vector. Some said it should be owned by the regional council, answerable to it, and "controlled more strongly than in the past". [11076] Others wanted more transparency and accountability from such organisations.

16.57   There was some discussion in submissions about different energy consumer trusts. Both Auckland Energy Consumer Trust ("AECT") and Counties Power Consumer Trust wanted their arrangements to be left alone, and not changed by the Commission. Counties Power said,

> We ask the Commissioners to note that Counties Power is operating effectively at present. As a company operating within and [outside the] Auckland region that has never even been partly owned by a local or central government entity, its ownership and governance should not be considered further within the current Royal Commission. [11018]

16.58   AECT was similarly firm about its legal status and the limits of the Commission's mandate:

> AECT was established to own the assets of the former Auckland Electric Power Board ("AEPB"). These assets currently consist of a 75.1% shareholding in Vector Limited, worth approximately $1.45 billion at current share values.
>
> AECT holds these assets in trust for the energy consumers living within the former AEPB boundaries (i.e. in Auckland, Manukau and Papakura) until 2073, at which point they will pass to the local government body or bodies functioning within the boundaries of the former AEPB. ...
>
> The Councils have no other interest in the assets of the AECT, and have no legal right or power to participate in the performance of AECT's obligations under the Trust Deed.
>
> The reform, amalgamation and even abolition of local government arrangements is expressly provided for in AECT's trust deed and would have no effect on AECT or its beneficiaries. ...
>
> AECT considers that its functions, ownership of Vector, the terms of its Trust Deed, the Energy Companies Act 1992, and issues affecting energy trusts generally, are not matters within the Commission's terms of reference. [11068]

16.59   However, the Local Government Centre said, in relation to AECT and the Commission's terms of reference:

> in recommending the **governance** arrangements for the future of the Auckland region, the Royal Commission should consider how wide the scope of its mandate goes in addressing the role and governance of local public institutions. As an example, the terms of reference encompass "what ownership, governance, and institutional arrangements and funding responsibilities are required to ensure the effective, efficient and sustainable provision of **public infrastructure**...". One of the most significant infrastructure networks in the Auckland region is the gas and electricity networks owned and operated by Vector Limited, itself 75.1% owned by the Auckland Energy Consumer Trust. [11078, submitter's emphasis]

16.60 A few submitters advocated that the AECT should be incorporated into the regional local government structure the Commission decided upon, thereby strengthening the regional body. Former Chairman of the Auckland Citizens and Ratepayers Now organisation, John Collinge, gave these reasons:

(a) It would enable funds to become free to help develop Auckland's infrastructure.

(b) It would enable the asset of the AECT to be held, developed and maintained for the benefit of the whole of the region – including the North Shore, Waitakere and Rodney as well as Auckland, Manukau and Papakura – in an integrated and equal way.

(c) There are costs savings in reducing the running costs of the AECT.

(d) It would bring the operations of the Trust into the public arena and avoid the secretiveness of the Trust

(e) It would substantially improve the governance of the Trust and Vector including the appointment of independent, non self interested, better qualified directors without conflicts of interest.

(f) It would avoid capture by private interests and small unrepresentative groups.

(g) It would help to bring back community responsibility to the provision of electricity in the Auckland region. [10780]

Solid waste

16.61 Solid waste was not commented on in detail by many submitters, perhaps suggesting that solid waste management is not widely perceived to be a problem. However, some submitters saw opportunities for improvement to current performance. As with other infrastructure, the major issue identified was the fragmentation of investment and management between territorial authorities.

16.62 Packaging Council of New Zealand advocated a regional approach to waste management decisions that should be consistent with national decisions:

> We believe that a clearly identified strategic regional vision to waste minimisation and resource recovery has a greater chance of achieving effective waste management solutions than the current fragmented local approach.
>
> The economics of waste management services, particularly with regards to the recovery of recyclables, is best handled on a regional scale. Without volume recovery, operations can be uneconomically viable which potentially compromises the range of materials which can be recovered – this is a situation which is occurring across the Auckland region today. [11054]

16.63 The Packaging Council acknowledged the value of the joint initiative between Auckland and Manukau Cities to recover recyclables collected through kerbside collection, saying it was testament to how effective waste policies could be implemented when a strategic focus was applied rather than a local solution. However, the submitter

left open whether a sufficient regional vision could be achieved through joint ventures or needed direct regional council control.

16.64 Another submitter favoured regional management of solid waste for other reasons, saying that solid waste facilities would require the involvement of private operators, but it was unsatisfactory for the existence of these facilities to be "simply at the whim of private enterprise." [10684]

Miscellaneous infrastructure

16.65 Other submissions seeking regionalisation of infrastructure mentioned a variety of other infrastructure. One referred to education infrastructure, indicating that this should be given the same attention as other infrastructure such as transport and water. The University of Auckland argued for recognition of the importance of research universities:

> Universities contribute in multiple ways to a city's development. Through their role as teaching and research institutions, and as critic and conscience of society, they train a highly-skilled workforce; they attract skilled and talented people (along with their knowledge and ideas) into cities and regions. [10850]

16.66 New Zealand Refining Company referred to the oil supply pipeline between Marsden Point and Auckland and asked for this to be recognised and provided for as infrastructure essential to Auckland region's economic health and a vital asset underpinning its future growth. This submission asked for utilities such as this to be holistically managed at a regional level. [11183] Other submitters asked for particular projects above a certain scale to be taken over regionally. These included the Eden Park upgrade and railway double-tracking.

16.67 Transit New Zealand in its submission emphasised the need for infrastructure providers to engage in long-term planning. [1545]

17. Transport

17.1　This chapter summarises submissions about governance of land transport, including road, rail, public transport, walking, and cycling. Some submitters wrote about all of these together as "transport", while others wrote specifically on one or more of these transport modes. Reflecting this pattern, this chapter is divided into sections that summarise general transport submissions, and submissions particular to roads, public transport, rail, walking, and cycling. Some overlaps are inevitable.

17.2　A total of 925 submitters mentioned transport issues in their submissions, more than 25% of all submitters. Most expressed dissatisfaction and frustration about current transport services and networks, many blaming current governance arrangements for the present situation. Some said that the impetus for change to the governance of Auckland came from public dissatisfaction with traffic congestion and councils' indecision on infrastructure issues. A number of submitters said that Auckland's main problem was transport.

> As an EFL teacher, students from every country are always in disbelief that a city of Auckland's size can have such a terrible transportation system. It cannot be considered 'world-class' with the current system and only effective regionwide government effort – without interference from government but rather support – will allow this to happen. [10474]

Current governance arrangements

17.3　The majority of submitters considered that there were problems with transport governance. Their main concerns with governance were a lack of integration between transport modes, slow decision making for upgrades to the system, and what was seen as the complicated and chaotic nature of current arrangements.

17.4　References were made by many submitters to the "multiplicity" of authorities, and the need for unified decision making. The number of agencies involved in transport decisions was variously suggested by submitters to be about 15 or 18. (The variation between these estimates is perhaps explained by the complexity of the governance system.) However, irrespective of the exact number, most submitters believed that there were too many players. As one submitter exclaimed, "Try getting someone to take responsibility in that quagmire!" [10472]

17.5　Complexity and fragmentation were the predominant themes in descriptions of current arrangements. Many submitters described fragmentation and duplication of governance over transport modes, between roads and public transport, and between

national, regional, and territorial authorities. Auckland Regional Transport Authority (ARTA) said in its submission,

> The duplication of functions within the system results in silo decision-making, some of which is carried out by organisations who may not be best positioned to understand regional needs, and an inability to deliver major and system-wide initiatives. These issues combine to limit the capability of the region to deliver improved outcomes to transport users and the community and increase transaction costs. [11291]

17.6   Another submitter saw governance problems extending to the regional agencies, ARTA, and Auckland Regional Council (ARC):

> … ARTA is responsible for making decisions about expenditure on public transport, while the ARC is responsible for the funding. The ARC has ultimate responsibility to the public for public transport outcomes, but it can only control outcomes from a distance, and through a very transactional process. [10734]

17.7   The same submitter said that in regard to railway development there were up to 18 parties involved, excluding contractors and consultants. The number of players and transactions slowed planning and decision making to a crawl. There was far more time spent interacting with the different parties than in providing the outcomes. Another submitter said that transport was the key area of poor performance in Auckland:

> We have the worst urban rail system in the developed world. This goes hand in hand with the fact that we are equal to the most car dependent city in the world. [10486]

17.8   Both Ports of Auckland Ltd (POAL) and the Employers' and Manufacturers' Association (EMA) said that there were too many disparate organisations involved in transport decisions. The latter submitter gave an example of the players involved in railway development:

> As well as ARTA having the electrification and rolling stock responsibilities it is also responsible for station buildings. But Ontrack is responsible for the tracks and signalling, and local councils (eg, Auckland, Waitakere and Manukau city councils) are responsible for the station surrounds such as "park and ride" facilities. [10813]

17.9   POAL advocated the rationalisation of approximately 15 different transport bodies (Transit New Zealand, LTSA, ARC, local councils, ARTA, ONTRACK, etc.) to one, and the integration of rail planning with roading. [10866]

17.10   Complexity was also mentioned by Auckland International Airport in its submission. It noted there were 46 separate plans that applied to transport matters across the city, including 17 strategy documents. Many of these had to be referred to, or required submissions, in the course of promoting land transport links to the airport. [11266]

17.11   The perceived disunity of transport agencies was not considered to have been cured by the Regional Land Transport Strategy. Auckland City Council noted that ARTA was currently the only transport agency required to give effect to the strategy. [11181]

Problems other than governance

17.12   A small minority of submitters took the view that the transport problems were due to factors other than governance. One submitter, who may have been a lone voice, said that transport problems were caused by physical geography rather than any governance issues.

Case studies

17.13   Several submitters described transport situations and projects that they considered to be caused by the dysfunction of current transport governance. Some expanded these into detailed case studies. These are briefly summarised here, as these cases may have been known by many submitters and influenced them.

17.14   One such case study was the central business district (CBD) to airport link, which was included in two submissions: the Committee for Auckland's case study, and that of Auckland International Airport Ltd, which obviously has a commercial interest in the issue. The importance of this access route was stressed in both submissions. Factors that contributed to its priority as a transport issue were detailed in the case study: Auckland International Airport contributed $19 billion annually to the economy, with 70% of all international travellers arriving or departing through Auckland. A 90% increase in land transport demand was predicted by 2015. [11021]

17.15   The airport company's submission expressed frustration at a lack of progress on this important route:

(a)   The provision of a designated clear route between the Airport and the CBD is a priority requirement, and is of city-wide and national significance. However, there is no city-wide policy or guidelines on how this route should be developed, so it has been left to the Airport to advocate for progress. The Airport is now working closely with ACC [Auckland City Council] to advance this project. The Airport has committed significant staffing and financial resources to make relatively slow progress.

(b)   The Airport is very poorly serviced by public transport passenger services. Bus services to and from the Airport are minimal, which is a very unusual outcome for New Zealand's major transport hub. Again, this is a city-wide issue that should be promoted from the "top down", but that is not happening. Although the issue has been identified as a deficiency in regional strategies and plans, it is only recently that any concrete steps have been taken by the various territorial, regional and transportation bodies, to implement improved services. [11266]

17.16   The Committee for Auckland reiterated the point that despite numerous studies, reports, presentations, submissions, and agreements, there was still no clarity on who had the ultimate responsibility for this project:

The CBD to Airport link should be a critical part of regional planning. …

> However there is no regional transport body empowered to take a whole network approach – including arterials and motorways – for the benefit of Auckland as a whole. This adversely impacts on the ability to make long-term infrastructural investment planning decisions, across the entire transport system. Improving the regional focus for transport planning, to drive economic development, is a key issue. [11021]

17.17   The Committee for Auckland saw the need for more transport links to the airport from the CBD as being an issue of connectivity, which was vital for successful city-regions. The committee noted what it called "unclear leadership and strategy" on this issue, which had major implications for the Rugby World Cup and Auckland's economic competitiveness. It recommended "a single empowered regional transport agency with authority to make decisions across the whole transport network that support a competitive city-region." [11021]

17.18   The Environmental Defence society said,

> In transport, there are still poor and incomplete motorway linkages with north-south traffic routed through the central isthmus; there have been excessively long time frames for implementation of public transport projects (the North Shore Busway was first mooted in 1988 as was the upgrade of suburban rail services); and average morning peak travel speeds (a measure of congestion) have not been increasing as a result of improvements – rather they are merely keeping pace with growth in traffic volumes and diversions to public transport. [10788]

Financial issues

17.19   Financial issues were often mentioned, especially the amount of capital investment needed for transport development, reflecting past under-investment. Some submitters felt that funding problems of transport were more influential than organisational problems, but most who acknowledged funding problems also asked for governance changes.

17.20   Submitters suggested a number of reforms to transport funding, particularly use of a wider range of funding, including rates, loans, Infrastructure Auckland dividends, and a resource rental paid by operators to fund roads, rail, airports, and ports.

17.21   The role of central government in funding transport was identified by submitters as a key concern. Suggestions included introducing bulk funding by central government to the regional council. The advantages of this would be to give certainty on transportation funding, allow local government to decide priorities, and remove Land Transport New Zealand (now New Zealand Transport Agency) from the process. Funding administered by that agency was seen as administration-intensive, uncertain, and inflexible.

17.22   One submitter attributed problems to "mislocated" decision making between Crown agencies and local government:

> there are issues around delegating responsibility for land transport funding: state highway development is tightly controlled by central government out of the consolidated fund while the rail network must be funded entirely by the region through debt, rates and a regional petrol tax. Consequently there is no alignment between state roading projects and regional passenger transport initiatives … . [10897]

Proposed transport models

17.23   This section summarises the main points of submissions from ARTA and the three city councils that proposed detailed models of transport governance.

17.24   The model proposed by ARTA was that there should be a mix of regional and local control of transport functions. Regional functions would include

- strategic planning and prioritisation of activities on the regional transport network

- coordination of regional transport funding (including through agreements with local government)

- full responsibility for the planning, management, and operation of all regional passenger transport infrastructure and services

- regional travel demand management initiatives

- management of the regional arterial road network (delegation to the region responsibility for the maintenance, management, and operation of the State highways and regional arterials that are at the moment local roads).

Under the ARTA model, local government would (subject to regional strategies) continue to be responsible for planning, management, and operation of local roads; provision of local bus stops, cycleways, and pedestrian facilities; and local travel planning activities. [11291]

17.25   The Auckland City Council model was part of its "one council" model for Auckland governance. The main points relevant to transport were as follows:

- Develop a 30-year vision and strategy, a 10-year action and investment plan, and a funding plan for all transport modes, including existing State highways.

- Agree on a transport vision with central government that supports regional growth; economic, social, and environmental objectives; and national priorities.

- Fund transport from national sources (Land Transport New Zealand, Treasury), rates, development contributions, regional fuel tax, user charges, and possibly

tolls (Government buy-in being critical, with discretion in the use of national funds).

- · Cater for neighbourhood and area initiatives in the planning process.
- · Implement construction, maintenance, service procurement, and operations via business units, council-controlled organisations (CCOs), or other options determined by capability to deliver in a timely, efficient, and effective way.
- · Require delivery agencies to give effect to a regional strategy and prioritised implementation plan, to avoid silos and multiple decision making. [11181]

17.26 Manukau City Council assumed that the functions and responsibilities of Transit and ONTRACK were beyond the terms of reference of the Commission. Its model included these features:

- · Include in the Regional Land Transport Strategy or Plan the development and funding of arterial routes, in accordance with the Regional Spatial Plan.
- · Government should "bulk fund" ARTA to deliver on regionally agreed roading programmes. ARTA should determine subsidy rates.
- · A regional agency implements planning for arterial routes.
- · Rather than the regional council, local councils deliver arterial routes because of the local impacts and because regional management would add yet another roading authority.
- · Local councils deliver road services and influence transport planning. (Fewer cities improve local delivery of roading and increase funding capacity.)
- · ARTA funds and provides passenger transport services. [11041]

17.27 The Waitakere City Council model provided for

- · a new multimodal regional transport agency with all the powers of Land Transport New Zealand for final approval of regional transport projects
- · a regional transport agency to have bulk funding and multi-year funding from central government and include Crown representatives and/or representatives on the New Zealand transport entity
- · the regional transport agency to be responsible for all rail infrastructure, planning, and priority setting, and State highway planning and priority setting from 2009
- · State providers to be required to give effect to regional priorities
- · the regional transport agency to be given responsibility for strategy, planning, and priority setting for arterial routes, and for allocating funding. [11121]

Regional governance of public transport and roads

17.28   The majority of submitters who discussed public transport and roads together did not provide detailed models, but strongly supported regional control of these transport modes. This section summarises those submissions. Following sections consider transport modes individually.

17.29   The majority opinion was that transport was the issue that most needed regional control or cooperation. The main reason given was the perceived complexity and number of agencies at present. Many saw this as a reason to consolidate governance of all roads and public transport into a single entity. One said,

> At the moment fifteen different public sector agencies have responsibility for planning, funding, developing and managing different parts of the transport network. If all those agencies were working together in full co-operation perhaps the system might work. But historically they haven't worked well together, and it is probably unrealistic to expect that they will. Different local and regional councillors, Ministers, and Boards are accountable to different constituencies. Stopping competition among the agencies, and reconciling their different views, will always be difficult. As a direct result of this, progress in fixing Auckland's transport is complicated and slow. [11259]

17.30   Overlaps between city councils were mentioned as a particular problem, mainly related to the roading network, but also to public transport. One submitter favoured a regional approach because, when measured in passenger-kilometres, the great majority of public transport trips were between existing cities, not within them. Another said, in calling for an increase of regional collaboration, "nothing progresses because any one link in the chain is able to prevent progress by all the others." [10218]

17.31   Regional control was also favoured because of the need for regional transport planning and the ability of a regional body to do this:

> The lack of transport and planning has affected the way Auckland has developed. For example, business and office parks have been developed away from regional centres and transport hubs in order to build car parks to make it easier for users. This has put more pressure on the road, marginalised potential transport solutions … and put pressure on Councils to change zones and plans to accommodate these much needed developments. Maintaining separate Councils will continue this fragmented approach and lack of cohesion. [10854]

17.32   Other reasons given for favouring regional control over transport included increased efficiency because of the scale of the regional function, and the opportunity it gave to adopt green transport solutions. Several submitters suggested that integrated ticketing, cycle networks, walking networks, and more effective use of the harbour as a transport hub could be brought about by regional control. One submitter said that the regional council would be better positioned and have more power to influence central government than current agencies.

17.33   The ability of a regional agency to coordinate land use planning and public transport policy was another reason for regional control. The Ministry of Transport said

that "effective governance for growth management and economic development is as important as effective governance for transport." [11296] ARTA also called for land use and transport planning to be undertaken together, not necessarily by the same agency, but by requiring a transport strategy to implement the goals of a land use strategy. [11291] (See also Chapter 12, "Planning and Regulatory Functions".)

17.34   The economic strength of a regional agency was seen by some submitters as an important factor in advocating a regional consolidation of transport. These submitters saw a regional body as being necessary to have the economic and political strength to get the job done and the ability to enforce controversial decisions on issues such as land use planning and air pollution.

17.35   The trade-offs between the road network and the public transport system, and competition for investment between them, were noted by submitters, many of whom felt that a single regional agency would be best able to adjust policies to changing circumstances. For example, some submitters felt that market forces would eventually lead to declining traffic volume; as the petrol price increased, funding could be redirected from road building to public transport. Others, perhaps less optimistic, saw a need for concessions or incentives to use public transport. A few felt that if the public transport system could be made more efficient, then cars would become uneconomic for regular commuting. Several suggested that if the money spent on roads were channelled into public transport, there would be less traffic congestion. A common theme with these ideas was that a governance structure was needed that could take an overview and make the appropriate trade-offs between transport modes.

17.36   One of these submitters called for a regional agency to have responsibility for all transport planning, including the State highways that pass through Auckland:

> The current transport strategy and funding is dominated by the fact that state highways take the major part of the regional transport building budget. The arrival of post peak oil conditions and a continuing high price of petrol will mean that road traffic will decline and leave capacity on Auckland roads. Funding has to be redirected to an accelerated public transport building programme; otherwise many people will be caught without an economic option for daily travel. [10486]

17.37   The kind of regional organisation that might run transport was not generally agreed. Some thought that ARTA, ONTRACK, and Transit should be combined into a single regional transport body and required to give effect to the regional transport strategy. Others thought that ARTA should be fully integrated within ARC or become a stand-alone funder of passenger transport in the region. The EMA suggested that regional transport including rail, transport infrastructure and services, State highways, local roads and traffic management, cycling, and walking, should be under a new council-controlled organisation with transport as its focus.

17.38   ARTA was itself controversial. Some submitters called for the disbanding of ARTA, one saying that "no costly liaison organisations [are] needed". [74] Others saw the need

for ARTA to be given more time to prove its effectiveness. North Shore City Council advocated that

> the continued separate structures of the Auckland Regional Transport Authority (ARTA) and Auckland Regional Holdings (ARH) need to be reconsidered to ensure adequate resources are given to ARTA and that its assets are legislatively retained in public ownership. [11074]

17.39 The Regional Land Transport Committee of ARC also had its critics. North Shore City thought that membership should remain broad to include interested stakeholders, but voting could be restricted to those responsible for funding the Regional Land Transport Strategy's implementation. Another said in regard to the committee,

> Regionally significant infrastructure investment decisions are not made with a regional view. Many decisions are actually defaulted on. In the past, for example, the Regional Land Transport Committee ranked all State Highway projects in the top ten as first equal. This didn't offend elected Members on the day, but did default the real decision making to others. [10924]

17.40 Central government involvement in regional bodies was mentioned. One submitter suggested the establishment of a new body having the sole purpose of providing transport and transport infrastructure across Auckland and stretching into the Waikato and Northland. This would be partly appointed and partly elected and its functions would include coordination with central government. Land Transport New Zealand said,

> The governance and delivery structures for greater Auckland must be up to the task of coping with large transport issues (staffing, skills, funding etc) and with the new approach of government. Only then can it be ensured that regional transport issues are recognised by central government as serious and urgent and that the proposed solutions are effective and economic. This transparency will expedite the funding allocation process. The transport governance and structure for greater Auckland will need to facilitate a strong partnership between Government and Region not only intra-regionally but also to adequately address inter-regional issues as well. [11296]

17.41 Other suggestions included a new regional body made up of representatives from each local council, supplemented by binding citizens' referenda and forums facilitated by electronic media. An Auckland transport CCO was also suggested. Another submitter suggested that an agency along the lines of the Australian model used by the Department of Main Roads (Queensland) or the Roads and Traffic Authority (New South Wales) could be adopted in Auckland. A common theme was that all other agencies (including Government and local authority agencies) should relinquish their responsibilities to the regional entity. Other suggestions for the regional agency proposed that it should be a regional transport board, or a public company, among others.

17.42 A submission from a regional councillor pointed out that bodies such as Transit, ARC, and Auckland and Manukau City Councils were all signatories to the New Zealand Urban Design Protocol, yet plans were still submitted that seemed to focus only on transport issues and did not advance "good urban design" and future public transport

routes. This could be rectified by a multi-party development agency approach. The case study of the Manukau Harbour Crossing and Gloucester Road Interchange was given. [10098]

17.43 In its submission, ARTA called for a high degree of cooperation between organisations such as Transit, ONTRACK, and ARTA, to achieve the targets and objectives set for transport infrastructure. ARTA saw the need for vertical integration between strategy, funding, planning, delivery, and operations, as well as the need for horizontal integration across the region for key infrastructure and services. The need to integrate transport planning with land use planning was also mentioned. [11291]

17.44 Some submitters favoured regional organisation of transport matters because a regional body could better coordinate with central government and ensure the financial burden was shared equitably across the region. Although some submitters felt that there could be cost reductions from regional control of transport, this was not the main driver for reorganisation.

17.45 The Local Government Centre submission proposed that the functional boundaries for the development of an integrated transport policy must include the ports of Tauranga and Northland because Auckland was heavily dependent on arrangements to ensure the timely and cost-effective transport of imports and exports. [11078]

Local governance of public transport and roads

17.46 Thirteen submitters proposed that there should be local control over public transport and roading. The main reason given was that transport should be implemented by smaller area authorities that understood the concerns of each locality. Papakura District Council advocated control of local roads to be retained within local councils, because they had a significant impact on local communities, they provided access and parking for local businesses, they were closely associated with local cycleways and footpaths, and local councils were more likely to respond quickly to local concerns about local roads. [10537]

17.47 Some of these submitters suggested qualifications to local control, for example suggesting a strong policy and implementation framework at the regional level.

17.48 There were 84 submitters who advocated a mixture of control over roads and transport infrastructure between regional and local authorities. The most common proposed allocation between the bodies was that the regional council should take responsibility for design of motorways and arterial roads and fund the arterial roads. The regional agency would run bus services, rail, park-and-ride services, airports, and ferries. Under this split, the local councils would be responsible for local roading, street lighting, street planting, local safety, footpath and road maintenance, street furniture, and car parking. Local provision of bus stops, cycleways, pedestrian facilities, and walking school buses were also suggested.

Road networks

17.49 This section refers to submissions that roads should be administered nationally, regionally, or locally.

17.50 One submitter said that prior to World War II, transport was funded by central government and that we needed to get back to that model where central government made decisions about infrastructure and its funding. [10867] Others shared the view that central government should have a greater role. One said that all responsibility for transport should sit with the New Zealand Transport Agency. [10214] Other submitters felt that central government should provide all roading in New Zealand and public transport to lessen the ratepayer burden. Others shared a view that a national body should at least fund and manage arterial roads. Against this, some submitters saw central government involvement as an unnecessary complication, which should be removed.

17.51 In terms of the freight sector, several submitters advocated the connection of Auckland networks to wider national networks. As noted earlier, one said that the functional boundaries for the development of an integrated transport policy must include the ports of Tauranga and Northland because of their part in transport of Auckland's imports and exports. [11078] Another submitter, a key supplier of aggregate (rock and sand) for roading, thought that the regional council should engage central government and Transit in the strategic importance of protecting long-term aggregate supplies for use in roading development in Auckland. [1476]

17.52 Many submitters advocated regional control of road networks. There were 169 submitters in favour of all roads being taken over by the regional council. A number of submitters argued that the region should have responsibility for roading construction throughout the city, which included control of motorways, State highways, and arterial roads. (There was no clear definition of arterial roads; they were alternatively called main roads, major roads, or regional roads by submitters.) Reasons given were that these roads were better controlled by one agency; that the new agency would better represent the interests of the region; and that it was a better way to protect the environment, maintain urban limits, and promote efficiency. One submitter said that a regional agency would ensure continuity in planning projects and take a wide regional view. Both management and funding of the roads were considered to be included.

17.53 The Ministry of Transport, while favouring regional control of arterial roads, recognised some difficulties:

> Arterials are, however, a key area where regional and community interests can collide. Improving the operation of these routes, including implementing bus priority measures, can often require changing the balance of regional and local interests. Examples include reallocating road space to buses and cyclists, changing access to the route or removing parking from community facilities, such as retail areas and high schools. The requirement for these issues to be addressed in a constructive way needs to be taken into account when considering future governance arrangements for these routes. [11296]

17.54   The details of a regional agency that might own and operate the roads was not described by many submitters. One suggested that council roads should be merged with Transit's Auckland activities to create a new company, contracted by councils, and subject to central government regulation. Others saw a CCO-type body run as a business, similar to the water companies. The advantages of the CCO structure were seen as efficiency and removal from daily political influence. Another submitter said that the roads could be run under contract by a private company or by the regional council.

17.55   Sixty submitters thought that roads should be managed and planned locally. Not many submitters gave detailed reasons. Some felt that local management of roads was important to ensure that local ownership was in the ratepayers' hands and that the roads were not sold. Others felt that arterial roads were a core responsibility of district councils.

17.56   What emerged most clearly from these local control submissions was concern about more than just the through-traffic function of roads. Many of these submitters mentioned walkways, cycleways, street lighting, road drainage, footpaths, street cleaning, traffic control, pavement issues, location of crossings, and parking issues as being important to be managed by local councils. It is notable that few of these issues were mentioned by those who favoured regional control of roads and it seems that those who favoured regional control mainly had in mind the through-traffic function of roads.

Control of the railway

17.57   Twenty-six submitters argued for the railway to be run regionally, at least for public transport. The main reason was that a regional agency could better represent the interests of the region in terms of rail development.

17.58   Some submitters proposed that an expanded regional council might fully take over rail networks from the Crown. They noted the operational and investment trade-offs between road and rail. In regard to rail, POAL said that the failure of ONTRACK to provide rail sidings at Wiri had resulted in approximately 100,000 extra truck movements per year on the roads. POAL advocated a rationalisation of the transport system by reducing the number of bodies it had to deal with, from 15 to one, and by integrating rail planning with roading:

> the efficiency of POAL's business activities will be enhanced by any reduction in the number of [local authorities and government bodies] with which [it] has to interact. [10866]

17.59   Other submitters also highlighted the disparity between funding of State highways from central government, and funding of the Auckland rail network from rates. One submitter argued that because of the reliance on rates funding, almost any council could veto a regionally important initiative by withholding its share of funds. [10897]

17.60 There was a feeling among some submitters that outlying areas of the region such as Franklin District did not get sufficient resources in terms of rail or other transport infrastructure. For example, rail services were less frequent to Pukekohe. Another said that the rail network aimed primarily to serve the Auckland CBD, which ignored the growing development of outlying business hubs. Wider public consultation on rail development was called for.

Public transport

17.61 This section refers to submissions that focused on control of public transport. There was evident dissatisfaction with the current public transport system. Submitters felt that much more needed to be done, particularly in terms of improving train services, developing cycleways and walkways, and having more frequent feeder services with smaller buses. The slow rate of improvement was frequently commented on.

17.62 Many submitters advocated that public transport should be managed regionally. Reasons advanced for this included that it would promote efficiency, effectiveness, and consistency; a regional agency would better represent the interests of the region; it would be easier to make decisions; it would remove public transport from daily political influence; and it would allow for a user-pays charging method. One submitter argued that a single agency to plan and provide regional transport services would reduce duplication, streamline its management and investment, and enable an easeful integration of transport services. Combined ticketing was seen as a positive outcome of placing buses within a regional agency.

17.63 The scope of the activity of the regional agency, it was suggested, should include all modes of public transport, including rail, sea, and air. Many submitters felt that the agency should have responsibility for planning and implementation of transport; however, some felt that central government retained a responsibility for provision of infrastructure with only the planning done regionally. Bus lanes and traffic signals were included by many submitters in a regional agency's functions. Park-and-ride facilities were also mentioned as a regional function.

17.64 There was disagreement as to the role of private enterprise in public transport. Some felt that this added to the confusion, whilst others felt that it could deliver some efficiencies. Several submitters urged that buses should be back under public ownership and organisation by a regional council.

17.65 Many submitters felt that robust decision making was required at the regional level to achieve certain outcomes, particularly in terms of public transport:

- Public transport needs to be forced on us. Motorways should be made narrower not wider, cars should face increased parking fees, be tolled …. If the money being spent on roads was channelled into public transport, there would be less traffic congestion." [1133]

- Radical surgery … [is] needed to move quickly to a position where it is possible for many people to leave their cars at home and have the services of reliable public transport to work and leisure activities … The present structure … is far too complex … ARTA … should have responsibility for **all transport planning, including the State Highways that pass through Auckland**. [10486, author's emphasis]

17.66   There was a variety of suggestions for the kind of organisation that might run the regional public transport system. Some advocated enhanced powers for ARTA, or the creation of a CCO, and the involvement of private companies. A block of 314 submissions from Papakura District asserted that large councils would have to give up some of their powers in order to consolidate traffic and transport powers within the regional council. Detailed reasons were not given.

17.67   There were three submissions in favour of local councils managing public transport. One pointed out that it was the smaller local councils who pushed for better transport systems in North Shore and Waitakere Cities. No further detailed reasons were given for this.

Walking and cycling

17.68   Some submitters referred to cycleway and walkway policies. A clear majority favoured regional planning and implementation for cycleways and walkways. While most submitters appeared unhappy with current policies set by existing councils, few proposed any governance changes in respect of these. Cycle Action Auckland noted that in spite of policy support for cycling on the part of councils, implementation of those policies was lacking:

> Transit is not willing to provide a cycleway and walkway over the Auckland Harbour bridge when carrying out strengthening work later this year. This is despite resolutions and support for the project from a number of separate entities (Auckland City Council, North Shore City Council, Auckland Regional Council), and the fact that it fits with national policy for sustainable transport. [10824]

17.69   This organisation criticised the current multi-tiered system as confusing in terms of who made policy, who implemented policy, who provided funding, what were the communication channels, and who ensured the process was democratic. They supported a new government structure to facilitate the planning, funding, and implementation of cycling facilities in order to improve safety for cyclists, as the present system did not reach stated goals:

> the responsibility for consulting with the community, funding and implementing the cycle and pedestrian facilities falls to the various city councils. The difficulties faced by councils in finding budgets and achieving successful consultation for change in the community mean that the facilities implemented fall far short of the vision of ARC and ARTA. …

A simpler, more streamlined regional governance structure will increase the likelihood of a shift to this more sustainable transport mode. [10824, submitter's emphasis]

18. The Three Waters

18.1   This chapter summarises the submissions in relation to the three waters (water supply, wastewater, and stormwater), which are basic and vital functions of a city/region's infrastructure managed by local bodies. Every community has needs in terms of usable drinking water, the disposal of wastewater (everything from the kitchen sink and bathroom to sewage and factory run-off), and dealing with stormwater from rainstorms and floods. A total of 491 submitters specifically referred to the three waters when addressing the issue of whether decisions and activities should be made at a regional or local level. Submissions on council-controlled organisations that manage water are referred to in Chapter 24, "Council-Controlled Organisations and Commercial Entities".

Effectiveness of current arrangements

18.2   Many submitters voiced concerns about the current state of Auckland's water services industry. The vast majority of these concerns related to the fragmented nature of the industry, which is

> characterised by a split between a bulk water and wastewater provider (Watercare Services Limited) and a series of water and wastewater retail companies (Local Network Operators). [11137]

18.3   Examples of the sort of comments received in relation to the fragmentation of services were

- Seven suppliers/providers for a customer base of c.1.5m. Logic would argue that this cannot be efficient. The potential for duplication and inefficiency is significant. [10421]

- The industry is too fragmented –
    • there is duplication in master planning, conflict over investment plans, and no common approach to major region-wide issues such as consumer pricing and demand management;
    • there is widespread concern about water sources and allocation, future wastewater treatment and capacity; and
    • retail prices and margins vary across the Auckland region. [11137]

18.4   The New Zealand Water and Wastes Association took an international perspective, saying that New Zealand had 73 separate entities responsible for three waters infrastructure, delivery, and disposal, yet France, with a far larger population, had five; and the greater Melbourne region, with a similar population to New Zealand, had a single water wholesaler and three water retailers. The association said the degree of

fragmentation in New Zealand was inefficient, and called for a smaller number of publicly owned but commercially operated providers, noting,

> The critical point is that rationalisation of delivery of services in such a vitally important area as water services need not impact on, much less threaten, local democratic representation and control (nor does it threaten public ownership of control of 'water'). [2162]

Auckland International Airport agreed:

> the Airport considers the current system is unnecessarily fragmented and complex, and results in suboptimal planning and investment in infrastructure, and high costs. The Airport therefore supports the vertical integration of water supply, wastewater and public stormwater networks. It seems sensible in a city of Auckland's size to have one such entity for these purposes, rather than the multiple bulk and retail organisation presently involved. [11266]

18.5   The Committee for Auckland also raised the problems of fragmentation and inconsistency in the sector, as well as central planning issues and "lack of overall strategic direction". [11037]

18.6   As in many other infrastructure sectors, there have been myriad reports into integration of the three waters, reform of the water sector, and water pricing. One submission referred to the "raft of previous studies", which showed "we would save about 20 percent of our current costs if we operated all water/sewer/stormwater through a single organisation." [11269]

18.7   A few submissions also raised concerns about territorial local authorities using funds received in relation to water services for other purposes. For example,

- some councils are using their water organisations as "cash cows" and effectively subsidising unrelated council services with money received from the water operation. This too is inequitable. [10813]

- Under no circumstances should water be run by Local Councils … Councils will milk water for unjustified profits. [10202]

18.8   Ngāti Whātua was concerned at the assumed "right of water allocation, monitoring and ownership" by Watercare Services Ltd. [11329]

Regional versus local decision making

18.9   Many submitters expressed the view that water services should be delivered at a regional level. Of the 491 submissions received in relation to water services

- 409 submitters considered that Auckland's water services (or at least those aspects of water services referred to in their submissions) should be delivered at a **regional** level

- 43 submitters considered that Auckland's water services (or at least those aspects of water services referred to in their submissions) should be delivered at a **local** level

- 39 submitters considered that some of Auckland's water services should be supplied at a regional level and some at a local level.

18.10   The reasons expressed by submitters in support of the three waters being dealt with at a regional level included the following:

- increased consistency

- efficiency and economies of scale

- better decision making

- ensuring the financial burden is shared equitably across the region

- cost-effectiveness

- a better way to protect the environment

- an issue that is handled better with a regional overview

- increased power to influence central government

- small communities maybe lacking the resources or scale to make efficient decisions

- consistency of standards for design and construction (e.g. software to model networks)

- ability to focus on the bigger issues of sustainability, growth demand management, and pricing.

18.11   The reasons expressed in support of the three waters being dealt with at a local level included the following:

- Wastewater and drinking water are "core responsibilities" of district councils.

- Local areas need to be more self-reliant to take into account climate change and future-proofing.

- Smaller areas understand the concerns of each locality.

- Ownership is kept in ratepayers' hands and not sold.

18.12   Other submissions in support of a "local" approach were specific to areas such as Waiheke Island, where there are no reticulated water services, and drinking water is supplied locally by bores and/or rainwater tanks.

18.13   A number of submitters suggested that stormwater would be best dealt with at a local level, especially in rural areas.

Governance

18.14   Although there seemed to be a broad consensus that most water services should be dealt with at a regional level, opinion was more divided as to which entity should have responsibility for providing those services.

18.15   Some submitters recommended that the Auckland Regional Council (ARC) should have responsibility for water services in the Auckland region. It was suggested that water services should be under direct control of the council to ensure the greatest possible accountability. One submission objected very strongly to any sort of "corporatised" model:

> I object to the proposal to spread the 'Council Controlled Organisation' model for water services when there has never been an independent cost-benefit analysis or full inquiry into the Metrowater 'user-pays' commercialised model for water services to establish whether the mantra that Metrowater would be more 'efficient'; that 'user-charges are fairer'; and that 'user-charges encourage conservation' has been proven to be true – ON THE BASIS OF FACTS AND EVIDENCE." [11300]

18.16   Waitakere City Council advocated Watercare's assets and the wastewater treatment and disposal assets of North Shore City should be transferred to a new regional entity and held in trust for the benefit of the territorial authorities and the people of the region. The assets should be protected so they could not be sold or privatised, and they would form part of the asset base that underpins loan financing for regional infrastructure projects. They should be managed sustainably, including demand management. At the Watercare level, there should be complete operational integration so the present dual accounting/ funding systems for water supply and wastewater disposal are removed and simplified. The Auckland Metropolitan Drainage Act 1960 should be repealed. The existing retail water supply and wastewater assets, disposal system, and stormwater should be retained in local council ownership, control, and management. [11121]

18.17   On the other hand, some submitters suggested that Watercare should assume responsibility for all water services (i.e. that all retail water authorities such as Metrowater should be abolished, and that Watercare should take over those functions as well). Property Council New Zealand endorsed Watercare as a council-controlled organisation, "to deliver the least-cost approach to reform within the Auckland water industry." [11137] The Property Council also supported the vertical integration of water and wastewater services to eliminate duplication and confused roles, and believed it would result in a "centralised billing arrangement, one asset management plan and one agency controlling network." [11137]

18.18   In some cases, these submitters suggested that a partially corporatised model (i.e. a council-owned organisation such as Watercare) led to better decision making in a "long-term" industry such as the water services industry, especially in relation to decisions

about investment in infrastructure. It was suggested that these decisions need to be taken at some distance from the political whim of the day:

> In addition, the short electoral term means there is a fairly constant "churn" of elected representatives, who, by the nature of the short electoral cycle, tend to have short term goals to accomplish in their term of office. [11266]

18.19 New Zealand Council for Infrastructure Development referred to the *Auckland Region Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Review 1999–2002*, which concluded that

> significant savings and benefits arise from improving regulation and greater regional collaboration within the current industry structure. Further cost savings are potentially available by amalgamating the ten local network operators and Watercare Services into one Council-owned company. [11259]

18.20 A number of submitters indicated that they thought Watercare was functioning well:

- WaterCare commenced with high environmental aspirations and openness about its expenditure plans which have been sustained. Other monopoly utilities have often had to be forced down these pathways by regulators. WaterCare – reflecting its ownership – has not needed this regulation.
  The Watercare model as it has emerged with the changed shareholding is in my view a robust one that should not be considered lightly for alteration other than in the context of greater integration. [584]

- [Watercare has] a record of achieving sustainable development and a robust system of accountability in the form of quadruple bottom line reporting to stakeholders. [11137]

- Watercare delivers required outcomes efficiently and is considered to be one of the more effective of the Auckland entities. However, it is difficult to measure cost effectiveness. [10813, Appendix 5]

18.21 There was very little support at all for the privatisation of any of Auckland's water services.

Regulation

18.22 A few submitters indicated that whichever entity took responsibility for the three waters, it should operate on a non-profit basis:

> [We should] merge all water and wastewater agencies into a single Region-wide entity operated on a <u>non-profit basis</u> (i.e. Watercare Services). Returns should be sufficient to finance activities, supply of services, capital works and debt repayment only. Involve private sector managers/directors in the operation and governance of the organisation. [11114, author's emphasis]

18.23 A small number of submitters suggested that an independent regulator and/or a water services ombudsman should also be established:

- there is strong supporting evidence that where an independent regulatory regime operates, stakeholder outcomes can [be] and are optimised. [10421]

- [If the industry were to be integrated] I believe price regulation should be unnecessary but a service standard regulator would be appropriate. There are good models for this in Australia. As a protection for customers I would also advocate for a customer ombudsman. [584]

19. Cultural and Recreational Facilities and Events

19.1   This chapter summarises submissions about cultural and recreational facilities and activities. A total of 408 submitters wrote on this topic, with the majority of those submissions indicating simply whether they wanted arts and sports events and amenities to be managed locally or regionally. Those submitters who wrote more substantively on the subject were mainly in favour of this area receiving more attention and collaboration in terms of governance.

Regional cultural facilities and events

19.2   The importance of arts in particular to a thriving economy and city culture was mentioned repeatedly, including by economists:

> it is important to observe that such artistic activities are not superficial to the effective global city. Its quality of life is critical to attracting talent that its industries require. [11305]

19.3   Arts Advocates Auckland made the point that many local authorities do not fully understand the economic contribution made by the arts, directly and indirectly, and called for the "development of user groups able to produce and present artistic product in a manner that adds to the fabric of a world class city." [11330]

19.4   Underinvestment in local arts infrastructure was mentioned by a few submitters as an issue that needed to be remedied. Arts Advocates Auckland said,

> While it may be overstating the position, it has been said that Auckland is a city better known for closing theatres than for opening them. There is a dearth of arts infrastructure in the performance field particularly. The long gestation under the aegis of the Auckland City Council of the Q Theatre initiative is indicative of the enormous difficulties associated with generating political support for the development of arts infrastructure, even when need is acknowledged. That project is not alone. There are longstanding demands for infrastructural development for the arts within the region to support major organisations such as Auckland Theatre Company, the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, New Zealand Opera and others. These matters have been allowed to languish for a very long time and there is a very significant arts infrastructure deficit as a result. [11330]

19.5   Many submitters were frustrated with the lack of coordinated regional management and funding of cultural facilities and activities. One said,

> it is unacceptable that the biggest city in the country does not have the public amenities of many of the country's other cities because each of the local councils speaks only for itself .... [10862]

19.6   Submitters were overwhelmingly in favour of having regional planning and coordination and gave a variety of reasons: better leadership and management, ability to promote Auckland's cultural activities and interests at a national and international level, more protection of cultural assets and heritage, cost benefits, faster decision making, efficient asset management, less duplication of activities, less call on limited resources, more investment in local infrastructure, and more effective engagement with central government.

19.7   The Auckland Major Arts Organisation said that changes would "allow Auckland's arts and cultural communities to make an active and continuing contribution to a vibrant Pacific world-class city". [775]

19.8   A majority of submitters mentioned similar facilities and activities that should be managed regionally: major museums (the Auckland War Memorial and New Zealand National Maritime Museums), major art galleries, the zoo, and the Museum of Transport and Technology.

19.9   Less frequently mentioned facilities and organisations included theatres, the Auckland Philharmonia, the central library, a regional library service, opera, the observatory, choirs, cultural and heritage parks, music and arts festivals, cemeteries, botanical and zoological gardens, Howick Historical Village, Bruce Mason Theatre, Pacific Events Centre, and the Aotea Centre.

19.10   There was conflicting opinion on certain facilities and activities, especially libraries and local art galleries. Some submitters thought these should be managed regionally; others that they should be managed locally.

19.11   Those in favour of regional management of libraries saw benefits in volume purchasing, rationalisation of management, and opportunities for commercialisation.

19.12   However, some exceptions were mentioned. The Archaeological Association said that Auckland War Memorial Museum's governance arrangements were a success and should not be changed; and the overlap between the roles of the Historic Places Trust and local government in managing historical heritage could be rationalised only at national level, so should not be changed by the Commission. [1369]

19.13   Auckland Chamber of Commerce believed there was a case for creating separate entities for several key organisations in the arts, culture, and recreation,

> including the Auckland Museum, the zoo, the art gallery (there may be a case for placing several art galleries or other cultural institutions under one body as is the case with the Wellington Museums Trust) and so on. A primary purpose for establishing separate entities for each of a range of activities is not only to provide "fit for purpose" governance, but also to provide a means through which individuals with a particular commitment to an activity can express that commitment. [10937]

19.14   A couple of submitters thought funding or management of facilities might need to be decided by central government legislation:

> That is because Auckland cannot agree without Wellington's intervention. This has been necessary twice before to establish a formula for council funding of two of the region's museums. [10861]

19.15   Auckland Tourism decried the loss of tourism opportunities in terms of visitor attractions and infrastructure, especially a waterfront stadium and the loss of events such as the Ellerslie Flower Show and failure to bid to host the World of Wearable Arts event. The organisation advocated less parochialism and more regional planning and events, and said,

> Individual Auckland TLA investment in major event activity and infrastructure that competes with other TLAs (eg stadiums) is an example of duplication of reasonably homogenous resource and effort throughout the region. [11083]

19.16   This submission went on to say that projects such as a world-class cruise ship facility, development of the waterfront, a large-scale convention centre, a waterfront stadium, and the Rugby World Cup event were of regional and even national importance, and their lack of development was directly linked to governance issues:

> It is essential that a reconfigured governance of the region removes unnecessary layers of bureaucracy and delivers regional cohesion and efficiency. This should avoid and remedy such missed opportunities in the future .... [11083]

19.17   The Committee for Auckland used the issue of an Auckland exhibition and convention centre as a case study for one of its submissions on the problems with Auckland governance. It noted that the global exhibition/convention market is high growth and lucrative for city, regional, and national economies, attracting international visitors and world leaders, and enhancing the city's and the country's international profile:

> Exhibition and convention centres form part of the infrastructural fabric of an internationally competitive city. [11026]

The submission said that the industry was highly competitive, and each year as other countries (especially New Zealand's closest competitor, Australia) "enlarge, renovate and develop new exhibition and conference centres", Auckland and New Zealand lagged further behind. [11026]

19.18   Work to develop a major exhibition and convention centre has been conducted in Auckland over the past decade. The Committee for Auckland submission detailed the timeline over the past five years of the range of reports, meetings, study tours, commissioned costings and drawings, consultations, peer reviews and briefings on this issue, with some progress but no clear mandate or committed decisions. The recurrent issues of parochial interests and the multiplicity of interested parties had frustrated those who supported the project. There was no singular champion of the project, and no funding mechanism or revenue stream in Auckland to undertake such a major piece

of infrastructure. A critical aspect of such a centre was central government support and funding. While the process stagnated, opportunities were lost. The submitter observed,

> … New Zealand's current exhibition and convention centre infrastructure is not seen as internationally competitive.
>
> …
>
> Every year delay in building this piece of city infrastructure costs the country $65 million in lost earnings. [11026]

19.19 The recommendations by the Committee for Auckland were that a new regional organisation be mandated with accountabilities for major civic infrastructure, with new funding to facilitate large projects, and a special projects agency to focus on and deliver major infrastructural projects for Auckland. [11026]

19.20 One submitter recommended that a regional tourism/cultural strategy could develop strong regional Pacific events.

Regional sports facilities and events

19.21 Similar concerns were expressed about sports and recreation facilities and activities, with submitters citing problems such as a lack of decision-making framework, lack of collaboration, inconsistency in delivery and programmes, too many agencies in the sports sector, too many local government bodies, and the need to serve Pasifika communities and other ethnic groups.

19.22 The Auckland Regional Physical Activity and Sport Strategy (ARPASS) was mentioned by several submitters as an example of a successful collaboration between councils, Ministry of Health, and regional sports trusts. However, its limitations were also mentioned:

> Currently the sport and physical activity sector has no influence over the investment and decision-making abilities of local government. ARPASS in its current state has a mandate to plan regionally but no ability to enforce or enact the implementation of the regional recommendations. The recommendations or projects are left to the local agencies to deliver on. [10702]

19.23 The majority of submitters on this topic wanted greater regional planning and management to ensure better use of resources and development of sports. The Auckland Regional Physical Activity and Sport Trust, which is charged with implementing ARPASS, decried the lack of regional planning and coordination:

> For sport and recreation there is no higher-level view than that of each local community, no view of the region as a whole. As a result there is no imperative to coordinate effort, talent or resources across the region, no mechanism for identifying initiatives that work or best practice that could make a difference if put in place across the region. From [the trust's] perspective there is a clear need to think regionally as well as locally and use the resources of the region more efficiently and effectively. [11015]

The submitter recommended,

> Should a regional entity be created, it should include a mandatory function for the strategic planning and policy development for sport, recreation and physical activity sector in greater Auckland. [11015]

19.24 SPARC, the national body for sport and recreation, also recommended a regional approach to planning for international, national, and regional sports and recreation facilities. Facilities specifically mentioned for regional planning and control included Eden Park, Mt Smart Stadium, North Shore Stadium, and Waitakere Stadium. [11289]

19.25 Some people wanted swimming pools and recreation centres administered regionally; others wanted local control over this.

19.26 There was also a call for there to be greater connectivity between councils, so they could share community facilities and integrate transport to them, for example, the Massey Leisure Centre, which was used by Rodney District and Waitakere City people.

19.27 Sports stadiums were referred to by many submitters, often as an example of piecemeal planning and lack of coordinated strategy. One said,

> Take the fiasco over the last twenty years that has allowed the seven cities and regional council to develop a raft of different proposals, stadiums and arenas – none of which genuinely meet our long-term regional and national needs. As a small country we can't afford to squander resources in this manner. Simply put Auckland doesn't need seven different stadiums rather than one that serves the purpose. We need to collaborate or we will perish. [11306]

19.28 A submission from the Committee for Auckland used the example of stadiums as a case study on how "the need for consensus has over-ridden bigger ideas", to the detriment of Auckland, and even New Zealand. It advocated regional planning for such facilities as an international-size stadium, detailing the many years of attempts to build a major indoor arena. Although it acknowledged that there were some successful facilities in terms of meeting regional and local needs, it said that "in all cases the performance at a pan-Auckland level is a serious disadvantage to Auckland and New Zealand as a destination for visitors." [11019]

19.29 This point was echoed by other submitters. One pointed out that in the past decade,

> each of the four city councils have built a stadium in their own backyard, only one of which is close to both rail and bus transport. [10493]

Another was clear that rather than councils competing to be "top dog", "all such facilities should be developed in close consultation with regional neighbours particularly immediate ones." [1557]

19.30 A typical perspective was that radical restructuring was needed to ensure

> that facilities and events, such as an enlarged rugby stadium, are built or held in the most sensible place, and not swayed by petty local interests. [10804]

19.31   Another submitter wrote,

> The issue of NO consensus on the (rugby) sports stadium … is appalling. … Auckland's
> failure to make consensus decisions … is making us a laughing stock and … will in the
> long term prevent National Government applying the resources that Auckland needs
> for lack of a united approach." [10841]

Local cultural and sports facilities

19.32   Some submitters spoke strongly about the importance for local communities to
retain some control of cultural facilities and activities in their areas.

> Strong, locally controlled, arts and cultural groups are well placed to provide the
> 'glue' to bind and strengthen these communities. [10055]

19.33   Facilities mentioned for coming under local control were local museums, festivals,
heritage areas, and other cultural and recreational facilities.

19.34   Some people wanted there to be local management of libraries, but with regional
lending and purchasing agreements.

19.35   The most common sports facilities mentioned for local management were swimming
pools. Other facilities mentioned were recreation centres, sports fields, playgrounds, and
skate-parks.

Funding of services and facilities

19.36   In terms of funding, submitters who addressed this were critical that there was
no effective mechanism to ensure services and facilities that provided regional benefits
(everything from the zoo and the Museum of Transport and Technology to the coastguard
and helicopter service) were properly funded at a regional level. One representative
submitter called for consistent planning and commitment to investment in arts
infrastructure.

19.37   Tourism Auckland wanted the funding system for events, amenities, and marketing
to be revamped so that it would be better resourced and more equitable:

> The fact that local government contributions to Tourism Auckland are inequitable has
> led to inevitable tensions between those territorial local authorities that fund more
> than others … More alarming though is that the contribution per head to tourism in
> Auckland (which is the largest regional tourism earner) is the lowest in the country ….
> [11083]

19.38   A lot of frustration was expressed in submissions that discussed funding arrangements for the arts, something that was often directly linked to governance arrangements:

> The current fragmentation of governance structure not only fails the major arts companies, it fails the community and, as a consequence, the country. [775]

19.39   Submitters pointed out that many of these organisations "have to seek funding from multiple councils." A perspective that exacerbated this issue was that many arts and other organisations

> are seen by other councils as "belonging" to Auckland City Council because that is where they are located.
> Most councils in the region are, to some extent, free-riding on Auckland City Council ratepayers for these services. [10897]

19.40   Another submitter wrote,

> Trying to get a number of councils to move in the same direction is like trying to herd cats. Even the smaller issues like funding the museum, art gallery and zoo (which benefit all of Auckland) seems to fall disproportionately on Auckland City Council since they inherited them. [10084]

19.41   Yet some submitters, particularly those from rural areas, resented having to pay for facilities and amenities they never used. One said,

> This is a huge problem given the lack of feeling people in out lying areas have for these facilities. … if they are in the national interest, the Government should pay for them … otherwise [they] should be funded on a user-pays basis. [1133]

19.42   Other submitters from Auckland City were also resentful for the opposite reason – namely, paying for regional facilities that were funded by their local rates:

> the zoo should become a regional park, as it doesn't seem fair that the Auckland city ratepayers should have the burden of the upkeep, just because it is situated within their boundary. [11187]

19.43   One submitter pointed out that during the 15-year history of the Auckland Theatre Company, whose performances are attended by people from all over Auckland,

> it has not received any funding from any local authority other than the Auckland City Council, whose grant of $105,000 represents 2% of the Company's overall annual income. To date it has not been possible for Auckland Theatre Company to initiate any meaningful dialogue with Auckland's local authorities about the delivery of professional theatre to the wider Auckland region. Likewise there is no dialogue between local authorities or with the professional theatre sector when it comes to planning for building and infrastructure development across the region. [775]

19.44   Another submitter believed that central government should fund Auckland museums given that Auckland taxpayers have to fund Te Papa, the national museum based in Wellington.

19.45 The Ministry for Culture and Heritage made the point that some cultural institutions receive funding on a regionally levied basis enshrined in local/private legislation, such as the Auckland War Memorial Museum Act 1996, and the Museum of Transport and Technology Act 2000. The ministry saw this as a successful mode of funding and would have liked to see more regional funding for other regional facilities. [11295]

19.46 The submission from the Auckland Museum Trust Board saw its historic and ongoing relationship with local bodies as successful, because of the museum's implicit and then explicit undertaking to have private/public fund-raising for major capital developments, while the local bodies would help support it for ongoing operational funding. The museum saw the present levy funding as providing a sustainable and secure basis for their future, and requested that the Commission consider this in any recommendations of change for future governance. [10482]

Administration of facilities

19.47 Ideas on what sort of structure could best administer regional culture and/or sport facilities ranged from the establishment of an "Arts, Community and Recreation Division" in a regional council, which would be responsible for the planning, funding, and provision of services, to a "Regional Facilities Agency" or a "Regional Amenities Unit", which would be responsible for all community facilities (such as libraries, pools, and cemeteries).

19.48 Other submitters believed that recreational assets and infrastructure (from sports facilities to zoological gardens) could benefit from management regimes such as a board of directors or appointed experts.

19.49 A submission from Ngāti Pāoa said they would like to co-manage historic sites with relevant governing bodies across the region. [11276]

Māori consultation

19.50 One submitter requested that any assets which are no longer required by regional or local councils should be held until relevant tangata whenua[52] are consulted.

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52   People of the land, indigenous people.

20. Emergency Management and Disaster Resilience

20.1   A total of 58 submitters commented on emergency management matters. These included emergency management planning, civil defence, coastguard, surf lifesaving, and search and rescue.

20.2   Issues that were highlighted by submitters included questions of governance, the need for collaboration between many agencies, inconsistent levels of available funding, the need to provide support for volunteers, some duplication of human resources, and the need to ensure that emergency planning was considered as part of wider planning processes focused on transport, health services, police, and the like.

Regional or local role

20.3   Twenty-seven submitters favoured the regional council being responsible for all civil defence and six submitted that territorial authorities should be responsible for all civil defence. A further six submitters suggested a mix of regional and local responsibility for civil defence.

20.4   The majority of submitters clearly preferred that responsibility for emergency services sat with a regional body, although it was acknowledged that the responsibilities were shared with other agencies such as the fire service, police, ambulance, and local councils. There was one suggestion that general emergency management should be regional, but fire and civil defence operations should be local. A couple of submitters also wanted a regional body to adopt the Auckland Region Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan, including all the roles and functions that currently sat with Auckland's existing units of local government.

20.5   Few submitters gave detailed reasons for preferring regional governance. One submitter who favoured regional responsibility for civil defence said that this would ensure coordination between fire, police, and ambulance services. A number of submitters mentioned the wider context within which civil defence and emergency management decisions needed to be made, including the need to consider civil defence disaster planning in terms of roading for evacuation and escape, hospitals, and police, as well as integration into a national standardised system. The wider context may have influenced some submitters to favour regional organisation.

20.6   One submitter said,

> As a current alternate Group Controller for the Auckland region, I would strongly support the CDEMG [Civil Defence Emergency Management Group] being a committee of the regional (or greater Auckland) council. The committee should have membership drawn from either the city council (or Community Boards if no cities)

> plus the 'regional' body (more than one representative). I would support this model, not the joint committee approach as at present. [10345]

20.7   Few of those who supported local control of civil defence gave reasons. One supported community level management of civil defence on the grounds that communities needed to be "self-sustaining". [21]

20.8   One submitter, an experienced nurse, argued against having one regional body to coordinate all emergency services. She suggested following the health and police model of having three major communities of interest: North-West, Central, and South:

> In the same way that health is split 3 ways across the Auckland region, similar 3 way splits are in place for the Police, Fire Service, Ambulance and other such emergency services. These divisions of physical area and responsibility reflect the size of the individual catchments and the need to provide for efficient services at a local level directly in proportion to the communities they serve. Would we contemplate putting all emergency services across the vast area of the Auckland region under one central structure? [10721]

20.9   Submitters who favoured a mixture of regional and local management of civil defence seemed to think that shared responsibility would be desirable, with, in some cases, final determination by the regional body. Some felt that the focus should be on the regional civil defence plan with implementation shared between regional and local authorities.

20.10   One submitter argued for community boards to represent the smallest physical territorial administrative division of the territorial local authority for delivery of civil defence and emergency preparedness programmes.

20.11   One submitter suggested that pandemic emergency planning should be included in regional civil defence and undertaken by the regional council.

20.12   Auckland International Airport provided a detailed case study on civil defence. It noted that civil defence planning was complex and resource-intensive. The company was not sure that "implementation is effective", and said that from its perspective, there was duplication of human resources across lifeline utilities and territorial authorities. The company suggested more moves to combine resources, which would also create fewer bodies, and increase coordination and communication. [11266]

Funding

20.13   The theme of this issue was the need for more regular, sustainable funding for emergency services. The Green Party observed,

> There is no effective mechanism to ensure services and facilities that provide regional benefits are effectively funded at regional level. The … coast guard, rescue helicopter service … and many other organisations all have to seek funding from

multiple councils. Many are seen by other councils as "belonging" to Auckland City Council because that is where they are located." [10897]

20.14   A number of submitters focused on particular emergency services that could be improved by a change of governance, or at least a change of funding arrangements from local government sources. For instance, one proposal was to amalgamate rural fire authorities into one enlarged rural fire district to be governed by the regional council. The proponent of this suggested that similar amalgamations in other parts of New Zealand have proved successful, and had yielded financial gains.

20.15   Several submitters favoured the regional council being responsible for funding of the coastguard, life saving, search and rescue, and rescue helicopters.

20.16   The Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust submitted that the air search and rescue air ambulance should be part of local government infrastructure and planning, as it was a critical part of disaster recovery. It pointed out that this already occurred in other areas such as Otago, and called for a sustainable funding package.

> The Air Search & Rescue Air Ambulance provided by the Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust has never been taken into account as part of the Social, Economic and Civil Defence infrastructure of the Auckland local bodies. Yet these services are part of the infrastructure in NZ and overseas as a key asset. [10091]

20.17   The New Zealand Council for Infrastructure Development said that a wide range of regional emergency organisations and related social agencies (such as Auckland Coastguard, Surf Life Saving Northern Region, and Volunteering Auckland) were not directly supported and were required to go "cap in hand" to councils on an individual basis only to receive mixed and inconsistent levels of support. [11259]