

Feedback form – Local Government Reform

The government has announced it wants fewer local authorities across New Zealand and is asking local and regional councils to consider the amalgamation of district councils and regional councils into unitary authorities.

These unitary authorities would combine the functions of local councils with those from regional councils, such as Northland Regional Council. The government has stated its preference for one unitary authority per region, however there are allowances for regions that are large or have more complex issues.

The government says councils have two choices before them:

- **Head Start pathway:** Work together to make a joint plan for Northland over the next three months and send a proposal by 9 August 2026, or
- **Backstop:** Do nothing and let the government decide later what will happen.

Whether councils use the Head Start pathway or the backstop process, approval will be required from government before any work commences on the amalgamation of district and regional councils.

The future shape of local government will ultimately be determined by central government, but our job is to make sure the voice of Kaipara is clearly heard before those decisions are made.

Consultation with the community on the details of any proposal that is accepted by the government will occur in the next phase, after October this year.

To find out more about the Head Start pathway and the local government reforms, please go to our website: [Simplifying Local Government, Kaipara District Council](#)

Points to remember when giving us your feedback

- Please print clearly. The form should be easy to read and be understood and may need to be photocopied.
- All feedback received will be summarised and reported back to the panel of elected members who will deliberate on the feedback provided. They will receive copies of all written submissions as well.
- Please note all submissions are considered public under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act. Your name and feedback will be available to elected members and the public via our reports and website. All other personal details you provide will remain private.

1 Your details

First name(s):

Last name:

Town:

Email:

Phone number:

I am writing this submission:

As an individual

On behalf of an organisation

Organisation name:

2 Local government reform

(a) Do you support the removal of regional councils?

I support it

I oppose it

I am not sure

(b) Why did you select this answer?

(c) Do you support transferring regional council functions to the district councils (making them into unitary authorities)?

I support it

I oppose it

I am not sure

(d) Why did you select this answer?

(e) If councils change in Northland, which scenario would you prefer?

There are currently four councils in Northland. Three district councils – Kaipara District Council (KDC); Whangarei District Council (WDC) and Far North District Council (FNDC) and one regional council, Northland Regional Council (NRC). If councils change in Northland, which scenario would you prefer?

Retain Kaipara District Council with functions of Northland Regional Council

Combine Kaipara District Council and Whangarei District Council with functions of Northland Regional Council

Combine Kaipara District Council and Far North District Council with functions of Northland Regional Council

Combine Kaipara District Council with both Whangarei District Council and Far North District Council with functions of Northland Regional Council

Other (please specify)

- (f) If plans to reform local government go ahead, what are the most important things that should be protected or focused on? You can select more than one answer.

Ensuring that Kaipara communities and voices determine what Kaipara ratepayers want

Improving efficiency and reducing duplication between councils

Protecting small, rural and remote communities

Local services remain accessible and easy to use

Making sure any transition is well planned and does not disrupt everyday services

Keeping costs affordable for ratepayers

Making sure communities continue to be heard

Other (please specify)

- (g) What positive changes or opportunities could come from councils working different across Northland? You can select more than one answer

Cost savings through shared services

Stronger planning across the wider region

Greater financial capacity

Reducing duplication of services

More capacity to manage emergencies

Nothing – I don't see any positives

Don't know/not sure

Other (please specify)

- (h) What worries or concerns do you have about councils changing or combining in Northland? You can select more than one answer.

- Loss of local voice and decision-making power
- Reduced access to councillors and council staff
- Smaller towns and rural areas being overlooked
- Services becoming less responsive to local needs
- Disruption to services during the transition
- One size fits all policies that don't suit diverse communities
- Diseconomies of scale
- Doubt whether promised efficiencies will be delivered
- Diseconomies of scale
- Doubt whether promised efficiencies will be delivered
- Don't know/not sure
- Other (please specify)

- (i) If councils in Northland were combined, what should be prioritised first to help the change work well for your community? You can select more than one answer.

- The structure of the new organisation(s)
- Ensuring everyday services (e.g. waste, water, regulatory functions) are not disrupted during transition
- Regular clear communication with communities
- Aligning policies and processes across the region
- Retaining staff capability and local knowledge
- Learning from how other councils have managed these changes
- Don't know/not sure
- Other (please specify)

- (j) If councils change in Northland, what must stay the same to make sure your community continues to be well supported? You can select more than one answer

Local voice and decision-making – local communities can still influence decisions

Access to council services locally

Retention of current council offices

Local council presence – ability to deal with staff who know the area

Protection of rural and remote communities

Affordable rates and costs with no significant increases

Reliable core services – no disruption to everyday services (water, rubbish, roads)

Don't know/not sure

Other (please specify)

Thank you for providing your feedback.

Tell us in writing

Be sure to get your written comments to us by **5pm Wednesday 24 June 2026**. You can provide your comments on the next page and follow the instructions below on how to get them to us or choose one of the ways listed below.

How to get your feedback to us

- Online** Complete this form online: www.kaipara.govt.nz/haveyoursay
- In person** Drop your feedback form to either council office - 32 Hokianga Road, Dargaville or Unit 6, The Hub, 6 Molesworth Drive, Mangawhai
- By mail** Feedback for the Local Government Reform
Kaipara District Council, Private Bag 1001, Dargaville 0340
- Email** Email us at: haveyoursay@kaipara.govt.nz

Stay informed

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|---|-----|----|
| I would like to get the latest news and updates via email | Yes | No |
| I want to receive surveys about council services, plans and initiatives by signing up to People's Panel | Yes | No |

Please add any other comment you may have about the proposed Local Government Reform

Feel free to add additional pages if required.