

To.

10th March 2017.

Chief Executive Officer,
Local Government Commission,
P.O. Box 5362,
Wellington 6140.

West Coast Local Government Arrangements.

Another Proposal.

Retain the West Coast Regional Council essentially in its present form. The West Coast has a more diverse and dynamic range of geographic features than any other region of New Zealand. It is important to have a Council with an entirely rural focus and specialised staff dealing with the vagaries of this rugged landscape and climate.

Centralize as many of the office-bound Council functions of the three District Councils as is possible without impacting on the delivery of ratepayer services by optimising the use of advances in data processing technology, on line service capabilities and video conferencing, all this under the auspices of one CEO.

Presently the three District Councils replicate a multitude of office functions in fulfilling their management, administrative, regulatory, compliance and governance requirements. A move to bring many of these functions into alignment would enable the centralising of most of these activities. In themselves they contribute virtually nothing to the direct delivery of core services which is the prime, in fact the only concern of 90% of ratepayers.

Westreef Services Ltd. (a Buller District Council Controlled Organisation) is responsible for all roading, water, waste-water and stormwater service delivery in this district and I believe would not be

inhibited in any way by such a centralization. They of course have their own set of management and administrative staff adding yet another layer of ratepayer expense.

Faced with diminishing population and a much lower waged economy a more cost effective delivery of Local Government on the Coast has to be the prime objective of the Commissions review process and council job losses have to be seen as inevitable.

It is not acceptable or affordable to have 4 separate Councils, 4 highly paid CEOs, 3 Mayors and a Council Chairman, 32 Councillors and approximately 120 office-bound Council staff costing in excess of \$15 million annually ($\frac{1}{3}$ of total rates collected) to service the Local Government needs of just 32,000 people.

The geographic length of the region should not be seen as an impediment to centralizing the majority of Councils office functions. Key personnel would remain strategically placed and as available as required.

I have been impressed with the thoroughness of the Commissions work thus far and your summary of community feedback.

I have a concern that the lengthy processes that you are obliged to follow (a feature of all local Government work) has disengaged the interest of many ratepayers at this point.

I am disappointed at the parochial self-interest of our elected representatives and the perception that they are placing the interests of staff ahead of that of their electors.

I do not believe that the Coast Councils declared intent to persue more shared services will provide anywhere near the cost savings necessary to give sustainable affordability to rates. Nor do I think that they will continue the pursuit of these with the same enthusiasm as they have shown since the threat of reform surfaced if the Commission were to conclude this project without presenting ratepayers with a more attractive alternative.

Another factor that I think has stifled interest is that district newspapers, who rely on local council activity for a lot of their copy appear intent on preserving the status quo.

Until such time as you present a firm proposal of reform and an indication of potential cost savings will coasters then take an active interest in this matter.

I trust that existing provisions or upcoming ammendments to the Local Government Act will enable you to do this.

From
a pensioner ratepayer.

Allen Morris,

Allen Morris

