

Thursday, 19 February 2026

Te Hui o Te Kaunihera ā-Rohe o Heretaunga
Hastings District Council
Council Meeting

Kaupapataka

Attachments

Te Rā Hui:
Meeting date: **Thursday, 19 February 2026**

Te Wā:
Time: **1.00pm**

Te Wāhi:
Venue: **Council Chamber
Ground Floor
Civic Administration Building
Lyndon Road East
Hastings**

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HASTINGS DISTRICT COUNCIL
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TE KAUNIHERA Ā-ROHE O HERETAUNGA

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CG-01-02-25-309

**SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES & SUBCOMMITTEES
2025-2028**

Note: The Schedule at the back of this document shows amendments

Appointment/Committee/ Subcommittee/Organisation	Membership	Appointments
Mayor	Full voting member of all committees of Council unless specific legislation or the terms of reference of a joint committee provides otherwise.	Mayor
Deputy Mayor		Cr Fowler
Council	Mayor & All Councillors	Mayor Schollum (Chair) Deputy Mayor Cr Fowler (Deputy Chair) All Councillors
STANDING COMMITTEES		
Strategy & Policy	Mayor & All Councillors 1 RCB Appointee 1 Heretaunga Takoto Noa Māori Standing Committee appointee 1 Heretaunga Takoto Noa Māori Standing Committee appointee as required for District Plan related reports	Chair: Cr Te Au-Skipworth Deputy Chair: Cr Milmine All Councillors RCB appointee – Heretaunga Takoto Noa Māori Standing Committee appointee A second Heretaunga Takoto Noa Māori Standing Committee appointee (DP Reports)
Performance & Monitoring	Mayor & All Councillors 1 RCB Appointee 1 Heretaunga Takoto Noa Māori Standing Committee appointee	Chair: Cr Fowler Deputy Chair: Cr Ross All councillors RCB appointee – Heretaunga Takoto Noa Māori Standing Committee appointee –

Updated: 13/02/2026

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**SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES & SUBCOMMITTEES
2025-2028**

Appointment/Committee/ Subcommittee/Organisation	Membership	Appointments
Heretaunga Takoto Noa Māori Standing Committee	<p>Mayor</p> <p>6 Councillors (including the three Takitimu Ward councillors)</p> <p>Up to 8 Mana Whenua (and Alternates) Members</p> <p>Supported by Council Kaumātua</p> <p>(Chair & Deputy Chair elected by Committee) Chair – elected from among the appointed Mana Whenua members Dep Chair – elected from among the elected members</p> <p>Two (non-voting) Youth Councillor appointees</p>	<p>Chair: Deputy Chair: Cr Daniel Cr Te Au-Skipworth Cr Jessup Cr Ratcliffe Cr Corban Cr O'Keefe</p> <p>8 x Mana Whenua Members</p> <p>Two 2025 Youth Council appointees (non-voting) –</p>
STANDING COMMITTEES		
Risk and Assurance Committee	<p>Mayor</p> <p>2 Independent members appointed by Council (including Chair)</p> <p>Dep Chair (appointed by Council)</p> <p>7 Councillors (instead of 4)</p> <p>1 representative from Heretaunga Takoto Noa Māori Standing Committee (appointed by Council)</p>	<p>Chair: Graeme McGlinn (External Independent Chair) – from 18/11/24 meeting Deputy Chair: Cr Nowell-Usticke</p> <p>Cr Gibson Cr Lorkin Cr Ross Cr Nixon Cr Milmine Cr Fowler (as Chair of Performance and Monitoring Committee or equivalent) Cr Te Au-Skipworth (as Chair of Strategy and Policy Committee or equivalent)</p> <p>Mayor Schollum</p> <p>(Independent External Appointed member) –</p> <p>Heretaunga Takoto Noa Māori Standing Committee appointee –</p>

**SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES & SUBCOMMITTEES
2025-2028**

STANDING COMMITTEES		
Chief Executive Performance Committee	Mayor	Mayor Schollum
	Deputy Mayor and Chair of Performance and Monitoring Committee	Cr Fowler
	Chair Strategy & Policy Committee	Cr Te Au-Skipworth
	Deputy Chair of Performance and Monitoring Committee	Cr Ross
	External Consultant	External Consultant
REGULATORY		
Hearings Committee Certification valid until: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Lyons (30/6/27) <u>Chairing endorsement</u> (CM: CG-16-8-00301) • Cr Corban (31/12/28) (CM: CG-17-8-00049) • Cr Te Au-Skipworth (31/12/27) (CM: CG-17-8-00288) • Cr Hana Montaperto-Hendry (30/6/28) (CM: CG-16-8-00333) • Kitt Littlejohn (30/6/29) <u>Chairing endorsement</u> • Bill Wasley (30/6/28) <u>Chairing endorsement</u> Private Plan Change 7 – Golf Sport Development Ltd – Hastings Golf Course (11, 12 and 16 June 2025) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitt Littlejohn (<i>external member</i>) appointed to panel (<i>as Chair</i>) • Bill Wasley (<i>external member</i>) appointed to panel as a member <i>Note – the two above external member appointments were to have been addressed at Council on 29 April 2025, but the panel was amended (membership now 4 instead of 5) and these appointments were then to be addressed at Council on 13 May 2025</i> <i>On 21 May 2025 the Applicant sought to put the plan change process on hold/suspend it (timeframe for reporting back by Applicant and setting a new date extended twice by Chair, at request of Applicant (4 Chairman's Minutes issued in 2025) and awaiting clarity regarding the NPS:HPL issue).</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel members formally reappointed at Council on 11 November 2025. 	Up to 10 Hearing Commissioners (including vacancies) with: Up to 7 being elected members of Council PLUS At least 3 being external appointed members - which can include a mana whenua appointee and a representative from Heretaunga Takoto Noa Māori Standing Committee All with relevant qualifications and experience Chair and Deputy Chair to be appointed from membership including external appointed members Private Plan Change 9 – Brookvale East <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George Lyons as Chair. • Bill Wasley (<i>external member</i>) • Panel to be formally appointed 	Chair: George Lyons (Commissioner Chair - External Appointee) Deputy Chair: Cr Corban Cr Te Au-Skipworth Cr Montaperto-Hendry Cr Daniel (to train) Cr Gibson (to train) Cr Nowell-Usticke (to train) Cr Ratcliffe (to train) Cr Milmine (to train) <i>(All members must be Qualified under Making Good Decisions programme)</i> Vacancies – up to 3 members (with up to 1 being an elected member and 2 being external appointed members)

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SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES & SUBCOMMITTEES
2025-2028

<u>CONT'D IN NEXT COLUMN</u>		
Hastings District Licensing Committee	<p>Councillor And up to 5 list members</p> <p>Appointments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">George Lyons had been appointed by CE (on Council's recommendation and this was further noted by Council on 11 December 2025) - for 5 years 9/6/22 to 9/6/27 (CG-01-02-22-285 and CG-18-01-00070)Tania Kerr appointed by Council on 11 December 2025 as a commissioner and as the Chair – for a five-year term 11/12/25 to 11/12/30Cr Elisha Milmine appointed by Council on 11 December 2025 as Deputy ChairTwo list members appointed for a five-year term 11/12/25 to 11/12/30 – being Sally Butler and Ana Apatu	<p>Chair: Tania Kerr (Commissioner) Deputy Chair: Cr Elisha Milmine</p> <p>George Lyons (Commissioner)</p> <p>List Members: Sally Butler Ana Apatu</p>

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**SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES & SUBCOMMITTEES
2025-2028**

Appointment/Committee/ Subcommittee/Organisation	Membership	Appointments
SUBCOMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS		
Community & Civic Futures Subcommittee	<p>Mayor 10 Councillors 1 Heretaunga Takoto Noa Māori Standing Committee appointee</p> <p><u>Officer members</u> (as per TOR)</p> <p>Group Manager: Planning & Regulatory Transportation Manager Environmental Consents Manager Chief Financial Officer</p> <p>2 Youth Council appointees (Youth Council members are non-voting appointees)</p>	<p>Chair: Cr Montaperto-Hendry Deputy Chair: Cr Milmine Cr O'Keefe Cr Lorkin Cr Jessup Cr Daniel Cr Ratcliffe Cr Gibson Cr Corban Cr Te Au-Skipworth</p> <p>PLUS: Officer members (as per TOR)</p> <p>Heretaunga Takoto Noa Māori Standing Committee appointee – Two 2026 Youth Council appointees (non-voting) –</p>
Infrastructure Delivery Subcommittee	<p>Mayor 10 Councillors 1 Heretaunga Takoto Noa Māori Standing Committee appointee</p> <p>1 RCB Member (non-councillor) appointee</p> <p><u>Officer members</u> (as per TOR) CE Group Manager: Asset Management</p> <p>2 Youth Council appointees (Youth Council members are non-voting appointees)</p>	<p>Chair: Cr Watkins Deputy Chair: Cr Ross Cr Fowler Cr Daniel Cr Nixon Cr Corban Cr Gibson Cr Nowell-Usticke Cr Montaperto-Hendry Cr Ratcliffe</p> <p>PLUS: Officer members (as per TOR)</p> <p>Heretaunga Takoto Noa Māori Standing Committee appointee – RCB Member appointee – Two 2026 Youth Council appointees (non-voting) -</p>

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**SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES & SUBCOMMITTEES
2025-2028**

Appointment/Committee/ Subcommittee/Organisation	Membership	Appointments
Hastings District Rural Community Board		
Rural Community Board	4 Elected RCB Members 1 Kahurānaki Ward Cr (Cr Milmine) 1 Mōhaka Cr (Cr Nowell-Usticke) 1 Takitimu Cr (Cr Daniel)	Chair: Isabelle Crawshaw Deputy Chair: Abby Morley Peter MacLennan (Poukawa) RCB – vacancy (Maraekākaho) Cr Milmine Cr Nowell-Usticke Cr Daniel
Appointment/Committee/ Subcommittee/Organisation	Membership	Appointments
Rural Halls Subcommittee	Rural Community Board Members Plus 2 Heretaunga Ward Councillors 2 Youth Council appointees (Youth Council members are non-voting appointees)	Chair: Isabelle Crawshaw Deputy Chair: Abby Morley Peter MacLennan Cr Milmine RCB - vacancy Cr Nowell-Usticke Cr Daniel 2 Heretaunga Ward Councillors Cr Montaperto-Hendry Cr Corban Two 2026 Youth Council appointees (non-voting)
Joint Committees		
HDC: Tangata Whenua Wastewater Joint Committee	(Chair appointed by Committee) 5 Hastings District Councillors AND one Alternate (6 in total) 5 Tangata Whenua representatives (and Alternates), appointed by Council (Two Post-Settlement Governance Entities of Heretaunga Tamatea Settlement Trust (3) and Mana Ahuriri Trust (2) Tangata Whenua members)	Chair: Deputy Chair: Cr Ratcliffe Cr Watkins Cr Nixon Cr Daniel Cr Jessup Cr Te Au-Skipworth (<i>Councillor alternate</i>) Darlene Carroll Beverly Te Huia Evelyn Ratima (MAT) Albe Baker (MAT) Marei Apatu

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**SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES & SUBCOMMITTEES
2025-2028**

Joint Committees		
Hawke's Bay Crematorium Committee	2 Hastings District Councillors 2 Napier City Councillors 1 CHB District Councillor (Chair and Deputy Chair elected by Committee)	Chair: Cr Deputy Chair: Cr Cr Nixon (HDC) Cr Ross (HDC) Cr Morley (NCC) Cr Simpson (NCC) Cr XXXX (CHBDC) –
Ōmarunui Refuse Landfill Joint Committee	4 Councillors HDC Alternate Councillor HDC 2 Councillors NCC Alternate Councillor NCC (Chair and Deputy Chair elected by Committee) 1 x Ngāti Pārau Appointee and an Alternate Ngāti Pārau Appointee	Chair: Cr Deputy Chair: Cr Cr Watkins (HDC) Cr Ratcliffe (HDC) Cr Corban (HDC) Cr Montaperto-Hendry Daniel (HDC) Cr Isaac-Sharland (NCC) Cr Morley (NCC) Alternate: Cr Daniel Montaperto-Hendry (HDC) Alternate: Cr Mawson (NCC) Ngāti Pārau Appointee – Alice Hughes Alternate: Darren Tareha (Ngāti Pārau)
Joint Waste Futures Project Steering Committee	3 Councillors HDC 3 Councillors NCC (Chair and Deputy Chair elected by Committee)	Chair: Cr Deputy Chair: Cr Cr Ratcliffe (HDC) Cr Montaperto-Hendry (HDC) Cr Daniel (HDC) Cr Isaac-Sharland (NCC) Cr Mawson (NCC) Cr Lawrence (NCC)
Transitional Governance Group (Hawke's Bay Water Services Council Controlled Organisation Project)	Mayor of each Council and one other member from each Council (either elected or an appointee); and an independent Chair appointed at the first meeting of the TGG	Independent Chair: Jon Nichols Mayor Schollum (HDC) Cr Fowler (HDC) Mayor McGrath (NCC) Cr Price (NCC) Mayor Foley (CHBDC) Cr Muggeridge (CHBDC)

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SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES & SUBCOMMITTEES
2025-2028

Appointment/Committee/ Subcommittee/Organisation	Membership	Appointments
Other		
Disability Reference Group	2 Councillors	Cr Ratcliffe (Chair) Cr Nixon (Deputy Chair)
Citizenship and Multicultural Ceremonies MC	1 Councillor	Cr O'Keefe
City Centre Forum	1 Councillor	Cr Lorkin

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**SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS
2025-2028**

Appointment/Committee/ Subcommittee/Organisation	Membership	Appointments
Other Appointments		
Aged Friendly Advisory Group	2 Hastings Councillors	Cr Milmine (Chair) Cr Daniel (Deputy Chair)
Camberley Planning Committee – Liaison	2 Hastings Ward Councillors	Cr Jessup Cr Daniel
Cape Coast Community Group (Working Group)	1 Heretaunga Ward Councillor	Cr Corban /Cr Montaperto-Hendry
Clifton Reserve Society	1 Councillor	Cr Montaperto-Hendry
Re-imagining Flood Resilience	2 Councillors	Cr Ross Cr Te Au-Skipworth
Community Arts Council (Creative Hastings) – Liaison	1 Councillor	Cr Lorkin
Community Liaison Group – HB Prison	1 Councillor	Cr O'Keefe
<u>Coastal Hazards Advisory Group</u>	<u>2 Councillors & 1 Alternate</u>	<u>Cr Corban</u> <u>Cr Montaperto-Hendry</u> <u>Cr Ratcliffe (Alternate)</u>
Creative Communities Local Funding Assessment Committee	2 Councillors Community Representative	Cr Lorkin Cr Daniel
Farndon Park Domain Committee of Management	1 Heretaunga Councillor	Cr Corban
Flaxmere Planning Committee - Liaison	2 Councillors (including the Flaxmere Ward)	Cr O'Keefe Cr Daniel Alternate: Cr Jessup
Hastings City Business Association	2 Hastings Councillors	Cr Lorkin Cr Fowler
Advisor		
Havelock North Business Assn – Advisor	2 Havelock North Councillors	Cr Lorkin Cr Fowler
Hawke's Bay Civil Defence Emergency Management Joint Committee	1 Mayor Alternate – Deputy Mayor	Mayor Schollum Deputy Mayor: Cr Fowler (Alternate)
Hawke's Bay Museums Trust Joint Appointments Panel (to appoint the Chair of HB Museums Trust)	Mayor 1 Councillor	Mayor Schollum Cr Fowler

Updated 11/02/26

**SCHEDULE OF APPOINTMENTS TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS
2022-2025**

Appointment/Committee/ Subcommittee/Organisation	Membership	Appointments
Hawke's Bay Museums Trust Joint Working Party	2 Councillors	Cr Fowler Cr Lorkin
HB Medical Research Council	1 Councillor	Cr Gibson
HB Museums Trust	1 HDC appointee	Mr George Lyons
Heritage Trails Committee	1 Councillor	Cr Gibson
Historic Places HB	1 Councillor	Cr Nixon
Keirunga Gardens Arts & Crafts Society Incorporated	1 Councillor	Cr Lorkin
Multi Cultural Advisory Group	2 Councillors	Cr Ratcliffe (Chair) Cr Watkins (Deputy Chair)
Positive Ageing Trust Hawke's Bay – Liaison	Mayor's Representative	Cr Milmine
Predator Free New Zealand HB	1 Councillor	Cr Gibson
Regional Sports Council	1 Councillor	Cr Milmine
Regional Sports Park Appointments Panel	Mayor Chief Executive	Mayor Schollum Chief Executive (Nigel Bickle)
Regional Transport Committee	1 Hastings District Councillor & 1 Alternate	Deputy Mayor: Cr Fowler Alternate: Cr Nowell-Usticke
Te Komiti Muriwai o Te Whanga (Ahuriri Estuary Committee)	1 Mōhaka Ward HDC representative & 1 Alternate	Cr Nowell-Usticke Cr Jessup (HDC alternate)
Te Mata Park Trust Board	2 Councillors	Cr Te Au-Skipworth Cr Ross
Waipatiki Reserve Management Group	Ward Councillor	Cr Nowell-Usticke (Chair)
Waipureku Waitangi Trust	1 Councillor	Cr Jessup
E Tu Whakatū - Liaison	2 Heretaunga Ward Councillors	Cr Corban Cr Montaperto-Hendry
Youth Council - Liaison	3 Councillors	Cr Daniel Cr Ratcliffe Cr Te Au-Skipworth
Zone 3 representatives	All Councillors	Cr Fowler lead councillor and a pool of <u>all councillors</u>



LGNZ four-monthly report for member councils

// July-December 2025*





Contents

This report summarises LGNZ’s work on behalf of member councils and is produced three times a year. It’s structured around LGNZ’s purpose: to serve local government by **championing**, **connecting** and **supporting** members.

Please put this report on the agenda for your next council meeting so that all councillors can review it and provide feedback. National Council and LGNZ Leadership Team members are very happy to join council meetings online to discuss the report or any aspect of it – just let us know.

This report complements our regular communication channels, including *Keeping it Local* (our fortnightly e-newsletter), providing a more in-depth look at what we do.

*This report covers just over five months, from July to mid December inclusive, to include all the post-election induction period and pre-Christmas reform announcements. The next report will cover December-March.

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Introduction

The reform storm

The next three years will heap reform on local government. Councils are already grappling with water reform but structural change and rates capping will stretch local government even further.

Local government needs strong political leadership and support to navigate reform and speak as an equal to Government. LGNZ's change in leadership, including National Council and the President, gives us an opportunity to reset priorities. Members need to see LGNZ being driven by members, for members. Members setting our advocacy priorities for the new triennium, as discussed in this report, is a critical part of that.

All the reform announcements are increasing pressure on elected members and staff. Providing feedback on structural reform, rates capping and resource management in the same tight timeframe will be extremely challenging for councils and LGNZ will be supporting you with draft submissions that you can use, informed by legal experts. We will also be engaging with officials and Ministers' offices, seeding stories in the media, and helping members speak directly to Ministers at our online and in-person events.

Post-election highlights

Between the elections and mid December, LGNZ has:

- Delivered Mayors Induction in Wellington;
- Run Elected Member Induction in 13 locations around New Zealand;
- Delivered Chairs Induction in Wellington;
- Held Metro, R&P and Regional sector meetings in Wellington;
- Attended zone meetings around the country and led engagement on advocacy priorities; and
- Responded to three major reform announcements via media standups, meetings with officials, information to members, and opportunities for member engagement including zooms with Ministers and officials:
 - Local government structure;
 - Rates capping; and
 - Resource management legislation.

Members have been very positive about the series of big reform explainers we've shared over the past few weeks. These respond to a key request from Elected Member Induction: to explain simply and clearly each key reform local government faces, to inform conversations around council tables:

- [RMA replacement explainer](#)
- [Rates capping explainer](#)
- [Structural reform explainer](#)
- [Funding and financing explainer](#)
- [Resource management reform explainer](#)
- [Building system explainer](#)

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- [Climate change explainer](#)
- [Transport explainer](#)
- [Emergency management explainer](#)

We're now very focused on the February deadlines for the Government's local government structure, rates band and resource management consultations. We will both influence policy on behalf of members and engage with members to inform our feedback and their own submissions.

Other highlights since July

In September, the Government announced a new regime for strengthening earthquake-prone buildings, driven by advocacy from LGNZ's seismic strengthening group led by Manawātū Mayor Michael Ford. This reform is expected to save New Zealanders more than more than \$8.2 billion in remediation and demolition costs.

Replacing the joint and several liability regime for buildings are also a significant win for LGNZ and will reduce councils' potential liability, with a shift to proportionate liability due to be in force by mid-2026.

Other highlights since our last four-monthly report include SuperLocal in July, which exceeded our attendance expectations. The programme, focused on doing the basics brilliantly, received extremely positive feedback.

With the support of the Local Government Funding Authority, Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Wellington, Palmerston North, Hutt City, New Plymouth and Queenstown Lakes Councils, along with Rewire Aotearoa and EECA, we have now completed the final business case for the Ratepayer Assistance Scheme (RAS). The RAS will be off-balance sheet, offering ratepayers low-cost finance for rates-like charges (rates postponement, household electrification, and development contributions) as well as providing a return to councils. Minister Watts has expressed support for the RAS, which has the potential to be a game changer like the Local Government Funding Authority (which LGNZ also spearheaded). We have been working towards the RAS for several years and a government decision is imminent.

We ensured that the Policy.nz online platform for nationwide candidate information would stand up for the 2025 election, thanks to funding from a number of supporter councils. The platform went live on 29 August 2025, containing bios for 1,340 candidates from across 67 local councils and 11 regional councils. Analysis shows more people used Policy.nz in 2025 than in any previous election.



Champion

Government relations

In the past week alone, we met separately with Local Government Minister Simon Watts, Labour Leader Chris Hipkins, and Green Party local government spokesperson Celia Wade-Brown to discuss recent proposals impacting local government. Ensuring local government input – so reforms are robust and enduring – was central to all these discussions.

Over the past three months, we have engaged in detailed discussions with Beehive offices, including the Prime Minister's local government advisor and advisors to Ministers Watts, Bishop, Mitchell, Upston, Seymour and Penk. We received advance briefings on the resource management, local government structure, and rates band consultations, enabling us to prepare for those announcements (outlined below).

We were also given early notice of Minister Penk's changes to building liabilities and the earthquake-prone building system. LGNZ strongly advocated for these reforms. This allowed us to publicly endorse the changes, which were reported in the media, as constructive collaboration between central and local government.

The Ratepayer Assistance Scheme (discussed further below) has been another key advocacy focus. LGNZ met with Minister Costello, Minister Penk, Under Secretary Simon Court, Cameron Luxton, Andy Foster, Jamie Arbuckle, and Dr David Wilson to demonstrate how RAS will deliver genuine cost-of-living relief for New Zealanders.

Next week, we will meet with RMA spokespeople from across political parties to assess the details of the recently released bill. And on 23 December (11.30am–12.15pm), LGNZ will host a webinar with Ministers Bishop and Watts, giving our members the opportunity to ask questions about the recent proposals they have released.

Media

Media is a key advocacy tool for LGNZ to both inform the public and advocate to central government by building momentum around an issue. Since August 2025, LGNZ has responded to almost 300 media enquiries and released 26 media releases. We've also appeared in more than 200 media stories across radio, print, digital and television. The range of topics included rates capping, structure of local government, elections, elected member abuse and local government funding and financing. A detailed breakdown of coverage is published in *Keeping it Local*, our fortnightly email newsletter to all members.

We revisited the work undertaken by the Electoral Reform Working Group with media, resulting in an excellent explainer article appearing in the [Post](#), the [Press](#) and the [Waikato Times](#).

Candidate nominations and elections have been a focus of our proactive media. We provided a [local elections media guide](#), and run briefing sessions with media outlets to help build more stories, which resulted in substantial coverage around the elections.

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SuperLocal attracted media interest from across the country, with 18 journalists attending from 11 media outlets over the two days and covering a wide range of local government issues.

Local government structure

On 25 November, the Government released a proposal to replacing regional councillors with a board of all Mayors in that region – who would then develop a plan to reorganise all councils (and/or service delivery) in that region over the next two years.

Before the announcement went public, we had a confidential briefing from DIA and received embargoed details from the Government, which gave us time to prepare. We held a media standup, [issued a media release](#) and our points were covered by a wide range of media.

That same evening, senior advisors to Minister Bishop and Watts visited LGNZ. They are keen to keep engaging with LGNZ to work through the proposal in detail.

LGNZ has set up a zoom with Ministers Bishop and Watts for Mayors, Chairs and CEs on Tuesday 23 December, to discuss structure among other issues.

LGNZ sees a significant opportunity to improve the proposal and get a better result for New Zealanders and local government, especially given the proposal lacks detail about how the new system will work in practice. The transition to any new structure will also be critical to the success of any new system.

National Council has agreed to set up a working group to make sure LGNZ's submission is driven by member input and these meetings will start from mid January.

Rates capping

The Government is consulting on the proposed formula and economic indicators for setting the target range, including whether 2-4% is appropriate.

DIA proposed a targeted consultation but we have convinced them that all councils should be able to submit, which they have agreed to.

The range proposed would apply to all rates (general rates, including the uniform annual charge, as well as targeted rates). It will exclude water charges and other non-rates revenue like fees and charges.

Councils would retain discretion over spending choices. However, they would need to comply with the new core services requirements and narrower purpose statement set out in the Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill once this bill becomes law.

Extreme circumstances would allow exceptions to the target range. For example, global economic crises or recovery from natural disasters. There would be a regulator to review the cap, provide oversight over compliance and manage the variations process.

We are providing opportunities for members to engage with the Minister on 23 December and with DIA officials this Wednesday.

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National Council has agreed to set up a working group that will start meeting in mid January to inform LGNZ's submission, which will focus on what economic indicators the rates range should be based on.

Local government funding and financing

Ratepayer Assistance Scheme (RAS)

The Ratepayer Assistance Scheme (RAS) is a broad-based ratepayer loan scheme that is off-council balance sheet. The RAS will provide enormous benefits to ratepayers, with low-cost finance for rate-like charges. It will help ease the cost-of-living pressures New Zealanders are currently dealing with while enabling housing development, improving our housing stock with property improvement loans, and provide relief to people on fixed-income with rates postponement. It will also have benefits for councils, given it will be off-balance-sheet and provide an ROI.

Rather than people having to pay rates, development charges and property improvement costs upfront, the RAS allows payments to be spread across a long period of time (up to 20-30 years for certain products). And because the scheme leverages the high security of rates and proximity to local and central government, interest rates will be lower than equivalent bank rates. Much of this saving will be passed on to ratepayers.

LGNZ has taken a critical leadership roles in developing the Ratepayer Assistance Scheme (RAS), much as we did for the Local Government Funding Authority. Like the LGFA, it has the potential to be a game changer for local government. We have convened wider collaboration and been a consistent champion and driver.

The final business case is now with the Minister and sets up a "go/no-go" decision. The business case, while conservative, clearly demonstrates the viability of the RAS as well as the public benefit it would deliver, with significant savings.

LGNZ acknowledges these supporting councils:

- Auckland
- Tauranga
- Wellington
- Palmerston North
- New Plymouth
- Queenstown Lakes
- Hutt City
- Hamilton

Other partners include LGFA, Rewire Aotearoa and EECA.

The Strategic Advisory Group, chaired by Mayor Nick Smith, along with Cameron Bagrie and Stuart Henderson, complemented the wider project governance and has been invaluable in testing critical strategic issues. The Strategic Advisory Group has agreed to endorse the RAS to the Minister. This written endorsement accompanied the final business case.

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Infrastructure funding and financing

The Government has released two proposed changes to local government funding for consultation. These relate to Pillar 2 of the Government's Going for Housing Growth programme and will be of most relevance to growth councils, particularly those near their debt limits. They align with LGNZ's previous advocacy on funding and finance tools.

- The Infrastructure Funding and Finance Amendment Bill will streamline the levy approval process, broaden the scope of the IFF Act to let the other entities use this, and make other changes to improve the Act. The due date for submissions will be known when this bill passes its first reading, likely to be early 2026.
- The development levies consultation will inform legislation to be introduced early in 2026. This will replace the current development contributions system. It enables growth paying for growth infrastructure, given changes to planning requirements to enable 30 years of enabled housing supply. Councils will be able to change to development levies from 2027.

LGNZ will submit on both bills. As well as circulating drafts for member comment and use, we are engaging with member councils most likely to be impacted by the changes to development levies, and also with those who have the most experience with the IFF Act process.

Local Government Quarterly Economic Insights

Our latest quarterly economic insights produced by Infometrics was shared with members on 11 December. This is a member-exclusive offering from LGNZ.

The [December edition](#) included the following insights:

- Data showing the increase of days spent in a state of emergency. Storm- and flooding-related emergencies are happening much more now than 10 years ago.
- The 8.8%pa average rise in rates in 2025 followed a 12%pa increase in 2024, and a 9.8%pa increase in 2023. The wider property rates and related services increase contributed 9.9% of total annual inflation, behind food (29% of total inflation) and household energy (12% of total). This data was specifically requested by members.

The [September edition](#) compared the cost of rates to taxes faced by households, presented historic information on council investment in three waters infrastructure, and looked into public transport data (comparing pre-Covid and current use).

DIA metrics release (aka council profiles or report cards)

These profiles were released in July on DIA's [website](#). They cover a range of financial metrics for councils. LGNZ successfully advocated for improvements to DIA's approach, including the provision of contextual information and links to council websites. The profiles will be updated yearly, and future iterations will cover additional metrics including asset management, service provision, and governance performance.

LGNZ worked with media outlets to ensure both sides of the story were told, emphasising it would be better if these metrics [showed outcomes](#) as well as expenditure – which was picked up by [Stuff](#), [RNZ](#), the [Press](#) and other outlets. Councils like Gisborne District also used these key messages to [give local context](#).



Regional deals

We are still anticipating the first Regional Deal by the end of this year, with two more to be agreed next year. The Government has signalled that it may call for new proposals next year.

In July, the Government announced it had signed memorandums of understanding with three regions – Auckland, Otago Central Lakes, and Western Bay of Plenty, which allowed negotiations on deals for those areas to begin.

It also outlined what would be up for negotiation, including:

- Improved central government coordination
- Early collaboration with councils on system reforms
- Providing councils with new funding and financing tools
- Supporting regions to unlock growth sectors

Water services reform

As of early December, 56 councils (individually, or as part of a joint entity) had their Water Service Delivery Plans approved, and implementation of these plans is now underway.

Previously the Minister has raised concerns with smaller councils that have chosen to go it alone about their financial sustainability. Councils have to demonstrate that their model is financially sustainable and will meet all required standards, and a failure to do so means that their Water Service Delivery Plan has to be rejected, opening those councils up to ministerial intervention.

Consultation on the Commerce Commission's draft decisions on information disclosure has concluded. The Commission will make final decisions by February, and the information disclosure requirements will apply to all regulated suppliers from this time.

The Wastewater Environmental Performance Standards have now been finalised and apply from 19 December 2025. These standards will replace all existing regional council rules and policies for public wastewater treatment plants and networks. We shared them with members in late November.

Resource management reform

On 9 December, the Government introduced legislation to replace the Resource Management Act. Two new bills will create a more enabling, directive and simpler system, with the following features:

- Councils have less discretion and make decisions on fewer things.
- The public have less opportunity to have their say – and on fewer issues. Most public participation will be in plan development rather than consenting.
- If a council wants to place conditions on landowners that are more stringent than national direction in a specific range of areas, the council will need to compensate these landowners. The specific areas include heritage, outstanding landscapes or features, and sites of significance to Māori. Compensation could be through monetary payments, rate or fee reductions, extra development rights, land swaps or targeted grants.
- Transition arrangements will mean new consents will have to comply with parts of the new legislation before the full system comes into force.

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- Urgent legislation will be passed by the end of this year to extend consents due to expire before 2031. The Government wants these consents to be considered under new regional combined plans: this means these consents will be extended till after 2031.
- The legislation will now go through a full select committee process. After the first reading, we'll know the deadline for submissions – but we expect this to be tight.

We held a media standup after the Government's announcement and issued [this media release](#).

LGNZ has established a Resource Management Reference Group comprised of a small group of elected members and council staff, which met for the first time on Tuesday 25 November. This will ensure member views are represented in LGNZ's RM policy and advocacy work.

LGNZ's RM submission will include expert legal support from Buddle Findlay. We also held an Ako Hour for elected members with Buddle Findlay Partner David Allen. [Register by logging into Ākōna here](#).

In mid-August, the second Resource Management Act amendment bill, which introduces a range of "quick fixes" to the RMA while replacement legislation was being prepared, passed into law. This legislation was amended after the Select Committee stage, with changes including:

- The Government giving itself the ability to "modify or remove provisions in local council plans if they negatively impact economic growth, development capacity, or employment". We noted this was significant overreach and would not be subject to select committee scrutiny or consultation.
- Suspending the requirement for councils to complete 10-year plan and regional policy statement reviews, ahead of the RMA being replaced.
- Broadening what water discharges can be allowed as a permitted activity, in response to concern from some councils that some farms would require resource consents for "routine on-farm activities".

LGNZ submitted on (and largely supported) the proposed changes to national direction and the Going for Housing Growth (GfHG) discussion document. These complement the second amendment bill and will be implemented before the RMA is replaced (except for the GfHG changes, which will be introduced at the same time as the eventual replacement legislation).

Transport

The Government introduced the Land Transport (Revenue) Amendment Bill to Parliament earlier in November. This will enable more flexible use of tolling for new (and in some cases, existing) roads, as the Government signalled earlier this term. It also modernises the Road User Charges (RUC) system, as a first step towards a new E-RUC system – something that LGNZ has long advocated for.

While tolling is unlikely to be used by councils directly, because local roads generally lack viable traffic volumes, we support greater use of tolling and included it in our funding and financing toolkit launched last year. We will be submitting on this legislation in support of both the tolling and RUC changes.

The Transport Forum had its final meeting before local elections in August. This gave an opportunity for the forum to reflect on its work over the last two years.

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Work is continuing on how LGNZ can shape the work the Government doing on emergency works funding, including how to better shift funding from reactive repairs to proactive mitigation works.

Climate change

The Independent Reference Group on Climate Adaptation proposed a framework for climate adaptation in July 2025. The national adaptation framework is intended to establish an enduring, long-term approach to climate adaptation in New Zealand.

Recently the Government released its response. Its climate adaptation framework has implications for local government, including a new requirement to undertake adaptation planning in priority areas, and new requirements around decision-making on adaptation investments. Disappointingly the framework did not adequately address the question of 'who pays' for post event adaptation or the need for addressing existing development in high-hazard areas.

Other policy issues

Seismic strengthening

In late September, the Government announced it would comprehensively reform the earthquake-prone building system, after strong advocacy from LGNZ. The changes will refocus the system on the highest risk buildings and remove low risk areas from the regime entirely.

While we still need to see the details of the legislation, LGNZ strongly supports this change and has worked closely with the Minister for Building and Construction and his officials to ensure the reforms work for councils. We will be drafting a supportive submission on the legislation once it is introduced.

Electoral Reform Working Group

The working group's final report was sent to MPs and Minister. The chair of the working group, Hon Dr Nick Smith, and other members met with Minister Watts on 13 October to discuss their proposals. Officials from DIA, at the request of Minister Watts, will engage shortly with the working group on proposals for potential changes to the electoral system ahead of the 2028 elections.

Building system reforms

The busy programme of building system reforms continues. Legislation to end the system of joint and several liability and allow for the easier amalgamation of Building Consent Authority (BCA) functions is expected early next year. Legislation allowing "granny flats" up to 70sqm to be built without the need for a building consent passed into law last month.

The Government has announced major, welcome changes to the building consent system, including replacing the system of joint and several liability with proportionate liability (which is used in New South Wales). This is a major win for local government and has been a long-standing advocacy priority for LGNZ.

Under the existing system, councils can be liable for all costs of building defects if other parties are unable to pay or have ceased trading. This has driven risk-averse behaviour due to the substantial financial risk that councils assume when signing off building consents and inspections.

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Under the new system, the Building Act 2004 will be amended to ensure each party will only be responsible for the share of the work they carry out. Further details will be provided in due course on what this will look like in practice, including how indemnity insurance and home warranties will work.

LGNZ has engaged regularly with Minister Penk and MBIE officials about these and other changes in the building and construction space, and we will continue to do so as further details are worked through. Legislation to amend the Building Act is expected to be introduced to Parliament in early 2026.

Emergency management reform

The Emergency Management Bill was introduced on 9 December. This legislation will replace the current CDEM Act. It will introduce minimum levels of service for local government, which could have significant implications for members. We will be producing a draft submission and sharing it with members in late January (we expect a February deadline for submissions).

Advocacy priorities

Having clear advocacy priorities set by members has helped LGNZ focus our effort in the right places. Now we're asking members to set our advocacy priorities for the new triennium.

Sector meetings in November [developed a longlist](#), which we sense checked with zone meetings, as well as emailing all members. The new National Council is clear that members must drive advocacy priorities. National Council will produce a shortlist from the member longlist at its February meeting, which members will rank in order of priority at the February sector meetings.

We have also produced a stocktake of achievements against our previous advocacy priorities as at October 2025. [Read the stocktake](#).



Connect

SuperLocal25

SuperLocal25 was held from 15-17 July at Te Pae in Christchurch with record attendance and very strong level of sponsorship.

We asked attendees to fill in a survey detailing their feedback and received a significant amount of anecdotal feedback. The survey's overall sentiment score lifted significantly compared to 2024, with a ratio of positive-to-negative comments of 6:1 (last year it was 4:1). Overall scores also lifted compared to 2024.

What attendees liked most

- Networking was a standout — especially 'connect and refuel' breaks.
- Praise for ministerial speakers, particularly Minister Seymour and Minister Bishop.
- High value placed on breakout sessions, especially practical and reform-focused content.
- Specific positive mention of Mayor Nick Smith's session on electoral reform

SuperLocal26

Planning for SuperLocal26 in Rotorua is well under way, including our theme, sponsorship proposal, budget and programme format. We have decided to include the Friday morning (as well as the Wednesday and Thursday), so that we can accommodate Ministers in the programme (as it is a House sitting week).

We are working closely with RotoruaNZ on the attendee experience, tailored to Rotorua. This includes early engagement with mana whenua.

Potential sponsors and exhibitors have already begun enquiring about SuperLocal26.

2026 events calendar and forward planning

In July, we circulated our draft events calendar for feedback then in December [shared an updated version](#).

Engagement at Zone meetings

Four zones met in November and LT members attended these events, where we also ran advocacy priorities sessions.

- Zone 6 held a well-attended mini-conference in Dunedin with a broad range of speakers that received extremely positive feedback from attendees, and was attended by Director Member Services Amanda Wells and Director Policy Simon Randall.
- Zone 2 met in Karapiro with good turnout and a focus on upcoming reforms and changes for local government, and was attended by Simon and Principal Government Relations Advisor Paul Hunt.

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- Zone 3 met in Palmerston North and was well attended, with LGNZ's reset top of mind along with local government reform and was attended by Interim CE Scott Necklen and Director Partnerships & Advocacy Ranjani Ponnuchetty.
- Zone 4 met in Kapiti, and handed over to new Chair Brady Dyer at this meeting, which Amanda attended.
- Zone 1 met online to conduct NC and Chair appointments, and we gave members the priorities survey for them to provide feedback. Scott and Paul joined the meeting.

Sector meetings

Networking function

The night before the November sector meetings, our networking function drew a strong crowd of well over 100. DIA Secretary for Local Government Paul James was our guest speaker, delivering a short address and taking questions. We will continue to provide networking opportunities at our All-of-our-local-government meetings and sector meetings.

R&P

At its November meeting, the Rural sector selected Mayor Ben Bell as Chair while the Provincial sector selected Mayor Nigel Bowen as Chair. We have synthesised the priorities developed by R&P into LGNZ's long list of priorities, as discussed in the separate Advocacy priorities paper. We have met with Mayor Ben and Mayor Nigel to work through key themes discussed at the November meeting, to design a programme for the R&P meeting in February.

Metro

Mayor Grant Smith is the Metro sector chair for this triennium. Metro sector's November meeting's advocacy priorities discussion focused on LGNZ and membership-related priorities. Mayor Grant, Mayor Sophie and Mayor Mahé were meeting before Christmas to discuss Metro's longlist of advocacy priorities for the triennium, which will be used to inform our policy and government relations work.

Mayor Grant has been connecting with Christchurch and Auckland to discuss connection with Metro sector and membership.

In the future, Metro meetings will be themed and run on separate dates from Regional sector and Rural & Provincial sector meetings. The February metro meeting will focus on business and property issues.

Regional

There has been significant change around the Regional sector table, with two of the 11 regional Chairs having previously served as Chair. The Regional Sector's November meeting followed a very successful and well attended Chairs Induction (the previous day). This first meeting focussed on key upcoming reforms like resource management and rates capping. The sector also had a very engaged session on advocacy priorities.

We have worked closely with the new sector chair, Chair Deon Swiggs, to front and respond to the Government's proposal for structural reform. We held a briefing for regional council Chairs early the day after the announcement and have provided targeted comms to members.

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There was a second online meeting of our Regional sector on 10 December to discuss impacts of the upcoming resource management and rates capping announcements.

Before the elections, the Regional sector has had its final online meeting of the triennium. This covered water regulation through discussions with both the Commerce Commission and Taumata Arowai; reflections on key policy portfolios; and engagement with Minister Shane Jones and Minister Mark Patterson on regional development and their views on role and functions of regional councils into the future.

Upcoming February All-of-local-government and sector meetings

We are currently refreshing our theme for the February All-of-local-government meeting given the impact pre-Christmas reform announcements will have on council's work programme. We have requested Sir Brian Roche as a keynote speaker, to talk about where public services are best delivered and how central and local government can work together efficiently. Government representation will be a key part of this event, which will be hosted at Parliament.

We are mindful that the February AOLG will be the first time the whole sector has the opportunity to get together in a room, so we're aiming to strike a good balance between networking opportunities and policy content that members find useful and can take back to council tables.

Invites for February sector meetings will go out before Christmas.

Elections 2025

Policy.nz was stood up for 2025 thanks to LGNZ raising funds from councils to ensure it was viable. The site gave voters clear, accessible information about who is standing and what they stood for. It went live with local election content on 31 August and was supported by a nationwide campaign across the NZ Herald, The Spinoff, iHeart Radio, Phantom Billstickers and LGNZ's social channels.

In terms of other election-related work, we ran a social media campaign encouraging people to vote and engage. We delivered significant media engagement around the elections, including providing data to media.

Te Maruata

Feedback from Te Maruata members on the SuperLocal conference in July was positive. Particular highlights included the sessions on Māori wards and Te Ngana a Tū, Te Pou o Rongo – understanding leadership responsibilities and challenges within council from a Te Ao Māori perspective. Members also valued the opportunity to engage with other Māori councillors.

A Te Maruata Whānui hui was held on 30 July and included a presentation from the Local Government Commission on their review of the Code of Conduct. Te Maruata noted that greater consideration of Māori values was needed to guide conduct expectations. Moko Tepania has joined the Local Government Commission's stakeholder group on the review of the Code of Conduct.

The final Te Maruata Whānui hui was held on 27 August and the final Te Maruata Rōpū Whakahaere was held on 19 September. Agenda items include an update on inductions and onboarding following the elections in October, the elections process for the new Te Maruata Kōmiti, an update from



Creative New Zealand on their Toi Ora Strategy and an update from LGNZ on current priorities and mahi.

An information pack on Māori Wards was prepared by LGNZ, in response to a request from Te Maruata. The information pack included LGNZ's position that all wards should be treated the same (based on agreed messaging from National Council), key messages, FAQs and useful links. While none of the information is new, the information pack brought together relevant information together in one document for easy access.

The election of the new Te Maruata governance group – Te Rōpū Whakahaere – took place in Wellington on 27 November 2025. The new co-chairs are Dinnie Moeahu (New Plymouth District Council) and Aubrey Ria (Gisborne District Council). Other Te Rōpū Whakahaere members are:

- Metro rep – Kylie Wihapi (Porirua City Council)
- Regional rep – Hinewai Ormsby (Hawke's Bay Regional Council)
- R&P rep – Aubrey Ria (Gisborne District Council)
- YEM – Bridgit Bell (Manawatū District Council) and Wahine Murch (Taupō District Council)
- CB – Irene Wakefield (Horowhenua District Council / Te Awahou Foxton Community Board)
- Wahine – Toni Boynton (Whakatāne District Council)
- Tane – Iwi Te Whau Jr (Bay of Plenty Regional Council)
- At large – Dinnie Moeahu (New Plymouth District Council), laean Cranwell (Environment Canterbury), Bonita Bigham (Taranaki Regional Council), Arama Morunga (Northland Regional Council)

The first meeting of the new Rōpū Whakahaere was held on 5 December 2025. The agenda was focused on identifying priorities for the new term, understanding what support LGNZ can provide and confirming arrangements for future events and hui, including Waitangi 2026.

Young Elected Members

YEM held a very successful pre-SuperLocal hui.

The election of the YEM Committee took place on Friday 5 December and the committee elected its chair on Monday 8 December.

Following the elections, the first meeting of the committee will be held before Christmas. Committee members include:

- Chair – Alex Crackett (Invercargill City Council)
- Deputy Chair – Bridgit Bell
- Zone 1 – Felicity Foy (Far North District Council)
- Zone 2 – Justin Ros (Kawerau District Council)
- Zone 3 – Charlotte Melser (Whanganui District Council)
- Zone 4 – Kaz Yung (Hutt City Council)
- Zone 5 – Megan Fitzgerald (Ashburton District Council, Methven Community Board)
- Zone 6 – Alex Crackett (Invercargill City Council)



- Te Maruata – Bridget Bell (Manawātū District Council) and Wahine Murch (Taupō District Council)
- Community Board – to be appointed by CBEC in the New Year
- At large (two roles) – Fisher Wang (Rotorua Lakes Council) and Rebecca Ryan (Waitaki District Council)

Community Boards

The relationship guide we launched at SuperLocal attracted a lot of interest, with a strong stream of visitors to CBEC's stand in the exhibition space. We will continue to promote this resource to councils and community boards.

The election of a new Community Boards Executive Committee will occur in early 2026.

Women in Local Government

We held a very successful breakfast ahead of SuperLocal, with the Hon Tracey Martin an extremely well-received speaker. We will be looking to reengage with women elected members in the New Year.



Support

Ākona

All elected members have been loaded into Ākona and we encourage anyone having difficulties with access to get in touch. We relaunched the Ākona platform in October so that it would provide a better learning experience for elected members.

The most popular Ākona courses since the elections have been:

- Responsibilities of the Chair
- Council asset management
- Intergenerational costing
- Asset maintenance
- Asset management plans

There are now 24 catalogues of learning available, covering skills like dealing with media, public speaking and te reo pronunciation as well as the more technical aspects of elected members' roles.

Ākona also houses all LGNZ guides and is the source of all information and learning connected with local government reforms.

The first Ako hours of the triennium are now live and open for registration in Ākona. We had a record number of attendees at the first Ako hour of the triennium, on resource management with legal expert David Allen, a partner at Buddle Findlay (who will also be supporting development of our resource management submission).

Work on our new local government accreditations continues with Victoria University, and we remain on track for a 2026 launch.

Ahead of the elections, Alicia McKay released a very popular Ako hour. This event was a taster for the bespoke curriculum she is building for LGNZ, ready for release in the New Year.

Induction

More than 400 elected members attended our range of induction events around the country, which were the result of months of planning. Registrations exceeded expectations and budget.

Mayors Induction

Mayors Induction on 20-21 November in Wellington was attended by 52 Mayors (and included non-member Mayors).

The Prime Minister joined us for lunch on the second day and we hosted an update and q+a with Minister of Local Government Simon Watts.

Session topics included:

- Managing the relationship with your CE
- Setting up decision making structures

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- Dealing with emergency situations

We had exceptional feedback, particularly from new Mayors.

Chairs Induction

Chairs Induction was also well-attended and held in conjunction with sector meetings, after Chairs had been elected. Fourteen Chairs, Mayors or Deputy Chairs attended the day, which covered similar ground to Mayors School with a specific regional council focus. It also attracted very positive feedback with 100% of respondents either Very Satisfied or Satisfied with the experience.

Elected Member Induction

We delivered induction for elected members in 13 different locations around the country. Elected members have told us that this year's induction was outstanding and this is borne out by our feedback survey results, with an average satisfaction score of 4.6 out of 5. After attending induction, 91% of attendees felt either "very confident" or "confident" about their role.

LGNZ struggled to deliver quality inductions in 2022 and 2019, and received a lot of negative feedback about those events. This makes our 2025 results even more meaningful.

Inductions were the result of months of planning and significant commitment by staff during October-November.

Pre-elected learning

We made online learning modules freely available to anyone considering standing for council, so that they could understand how councils delivering for communities and what being a councillor actually entails. These pre-election resources were very popular, with over 2000 people accessing the site and 1,061 actively engaging in multiple activities.

LGNZ Māori strategy

Building our internal capability in te ao Māori to be effective for all our members has been a specific focus for LGNZ over the last three years. Establishing a Kaitohutohu Whakarae (Māori) - Māori Chief Advisor to provide cultural leadership and mentoring, lead our engagements with Te Maruata and manage our relationships with hapū, iwi and Māori communities has been a key pillar of our strategy.

We will continue to attend Waitangi. This is now an annual event for LGNZ, providing an opportunity to build relationships with iwi, Māori communities, Ministers and local MPs. In 2026, we are aiming to sign an updated relationship agreement with the Iwi Chairs Forum, highlighting our joint commitment to local democracy. Our delegation will include our President, VP, Te Maruata Co-chairs, Interim CE, and Director Partnerships and Advocacy. The week will include meetings with iwi, attending the powhiri, holding a stall at Waitangi to promote local government, meetings with MPs and participating in other activities such as providing breakfast to attendees of the dawn ceremony in partnership with Woolworths Waitangi and panel discussions.

Te Korowai – CouncilMARK

Te Korowai continues to strengthen its role as LGNZ's sector-led continuous improvement programme, providing councils with an independent, trusted assessment of organisational

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performance. It builds on the robust framework originally developed under CouncilMARK while moving away from its more audit-focused approach. By adding qualitative insights and narrative to DIA's mandatory benchmarking, the programme helps councils understand and to communicate the "why" behind performance and make stronger, evidence-based decisions.

Councils are navigating significant shifts in responsibilities, expectations, and financial settings given current and upcoming Government reform. These changes will require many to realign strategy and plans under increased public and political scrutiny. In this environment, Te Korowai is being positioned as a tool that enhances organisational resilience—providing a strong evidence base and high levels of transparency to help councils understand their capability, demonstrate sound governance, and work confidently through a rapidly changing landscape. Assessments, under the new model, have now been completed for six councils, with flexible engagement options ranging from the Integrity Survey through to full assessments.

At SuperLocal, we hosted two fully subscribed workshops (around 50 participants each), chaired by Mayor Tamah Talley (Central Otago District Council) alongside Sarah Stevenson (Independent Evaluation Panel Member) and Tanya Winter (CE, Ōtorohanga District Council). The workshops highlighted how Te Korowai helps councils focus and prioritise resources, while complementing DIA benchmarks.

We are currently working with a number of councils, who are at different stages of the process.

Road Efficiency Group

REG is a partnership between LGNZ, NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi and all road controlling authorities. It supports councils and transport partners with guidance, tools and insights that improve planning, investment and service delivery. It improves decision-making and systems and processes, allowing you to deliver transport services more effectively.

We have completed the first year of the 2024-2027 The Road Efficiency Group (REG) programme supporting a high-quality learning programme, including a greater focus on in-person workshops and Asset Management Plan reviews.

Governance support

We are currently supporting several councils to navigate sensitive issues. Alongside this work are the numerous calls we receive for general advice and support.

Work continues on updating LGNZ's suite of governance guides. The first products of the shelf were the Standing Orders' templates and the Standing Orders' Guide. The templates and Guide were updated to reflect legislative changes made over the last three years and to incorporate additional guidance where this has been requested, for example, information on workshops following advice from the Ombudsman and clarity on the new quorum rules.

We have also updated:

- Guidance for new Mayors and Chairs;
- The community boards' governance guide;
- The tax guide for elected members;

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- Elected Members' Guide to Governance and Local Government;
- Designing governance and decision-making structures;
- Elected Members' Guide to the LG (Rating) Act 2002;
- Standing Orders Guide

LGNZ has received a number of queries from councils about whether our Code of Conduct template will be updated. We had plans to streamline the Code of Conduct template, based on feedback from users. However, we will not be doing this as the Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill will see the Secretary for Local Government able to adopt a code of conduct for all councils. The Local Government Commission has been charged with developing this model Code of Conduct by the end of 2025. We submitted on the draft code, and have engaged with the commission throughout the process.

A Guide to help councils determine governance and decision-making structures was developed and circulated to councils. This Guide is intended to assist councils to look at the pros and cons of different governing arrangements, such as the pros and cons of establishing committees, whether committees should have delegated responsibilities, or simply be advisory, and whether they should be committees of the whole, or not.

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