

# Memo

To: Helgard Wagener – Relationship Manager Aotea / Great Barrier and Waiheke

cc: Izzy Fordham – Chairperson, Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board  
Luke Coles – Deputy Chairperson, Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board

From: Jacqui Fyers – Senior Local Board Advisor Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board

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Subject: Urgent decision request of the Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board

## Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to initially seek the local board relationship manager's authorisation to commence the urgent decision-making process and if granted, seek formal approval from the chair and deputy chair (or any person acting in these roles) to use the process to make an urgent decision.

The urgent decision being sought needs to be authorised by the chair and deputy chair (or any person acting in these roles) by signing this memo. The decisions required, and the supporting reports, are attached to this memo (Attachment A and B).

This memo and support reports will be reported as an information item at the next Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board ordinary business meeting on Tuesday 25 February, if the urgent decision-making process proceeds.

## Reason for the urgency

Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board has the opportunity to submit feedback to Local Government New Zealand discussion document: *Reinvigorating local democracy: The case for localising power and decision-making to councils and communities*.

The deadline for submission is Friday 31 January 2020.

The reason for the urgent decision is that the board's submission is required to be formally adopted and put on public record.

The next Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board ordinary business meeting is scheduled on Tuesday 25 February 2020.

## Decision sought from the chair and deputy chair (or any person acting in these roles)

That the Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board:

- a. adopt the feedback submitted on the Local Government New Zealand discussion document: *Reinvigorating local democracy: The case for localising power and decision-making to councils and communities*.

## Background

### **Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) discussion document: *Reinvigorating local democracy: The case for localising power and decision-making to councils and communities***

1. At the Chairs' Forum on 9 December 2019, local boards have been given the opportunity to feedback on the LGNZ localism discussion paper.
2. The localism discussion paper seeks to refine LGNZ's advocacy position on 'localism' and makes the case for decentralisation of decision-making. The overall proposal is for an active programme of devolution by central government. The paper argues that decentralisation will be more efficient and effective in meeting community needs, be more relevant and able to respond to growing diversity, increase voter interest and participation and spur innovation.
3. Key elements of the proposal include:
  - a suggestion that the State Services Commission regularly review the range of services that could be transferred to local government or appropriate local agencies
  - establishing a framework to enable councils to take over certain functions where local capacity exists; or, alternatively, enabling councils to negotiate or request functions to be devolved
  - a principle that any transfer would need to include (a) funding (b) guidance and support to build competence and (c) happen only where local capacity already exists
  - removing constraints on local government – regulatory/legislative e.g. pre-fab, public transport, Resource Management Act.
4. Submissions on the LGNZ Localism discussion paper close on Friday 31 January 2020.
5. Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board's feedback will be submitted on Friday 31 January 2020 (Attachment A)

**Authorisation of the urgent decision-making process**



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Signed by Helgard Wagener  
Relationship Manager, Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board

Date: 31/01/2020

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**Approval to use the urgent decision-making process**



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Izzy Fordham  
Chairperson, Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board

Date: 31/01/2020



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Luke Coles  
Deputy Chairperson, Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board

Date: 31/01/2020

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**Aotea / Great Local Board Resolution/s**

That the Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board:

- a. adopt the feedback submitted on the Local Government New Zealand discussion document:  
*Reinvigorating local democracy: The case for localising power and decision-making to councils and communities.*



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Izzy Fordham  
Chairperson, Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board

Date: 31/01/2020



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Luke Coles  
Deputy Chairperson, Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board

Date: 31/01/2020

**Feedback by the Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board on Local Government New Zealand discussion document: *Reinvigorating local democracy: The case for localising power and decision-making to councils and communities***

Purpose

1. To provide feedback by the Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board on the Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) discussion document titled *Reinvigorating local democracy: The case for localising power and decision-making to councils and communities (July 2019)*. (localism discussion paper).

Context

2. An opportunity to feedback before the of end January 2020 on the LGNZ localism discussion paper has been provided to Auckland Council's local boards. This issue was discussed at the Chairs' Forum on 9 December 2019.
3. The localism discussion paper seeks to refine LGNZ's advocacy position on 'localism' and makes the case for decentralisation of decision-making. The overall proposal is for an active programme of devolution by central government. The paper argues that decentralisation will be more efficient and effective in meeting community needs, be more relevant and able to respond to growing diversity, increase voter interest and participation and spur innovation.
4. Key elements of the proposal include:
  - a suggestion that the State Services Commission regularly review the range of services that could be transferred to local government or appropriate local agencies
  - establishing a framework to enable councils to take over certain functions where local capacity exists; or, alternatively, enabling councils to negotiate or request functions to be devolved
  - a principle that any transfer would need to include (a) funding (b) guidance and support to build competence and (c) happen only where local capacity already exists
  - removing constraints on local government – regulatory/legislative eg pre-fab, public transport, Resource Management Act.
5. Acknowledging central government's reinstatement of the Four Well-Beings into the Local Government Act has enabled Local Authorities to play a broad role in promoting the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their communities, taking a sustainable development approach.

Discussion

*Local boards as part of Auckland's unique governance model*

6. The localism discussion document does not consider the differing capacities of the various regional and territorial authorities, specifically no mention is made of Auckland's position as a Unitary Authority
7. Auckland is the largest city in New Zealand and is home to about a third of the country's population with commensurate challenges and opportunities.
8. The 2010 Auckland governance reforms brought about significant change for local government in Auckland. The primary intent of these reforms was to provide stronger regional decision-making alongside greater community engagement and decision-making at the local level.

9. The resulting governance model for Auckland created a shared system of local government, with regional consistency over regulatory and planning decision-making allocated to the governing body, and decision-making over local activities being allocated to 21 local boards.
10. Many local board areas have populations in excess of most cities and towns in New Zealand. The various local board areas are diverse from urban to rural to remote, all with their own respective characteristics and environment.
11. It is therefore important to include local boards in any further discussion about devolution. Any additional devolution of functions from central to local government that results in further non-regulatory activities of Auckland Council being exercised at the local board level will impact on local board decision-making.
12. Local boards are also the Auckland Council's interface with local communities. The aspirations of local communities are captured in local board plans. Localism includes the participation of communities and local boards are key to that.

*Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board's challenges and opportunities*

13. Aotea / Great Barrier Island lies 90km east of Auckland City in the Hauraki Gulf and is Auckland Council's most remote and isolated area. Over 60 per cent of the island is Department of Conservation (DoC) estate.
14. The island is completely off-the-grid with no reticulated power nor water. It has no public transport and transportation to and from the mainland is either by plane, a 35-minute flight one way, or by ferry a four-and-a-half-hour trip one way.
15. Aotea has a permanent population of 936 residents (2018 Census). In 2013, the median household income was \$30,100, much lower than the regional median of \$76,500 and the lowest income across all local board areas in the Auckland region.
16. Due to the remoteness from the island and the small population accessibility by residents to health and education services provided by the central government are a challenge not necessarily faced by other residents of Auckland. Consequently, the local board has taken an active role in facilitating access to central government health and education services by collaboration with central government departments, as set out below.
17. The island has no hospital services and no Citizens Advice Bureau. These services are provided by community organisations and supported by the local board through funding and enabling access to infrastructure.
18. Aotea has one playcentre, three primary schools and no secondary school. The local board and central government are currently supporting community organisations to provide Te Kura (Learning Hub), early childhood centre (ECE) and adult learning opportunities.
19. The island has limited broadband access. The local board has been working with central government, community groups and corporates to find solutions.
20. Aotea is an International Dark Sky Sanctuary. The local board has recently worked with the community to develop a visitor strategy to aid tourism growth and deal with the seasonal influx of visitors puts on the island's limited infrastructure.
21. Due to the unique and remote nature of the island, Auckland Council's governing body has devolved varied functions to Aotea such as delegations over cemeteries and right to kill wandering stock.

*Delegation of specific functions to local boards*

22. The localism discussion document proposes that specific functions may be devolved from central government to local government as:

- agreed devolution - agree up front what services local government can 'take over'
  - negotiated devolution - give local government the ability to apply and negotiate areas that they want to take over.
23. Whilst there are a set of readily-identifiable functions that should be delegated to all local authorities, there are also multiple uniquely local challenges and opportunities that may best be dealt with through negotiated devolution by a specific territorial or regional authority or a group of authorities (including local boards) that gives due regard to local conditions and can be delivered within their resource capacity.

#### Recommendations

24. The Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board:
- a) support the concept of localism and rethinking centralized systems
  - b) support the proposal that employing a place-based approach to decision making, especially on areas where needs and preferences vary, enables authorities to deliver locally-appropriate services to our increasingly diverse communities
  - c) support initiatives that increase interest and participation in democratic processes
  - d) support a collaborative approach between central and local government on decisions that affect people in the Aotea / Great Barrier local board area and the Auckland region
  - e) support an approach that-
    - i. identifies generic functions that are appropriate for delegation to all local authorities
    - ii. enables negotiated devolution of functions that gives a council (or local board) or group of councils (or local boards) the ability to apply and negotiate additional functions, activities and/or areas that are suited to be devolved
  - f) agree that any devolution of functions must be supported by necessary funding
  - g) support the proposal for exploring funding mechanisms that can support, enable and incentivise local government to invest in areas that will spur growth and better deliver local services. Such as the possibility of GST collected on rates could be "given back" to those councils and unitary authorities where it was collected from.
  - h) recommend LGNZ considers what localism looks like at the local government level to ensure local boards and community boards are a key part of the solution.