

LGNZ Remits 2020 – Management Comments and Recommendations

Number	Name of Remit	Summary of Remit	Management comments	Recommendation
1	Public Transport Support	Calls on Government to work with councils to maintain financial viability of public transport during recovery phase of COVID-19	Remits also acknowledges the Government's strong support of public transport during COVID-19. Impacts on Regional Councils who provide public transport.	Support
2	Housing Affordability*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls for new legislation to enable councils address housing affordability with a range of tools – including 'inclusionary zoning' • Set up a working group • Advocate a National Policy Statement for affordable housing 	<p>This remit is consistent with TCC position calling for a more joined-up response to affordable housing.</p> <p>The remit calls for more tools for councils to use to enable them to respond to housing needs and seeks clear authority for councils to implement tools without risk of legal challenge such as a National Policy Statement for Affordable Housing under the RMA.</p> <p>Inclusionary zoning is specifically addressed with the remit seeking the ability for Council's to develop policy that would require land or financial contributions from developers being vested to nominated housing land trusts – retains a portion of new land for people on low-to-moderate incomes. As set out in the remit it is currently very challenging to implement workable inclusionary zoning provisions under existing legislation. It would not be mandatory to implement inclusionary zoning.</p> <p>TCC supported the remit when it was nominated.</p>	Support
3	Returning GST on rates for councils to spend on infrastructure*	Calls for GST of 15% on rates to be returned to councils to spend on local and regional infrastructure projects	<p>Consistent with previous LGNZ remit in 2017. This remit differs in that it focuses on the GST to be spent on infrastructure projects.</p> <p>TCC supported the remit when it was nominated.</p>	Support

4	Natural hazards and climate change adaptation	<p>Calls for a review of the current law on natural hazards and climate change adaptation for coastlines and asks for a coastline strategy for all NZ.</p>	<p>This remit raises issues around how local government practically implements the guidance provided by central government and how to deal with topics of community resilience and climate future fit.</p> <p>The remit asks for clarity and co-ordination of roles. It is not so much roles and responsibilities that is the issue, what is more appropriate and missing from the course of action is a lack of legislation review, and then change to bring about consistency across all legislation. This was a key driver of the Remit, but it is not in the list of the suggested course of actions. This was a recommendation from TCC when supporting this remit.</p> <p>There is currently a misalignment of national legislation and documentation (this includes all legislation, including the Building Act, RMA, CDEM, LGA and current guidance and implementation documents). Given the recent government announcements about legislative review of the RMA, it is reasonable to expect changes. What is not known is whether the review includes other acts and their integration that will enable adaptive planning approaches to natural hazard risk management and climate change adaptation.</p> <p>Integration between councils and government about managed retreat and the development of principles for “who pays” is supported. The question is where adaptation funding comes from, or more specifically, will there be a central government agreement to fund. Being told how to retreat may cause more problems and restrictions than we have currently.</p> <p>The question remains what support will be available when the inevitable court and legal challenges arrive.</p>	Support
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5	Annual regional balances of transfers	Calls for LGNZ to work with Treasury and Statistics NZ to develop an annual regional balance of transfers to show how much each region contributes in taxes and how much each region received in government funding.	<p>This remit asks for transparency for regions and to promote more open democracy and accountability of where public money is spent and where it has come from. Attempts to get a clear picture of regional balance of transfers have been unsuccessful in the past.</p> <p>This remit relates to LGNZ and NZ Initiative work on localism.</p>	Support
6	Local government electoral cycle	Calls for electoral cycle to be extended from three to four years	<p>This remit would see local government elections every four years instead of current three yearly cycle.</p> <p>Pros and cons of a four yearly cycle is set out in the remit.</p> <p>The change would result in local government and central government elections been held in same year once every third cycle.</p> <p>The remit notes that the central government term could also be extended for four years. Two referenda held in 1967 and 1990 on increasing the parliamentary term both heavily defeated.</p> <p>Any changes to the electoral cycle may impact on the LTP and Annual Plan cycle. This is not discussed in the remit.</p>	No recommendation. This is a political decision.
7	Water bottling*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls for a moratorium on water takes for bottling or bulk export. • Requires inactive consents to be withdrawn. • Undertake an assessment of effects of the industry and future growth and • Initiate discussion on issue of water bottling and changes to legislation and policy. 	<p>LGNZ note that the intent of the remit is not to impact existing water bottling operations or make judgements on the merits or otherwise of the industry. The focus is on obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the industry, its potential growth, impacts of the growth and policy and legislation that are required to address this. The activity however is also linked to the issue of end-use disposal of plastic water bottles and whether or not it meets the objectives and policies of the RMA and the Waste Minimisation Act.</p> <p>A national election issue in 2017, with community concern about water bottling including protests and challenges</p>	Support

			<p>from Māori on environment court decisions. Currently three appeals before the High Court.</p> <p>This remit is a new policy position for LGNZ and central government and could accelerate the debate on water allocation and the NPS on Freshwater Management. The results of the remit could feed into Stage 2 of RMA reform and LGNZ's Water 2050 project.</p> <p>TCC supported the remit when it was nominated.</p>	
8	Quorum when attending local authority meetings	Calls for legislation to enable elected or appointed members to connect remotely and be included in the quorum.	<p>This remit would provide an option for councils to hold meetings remotely as they did during COVID-19. Prior to that the legislation required members to be physically present to be included in the quorum, although they were able to vote.</p> <p>This remit requests that the changes introduced for COVID-19 to the Local Government Act 2002 and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 are retained permanently and not removed when the Epidemic Preparedness (COVID-19) Notice 2020 expires.</p> <p>This would still be an option for councils to adopt through their standing orders and would not be mandatory.</p>	Support
9	Use of macrons by local authorities	Calls for LGNZ to work with central government to put in place a simplified process for macrons to be added to council names.	The remit sets out the complex process to change a local authority's legal name to include Māori macrons. It suggests that rather than individual councils go through the process, this should be addressed by the sector as a whole. Legal advice from Simpson Grierson is included with five potential options set out and it is recommended that LGNZ assess and explore these options further with central government.	Support

<p>10</p>	<p>Rates rebates for low income property owners</p>	<p>Calls for the government to lift the level of rates rebates available for low and fixed income property owners with yearly increases.</p>	<p>The remit states that the level of rates rebates has not kept pace with the cost of living and is not providing financial support for those property owners on low and fixed incomes which has resulted in significant financial hardship for some members of the community.</p> <p>Current eligible rates rebates of up to a maximum of \$640 per year and the income threshold is \$25,660.</p> <p>The Productivity Commission recommended the current scheme be replaced with a national rates postponement programme or at least shifted to an online scheme, describing the scheme as inequitable, administratively cumbersome and modest. The Minister of Local Government has indicated the government is carefully considering these recommendations.</p> <p>Tauranga/Western Bay of Plenty submission to the Productivity Commission recommended restoring the rebate to \$1,000 maximum indexed each year by the average rates increase across the country.</p> <p>Tauranga City Council has been advocating strongly for a more user friendly and efficient rates rebate application process. Council staff with help from SOLGM working with the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) to enact the Rates Rebate (Statutory Declarations) Amendment Bill. The Bill will make it easier for eligible applicants to apply for a rates rebate, replacing the statutory declaration with a verified signature, and will allow local authorities to design online applications forms for rates rebates. Tauranga has already invested significant time piloting a rates rebate online application with the DIA. Staff will continue to work with other local authorities and the DIA with the goal of having a nationwide online application portal.</p>	<p>Support</p>
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11	Local Government's CO2 Emissions	Calls for the government to implement an independent scheme to measure and report on carbon emissions at a district level.	The remit would task a government department with analysing and publishing each district's carbon emissions, to provide a reliable breakdown of CO2 emissions. This would show CO2 changes over time, provide low cost information sharing and incentivise best practices to reduce CO2 emissions.	Support

*TCC supported the remit when it was nominated