


AMALGAMATION

A PROPOSAL BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

Residents and ratepayers of Nelson City are being asked to vote in a poll on whether Nelson City and Tasman District should amalgamate into one unitary council. Nelson City Council is providing this summary of the proposal document to help you make your decision.



12pm on Saturday 21 April is high noon for the issue of whether the residents and ratepayers of Nelson want the Nelson City Council and Tasman District Councils to unite. Noon marks the end of the voting period that begins on 30 March. If over 50% of the eligible votes in each of the current council areas are 'yes', then a new combined district council covering an area from south of Murchison in the south, Golden Bay in the west and Nelson in the east will come into being on 1 November this year. It would be called the Nelson Tasman District Council. This new district council would take over the functions of both the Nelson City Council and the Tasman District Council and continue to provide council services under a new structure that will include a mayor and 16 councillors, voted for in elections to be held in October this year.

 **NOTE:** The information on these pages has been prepared using the Local Government Commission document.

GLOSSARY

The **Local Government Commission** is an independent statutory body. Its main role is to make decisions on the structure and representation requirements of local government in New Zealand.

A **ward** is a subdivision of a local authority area for the purpose of elections. (Reference, Local Electoral Act 2001)

A community board

- represents and acts as an advocate for the interests of the community
- considers and reports on any matter referred to it by their council, and any

issues of interest to the community board

- makes an annual submission to their council on expenditure
- maintains an overview of services provided by their council within the community
- communicates with community organisations and special interest groups in the community, and undertakes any other responsibilities delegated by their council.

Community boards were created by the local government reforms in 1989.

(Reference Local Government New Zealand)

The purpose of a **committee or a standing committee** is to carry out general and special directions as directed by the Council. (Reference, Local Government Act 2002).

The LGC decided, despite the potential confusion by the use of the word 'board', that the proposed Māori Board is a standing committee of the new Council.

Likewise, the LGC decided that the proposed Rural Advisory Committee is a standing committee of the new Council.



The Local Government Commission (LGC) has proposed a detailed plan of how an amalgamated council would work in our region. The proposal is called 'Reorganisation Scheme for the Union of Nelson City and Tasman District' and is dated 30 January 2012. This document has taken into account submissions on an earlier proposal from 2011. The final proposal details how the amalgamated council, the Nelson Tasman District Council, would function.

The full proposal, along with other documents that will help inform your vote, can be found at www.lgc.govt.nz/nelsontasman

List of available documents on the LGC's website:

- Nelson Tasman District Reorganisation Scheme and maps
- A second addendum to the Strateg.Ease May 2011 report on financial and service delivery matters
- Peer review of the second addendum by Ernst and Young
- 'The Final Decision' outlines the Local Government Commissions reasons for proceeding with the poll
- List of submitters appearing at the 2011 hearings on the draft reorganisation scheme and the main points made in the submissions and at the hearings
- Frequently Asked Questions

THE PATH TO THIS VOTE

In June 2010, a proposal for the union of Nelson City and Tasman District was initiated by more than 10 percent of the electors of the City and the District. That same month, the LGC called for submissions on the proposal and hearings were held in December of 2010. The LGC's decision, after assessing the proposal and all submissions, was to prepare a Draft Reorganisation Scheme. That draft document was released in June 2011. The LGC received 395 submissions on the draft reorganisation scheme. On 31 January 2012 the LGC issued a Final Reorganisation Scheme proposing the union of Nelson City and Tasman District.

The LGC has reviewed the state of local government and decided that there are advantages to the region from this proposal which include

- a more appropriate district/region for a council
- a more distinct community of interest
- enhanced resources
- better ability to meet decision-making requirements

The LGC says integrated decision-making will help achieve sustainable development and community well-being more effectively than two councils having to agree on the basis of the increasing need for co-ordinated action. It also states that it will also be more efficient economically.

The disadvantages are the uncertainty and cost of transition from the current situation to a new combined council. The other disadvantage is fewer councillors representing the wards of the new region. However, the LGC states that this will be significantly offset by enhanced local decision-making powers by the proposed new community boards.

HOW THE NEW COUNCIL WOULD LOOK

At the moment, Nelson City Council has a Mayor and 12 councillors representing a population of 42,891 (Census 2006) and the Tasman District Council has a Mayor and 13 councillors representing a population of 44,625 (Census 2006). Currently, Nelson electors have 13 votes – one for each of the 12 councillors and a Mayor but under the new structure, electors would have two votes – one for the councillor in your ward and one for Mayor.

The proposed united Nelson Tasman District Council would have one Mayor and 16 councillors elected from eight wards. These wards would be the existing Tasman District Council wards of Golden Bay, Lakes-Murchison, Motueka, Moutere-Waimea and Richmond and add to them would be three new wards across the current Nelson City Council territory defined as Stoke, Nelson and Atawhai.

The first election of the Nelson Tasman District Council would be held on 13 October 2012 and the new council and Mayor would be in place on 1 November 2012.

REPRESENTATION UNDER THE PROPOSED NEW DISTRICT COUNCIL

You would be represented in several ways across different layers of the new district council structure. The first way is through councillors you elect based on the area you live in or pay rates for. Each address will be part of a ward as outlined in the map of the proposed eight wards.

At an election you would get two votes – one for Mayor and one for those persons standing for council in your ward.

Each ward will be represented by between one and three elected council members.



The wards represented by one elected councillor would be:

- Golden Bay
- Lakes-Murchison
- Atawhai



The wards represented by two elected councillors would be:

- Motueka
- Moutere-Waimea



The wards represented by three elected councillors would be:

- Richmond
- Stoke
- Nelson

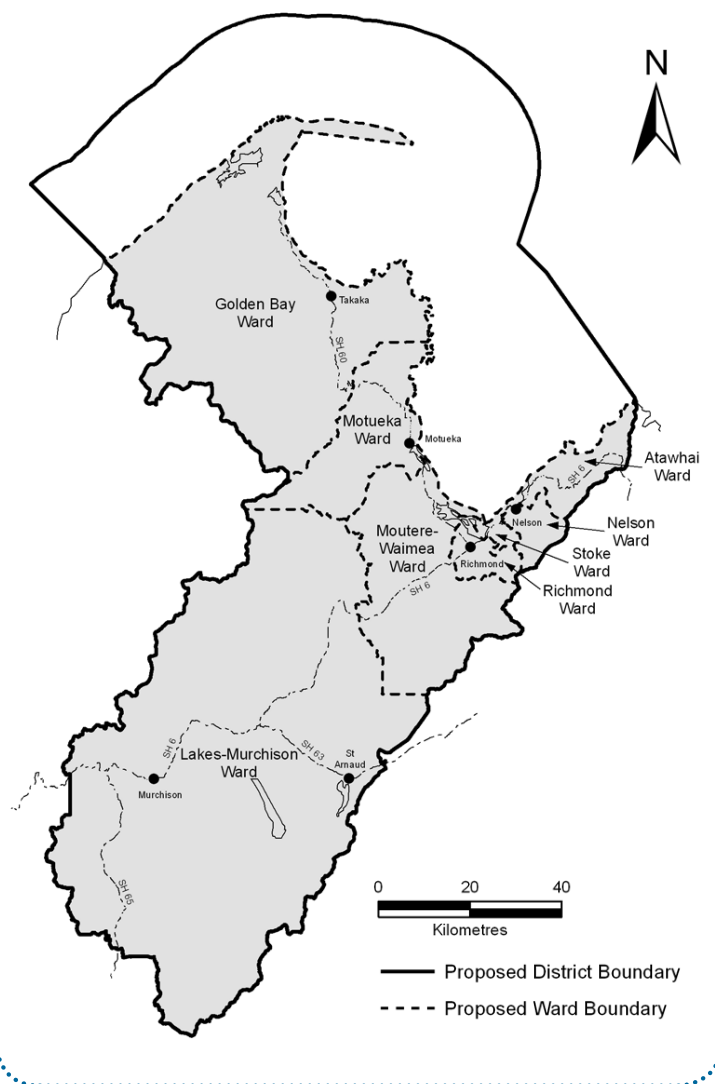
COMMUNITY BOARDS

The second tier of representation is based on smaller communities of interest: both community boards and committees will report to the Nelson Tasman District Council. Have a look at the glossary on page 5 for the purpose of community boards.

Community boards already exist in the current Tasman District Council. In the proposal, there are only two community boards – Golden Bay, which would consist of four elected members plus the Golden Bay Ward Councillor, and Motueka, which would consist of four elected members and the two Motueka Ward Councillors. Community board members will be elected at the same time as Council members.

Community boards would be allocated budgets and can approve expenditure for their area. They would be required to communicate with their communities and undertake community planning, decision-making and make recommendations to the Nelson Tasman District Council. The Nelson Tasman District Council would be able to add new community boards at any time and also delegate additional powers to the boards if required.

WARDS PROPOSED NELSON TASMAN DISTRICT



The full proposal, along with other documents that will help inform your vote, can be found at:

www.lgc.govt.nz/nelsontasman



Looking for estimated cost information?

The Local Government Commission has an addendum report by Strateg. Ease on their website that supplements the LGC proposal with financial and service delivery information. Information is provided on:

- Estimated costs of Councillor and Community Board remuneration costs
- Estimated costs for the proposed Māori Board and Rural Advisory Committee
- Administration, financial and operating system issues and potential cost savings
- Staff cost savings
- Transitional issues and costs

To download and read this report, visit www.lgc.govt.nz/nelsontasman.

→ COMMITTEES

The Nelson Tasman District Council is able to appoint as many committees as it needs. Committees included in the LGC proposal are the Rural Advisory Committee and the Māori Board.

The Rural Advisory Committee consists of the Mayor and nominated representatives of Federated Farmers Golden Bay, Federated Farmers Nelson, Rural Women NZ Golden Bay, Rural Women NZ Nelson, fruit growers, wine and grape industry and the forestry industry. Its role would be to oversee and advise Council on rural issues.

The Māori Board is made up of the Mayor of Nelson Tasman District Council, one representative of each iwi in the district and one representative of matawaka. Its role would be to oversee and advise Council on Māori issues.

The Final Reorganisation Scheme states that every Council committee must have one member from the Rural Advisory Committee and the Māori Board. There must also be a member from each community board sitting on most Council committees.

→ HOW AMALGAMATION WOULD AFFECT MY RATES

The current arrangements for determining and setting rates are included in each council's Long Term Plans and these would continue to apply until July 2015. For Nelson, that's a land value rates system. For Tasman it's a capital value system. The level of rating and charges under an amalgamated council will be decided by the incoming Council, once they've consulted with the community.

Loans raised by each council will continue to be repaid by the areas that raised the loans.

→ ACCESSING COUNCIL SERVICES

A new combined Nelson Tasman District Council would have its headquarters in Richmond.

There won't be any change to service centres for a minimum of five years. All the services to the public currently provided in Nelson, Motueka, Richmond, Murchison and Takaka must continue to be provided during the initial five year period.

→ WHAT IT MEANS FOR FUTURE PLANNING FOR NELSON

There will be no change in the long term plans that are already in place for each current council and the areas each represent. The new Council would, however, have to adopt a new long term plan before 1 July 2015 that covers the Nelson Tasman region. Each council will still be required to produce an annual report that covers the period up to June 2013.

→ HOW THE TRANSITION WOULD WORK

To oversee the amalgamation that would take effect from 1 November 2012, a transition committee would be set up. It must include both current Mayors, and Deputy Mayors, one other member appointed by each council as well as an independent chairperson. The chairperson is not allowed to work for either of the current councils and both Mayors must agree on the appointment.

The Transition Committee is tasked with making sure the new council is able to operate effectively and efficiently. It will make recommendations to the new council on areas including funding and powers for community boards, electoral officer for the first elections, and draft annual plan matters. It will inform and consult the community on progress and issues as required. The Transition Committee is also responsible for recommending the person to be appointed as the Transition Manager. The Transition Manager will identify and report to the Transition Committee all steps needed to have the new council established on 1 November.

Have a question about the Local Government Commission's proposed amalgamation scheme? Ask your question and staff from Nelson City and Tasman District Councils will answer to the best of their knowledge. The **ASK ABOUT AMALGAMATION** website is brought to you by Nelson City and Tasman District Councils.

www.askaboutamalgamation.co.nz



➔ THE INITIAL CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Transition Manager will become the Nelson Tasman District Council's first Chief Executive. The role will continue until the Council appoints a new Chief Executive by the set date of 30 June 2013.

➔ WHAT HAPPENS TO THE CURRENT STAFF OF EACH COUNCIL

The employment of each of the two current Chief Executives would end when the two current councils are dissolved. All other staff will become employees of the new council. The Transition Manager/ Nelson Tasman District Council Chief Executive is also responsible for starting a recruitment process for second tier management positions.

➔ VOTING ON THE LGC'S PROPOSAL

Anyone over 18 who either lives in Nelson City Council or Tasman District Council areas or pays rates on a property in those areas is eligible to vote. But you must be enrolled to vote. You need to be enrolled on either the electoral roll – the same roll used in the general elections for parliament, or on the ratepayer elector rolls at either Nelson City or Tasman District Councils.

How do I vote?

Voting documents will be mailed to electors of Nelson City and Tasman District between Thursday 29 March 2012 and Wednesday 4 April 2012. Your completed voting documents must be received by the electoral officer before noon, Saturday, 21 April 2012 to count.

Once you've received your voting papers in the mail you can either post it back in the provided freepost envelope or you can drop it in to voting boxes which will be at the Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council headquarters. Because the voting papers need to be in the hands of the electoral officer by the deadline of noon on Saturday 21 April, if you're posting you need to make sure you post it in time to get there.

If you're a ratepayer in either council area but don't live there, you are still eligible to vote, but you must enrol for the non-resident ratepayer electoral roll. You will then be able to vote by special vote up until closing of the poll on noon 21 April. Any special votes can be taken at either Nelson City Council or Tasman District Council up until that closing deadline. As with any election there are processes in place for voting if you'll be out of the country.

For more information on the voting process or special votes, phone the electoral helpline 0508 666 556.

➔ THE RESULT

The voting is being conducted using two separate polls run at the same time. One poll is for Nelson City Council electors the other Tasman District Council electors. For the proposal to establish a Nelson Tasman District Council to be adopted, the majority of votes in each separate region (Nelson and Tasman) must vote in favour. The vote results are binding and require over 50% of votes in both the current council areas to be in favour. If there is no majority vote in at least one of the polls then amalgamation won't proceed and both councils will continue as they are currently as separate entities.

➔ TIMELINE - KEY DATES

MARCH 2012

29 Mar - 4 Apr:
Voting papers
posted out

30 Mar: First
day of voting

APRIL 2012

4 Apr: Final
date for voting
papers to arrive

21 Apr: Voting
papers must
be with
electoral
officer by
noon to count

If a majority of electors in Nelson and Tasman vote FOR the united Nelson Tasman District Council:

April 2012 – an order in Council will be prepared to give effect to the scheme. This would constitute the Transition Committee.

13 October 2012 - elections for Mayor, Councillors and Community Board members held in both current council areas.

1 November 2012 – new Council begins operating.

How to find a hard copy of the LGC Proposal

Copies of the LGC proposal can be found at the Customer Service Centre, 110 Trafalgar Street or at any of the Nelson Public Libraries.

The full proposal, along with other documents that will help inform your vote, can be found at:
www.lgc.govt.nz/nelsontasman