



## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

**His Worship the Mayor  
Bruce Smith**

Westland District Council  
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FILE REF: CCL 7

30 September 2021

Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
Minister of Local Government  
Parliament Buildings  
WELLINGTON

Via Email: [n.mahuta@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:n.mahuta@ministers.govt.nz)

Tēnā koe e te Rangatira

### **PROPOSED THREE WATERS REFORM PROGRAMME**

At our monthly meeting on Thursday the 30 September 2021, Westland District Council discussed the Three Waters Reform proposal and finalised the feedback the Council will be providing to the Government.

Westland District Council unanimously resolved that:

**It opposes the New Zealand Government's proposed model to establish four large water entities and remove the three waters assets and services from local councils.**

The Council is not convinced that the current model provides the best governance and financial outcomes for our District and New Zealand.

As a result, based on the information available at present, this Council would seek to opt-out of the reform should this decision be required.

This position is backed by our community and is reflected in the feedback collected during the community engagement undertaken.

In order to understand the views of the people we represent, the Council took the opportunity to engage with its community; this resulted in significant levels of feedback both written and verbal.

A total of 370 written responses were received over a three week period, a greater figure than even our LTP.

An overwhelming 92% of respondents requested that the Council 'opt-out' of the proposed reforms. Westland has a proud record of independence, and this record response rate shows the huge importance that our community places on the issues being considered. There is a clear message from residents that they do not support this reform proposal.

Residents are not happy about losing control over their assets and infrastructure; they value local say and management and they have a number of valid concerns that need to be listened to by the Government including the need for any local government reform to be driven by the people upwards and not imposed by government upon our people.

There has also been significant concern expressed about the disappointing and misleading nature of the Government's public advertising campaign, inaccuracies in the data the Government is reliant on, and core underlying assumptions that have been questioned by industry experts.

Our Council is not alone in expressing these concerns. Despite the feedback and assurances from DIA staff that the campaign would be reviewed, the advertising continues. The damage it inflicts on this government will be immeasurable which is unfortunate.

Of significance to Westland was the support received from the Chairman of Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae and the Chairman of Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio in opting out. What has become very clear is that Iwi around the country have many different views with a minority in the North Island being very radical in nature.

Westland District Council, like all councils nationwide, went into this process in good faith and on the understanding that the reform was voluntary with the ability for councils to opt-out.

We would like to remind the Government of the good faith in which we entered this process and trust that similar good faith will be shown regarding the Council's ability to opt-out.

We advise you that should government mandate this three waters proposal we will stand with our community and push back.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'B. Smith', written in a cursive style.

**Bruce Smith**  
**Mayor**

**Deputy Mayor David Carruthers**  
**Chair, Capital Projects and Tenders Committee**  
**Hokitika Ward Councillor**

**Cr Latham Martin**  
**Chair, Community Development and Planning**  
**Committee**  
**Hokitika Ward Councillor**

**Cr Jenny Keogan**  
**Northern Ward Councillor**

**Cr Jane Neale**  
**Northern Ward Councillor**

**Cr Anna Hart**  
**Northern Ward Councillor**

**Cr Paul Davidson**  
**Hokitika Ward Councillor**

**Cr Ryan Kennedy**  
**Southern Ward Councillor**

**Cr Ian Hartshorne**  
**Southern Ward Councillor**

**Kw Francois Tumahai**  
**Chair, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae**

**Kw Paul Madgwick**  
**Chair, Te Rūnanga o Makaawhio**