

KIA KŌTAHI MAI

Representation Review 2021 Final Proposal



Introduction

He kupu whakataki

We're doing a representation review to look at how Northland communities are represented at the council table.

Following a one-month public consultation on our Initial Proposal, we have carefully considered the feedback we received and decided not to make any further changes.

This document sets out our Final Proposal, which remains the same as our Initial Proposal.

Those that submitted on the Initial Proposal can now make a formal appeal if they wish to do so.

All appeals must reach Northland Regional Council by 4.00pm on Friday 26 November 2021.



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Ihirangi

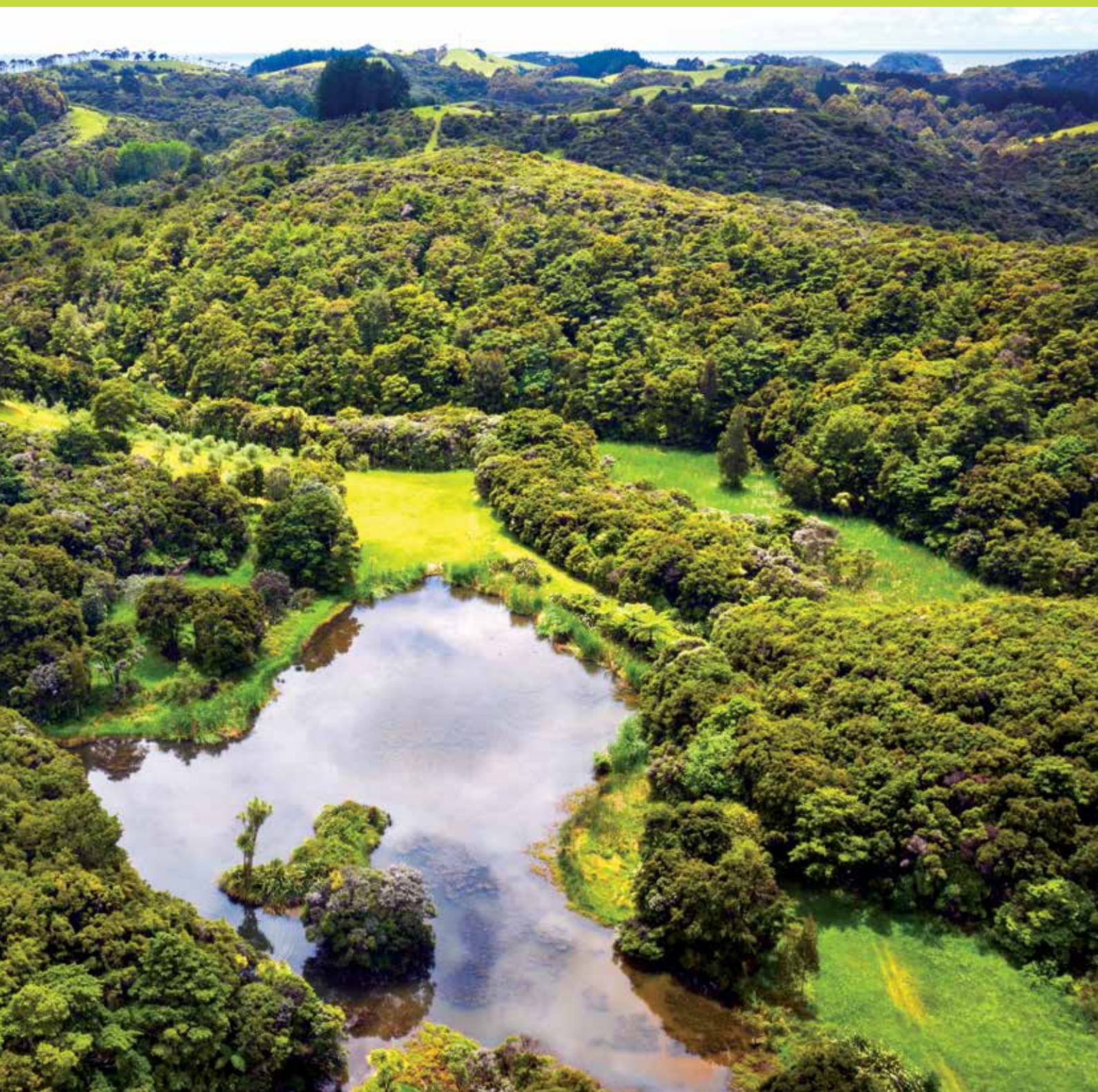
Nau mai, haere mai

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Representation review

Arotake Whakaahuatanga

As a council, Northland Regional Council is required to review its representation arrangements at least every six years.



What is a representation review?

He aha te arotake whakaahuatanga?

Every three years elections are held for council. To make sure we have fair and effective representation at the council table, we are required under the Local Electoral Act 2001 to review our representation arrangements at least every six years.

Following the decision to establish Māori constituencies, council was required to do a representation review in 2021 so that the new arrangements will be in place for the next local government elections in 2022.

A representation review looks at how Northland Regional Council can best represent the people of Northland.

It covers:

- » The total number of councillors; and
- » The number, boundaries and names of the areas from which councillors will be elected (referred to as constituencies).

This document presents the Northland Regional Council's Representation Review 2021 Initial Proposal which provides the detail and reasoning behind proposed changes to its representation arrangements.





Key considerations | Ngā kaupapa matua

There are three key factors councils are required to look at when considering representation:

- » Regional communities of interest;
- » Effective representation; and
- » Fair representation.

Below is more detail on what these things mean.

Regional communities of interest

This is about the communities people identify with – whether it's geographical, historical or something else. It can mean different things to different people and can change over time.

It can include things like:

- » A sense of belonging to a distinct area or location
- » Distinctive topographical features such as river catchments, mountains and coastal ecosystems
- » Similar demographic, socio-economic and ethnic characteristics
- » Similar economic and social activities in an area
- » Land use and local history of an area
- » The rohe or takiwā of iwi and hapū

- » Shared facilities such as schools, marae, shops and recreational.

Effective representation

Once communities of interest have been identified, we look at how they can be grouped together into geographically distinct areas (constituencies) to represent the people who live there. We need to consider whether:

- » People will have reasonable access to their local councillor
- » Councillors will be able to easily attend meetings/events in their constituency
- » The representation arrangements facilitate the sharing of an appropriate (and ideally equal) workload amongst councillors.

Fair representation

Legally each councillor must represent roughly the same number of people. This is known as the 'plus or minus 10% rule'.

This has a strong influence on where the proposed constituencies boundaries go and also has to be considered when trying to future-proof representation arrangements. For example, in growth areas it makes sense to draw the constituency boundary at the lower end of the population scale to allow for continued growth.

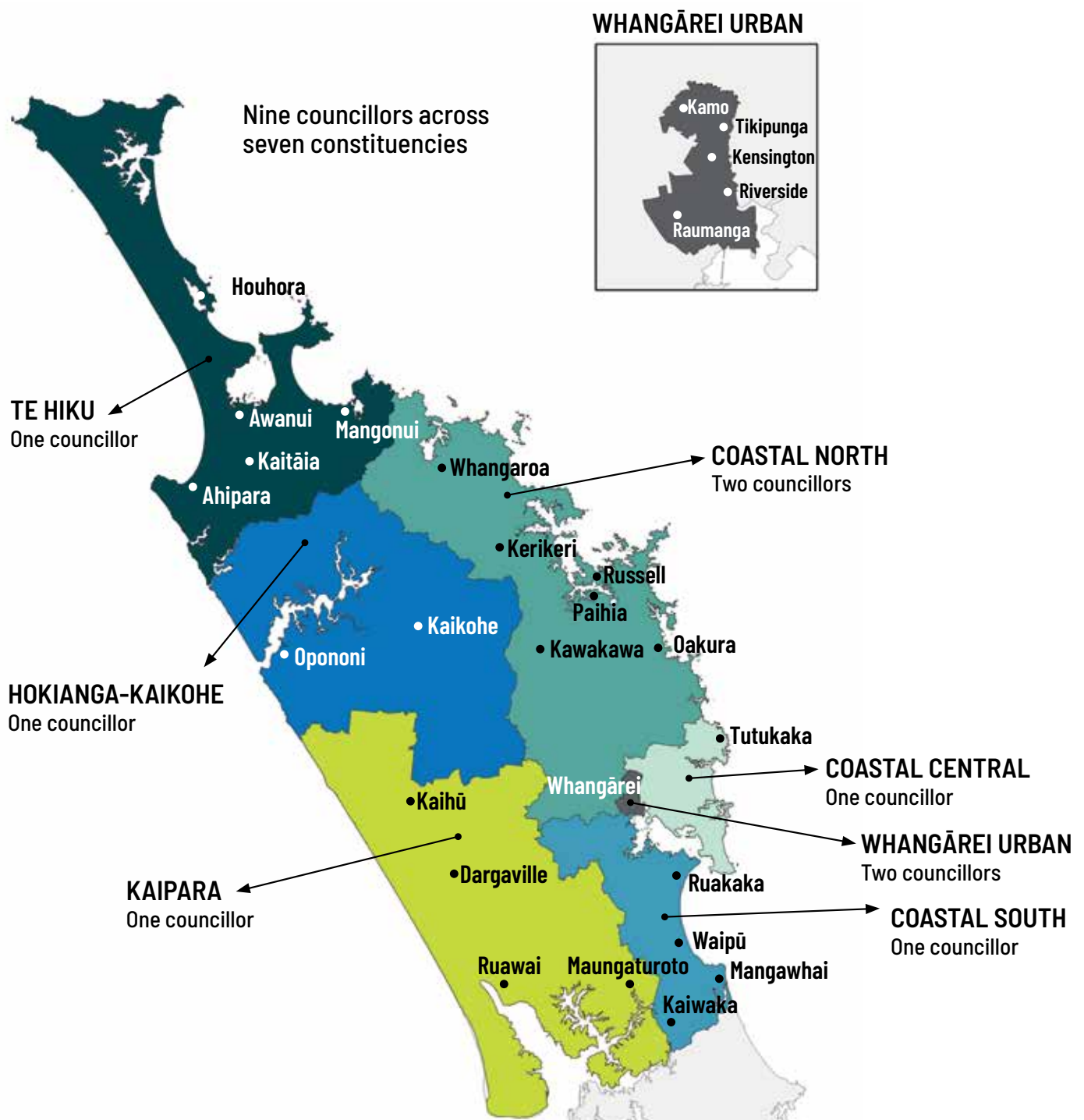
The current model | Te taura ināiane

Since 2012 Northland Regional Council has had seven constituencies represented by nine councillors (before that there were three constituencies and eight councillors).

We fine-tuned this model in the 2018 representation review, mainly to fix anomalies along constituency boundaries and accommodate the rapidly growing Coastal South constituency.

The seven current constituencies are shown below. Coastal North and Whangārei Urban constituencies each have two councillors; the other five constituencies are represented by one councillor for each.

Current Northland Regional Council constituencies





What has happened so far

Te hātepe – i ahatia i tēnei wā.

Developing the Initial Proposal

For the Initial Proposal, we have worked with a range of people, including our Māori advisory group, to put together a model that we think will best serve our communities.

Our proposal is to keep the total number of councillors the same – nine – made up of:

- Seven councillors elected from seven general constituencies (one from each); and
- Two councillors elected from one region-wide Māori constituency.

Feedback on the Initial Proposal

A one-month consultation period on the Initial Proposal ran from Tuesday 10 August to Friday 10 September.

We received 33 submissions on the Initial Proposal, with eight in support, 22 in opposition, and three unknown. The key themes identified were:

- A fair balance as proposed
- Only those of Māori descent being able to stand in Māori constituencies

- Increasing number to 8-12 general and 3-4 Māori councillors
- Including Kamo, Kauri, Springs Flat, Maunu, Whatitiri in Whangārei and increase councillors to two
- Challenging for two Māori councillors to represent all of Te Raki and the public to have access to these councillors
- Inadequate representation for Māori, plus how Māori are represented should be decided by Māori
- Inadequate consultation was carried out
- Out of scope: Application of the first past the post (FFP) electoral system and having Māori constituencies

After carefully considering all the feedback received and looking at the implications for representation across the region, council has decided to proceed with the model set out in the Initial Proposal.

We believe this is still the best way we can achieve fair and effective representation for Northlanders, within the legislative requirements councils are bound by.

Key dates | Ngā rā matua

10 August to 10 September 2021: Submission period

33 submissions were received on our Initial Proposal.

28 September 2021: Hearings

Council heard from members of the public who spoke to four of the formal submissions.

5 October 2021: Deliberations

Council met to consider all the information it has received.

19 October 2021: Final Proposal

Council adopts its Final Proposal for representation.

22 October to 26 November: Appeal period

Earlier submitters can lodge an appeal against the Final Proposal if they wish (see appeal form at the back of this document).

April 2022: Determination by the Local Government Commission

If there are any appeals, it all gets passed to the Local Government Commission to make the final decision. The final determination is required by 10 April and the decision is final (other than an appeal to the High Court on a point of law).

8 October 2022: Local government elections

The representation arrangements decided through this process will apply at the 2022 elections for Northland Regional Council.



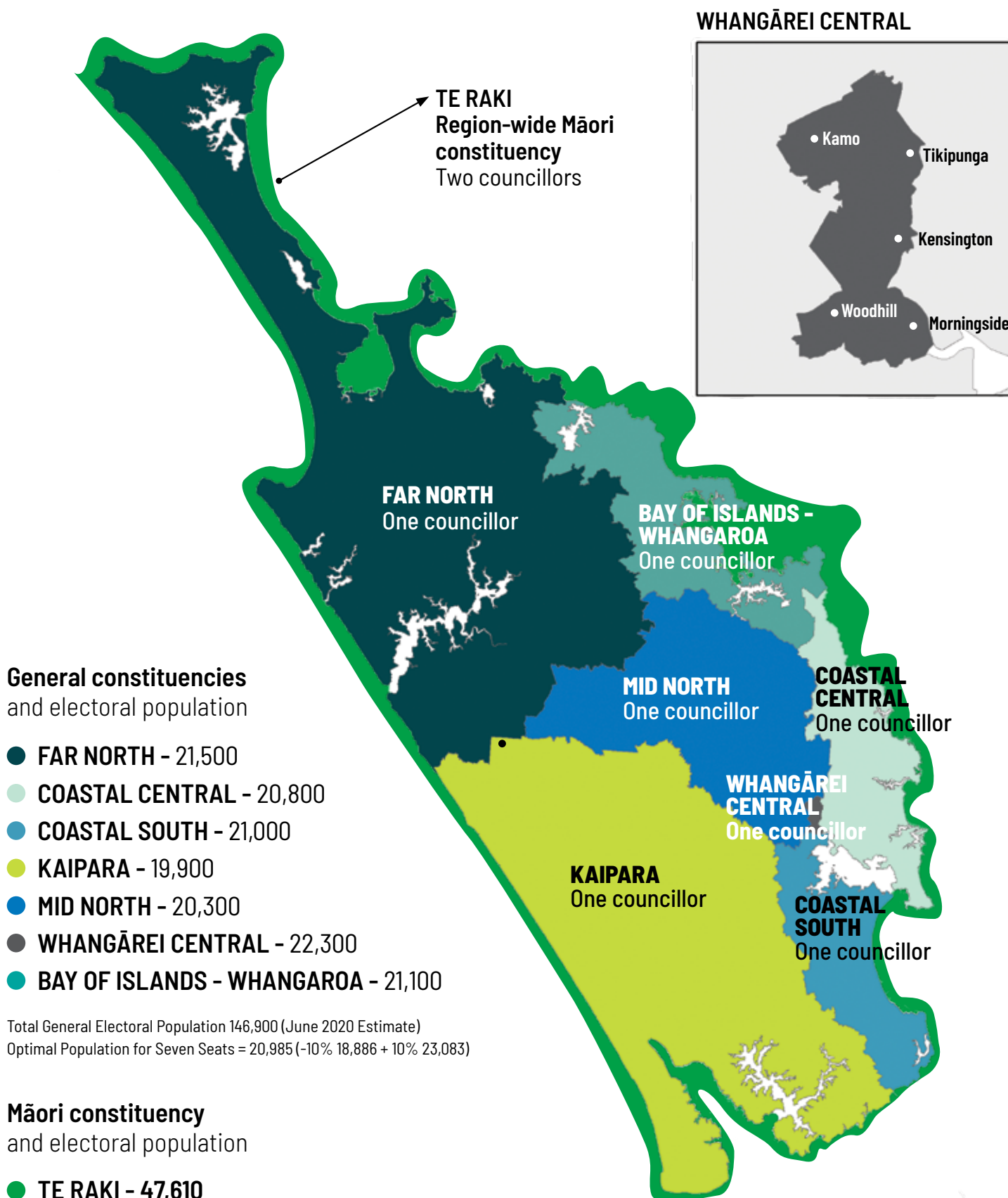
The final proposal

Te Whakatakoto whakamutunga

This review has been a fresh opportunity to look at how Northlanders are best represented at the council table moving forward. Our final proposal for representation is outlined in the following pages.



This map is the overview of the proposed representation arrangements. There is more information on the following pages.
More detailed maps can be found in Appendix 1 or online on our council's GIS viewer: <https://bit.ly/3etsmiv>



Number of councillors | Tokohia ngā kaikaunihera

Keep total number of councillors at nine

The total number of councillors we can have (as determined by the Local Electoral Act 2001) ranges from a minimum of six to a maximum of 14.

Our council currently has nine councillors. We are proposing to stick with this number as this has been working well and has several benefits including:

- » Adequate numbers to spread workload while maintaining cohesive decision making
- » Ability to be inclusive, collaborative, agile and make decisions quickly
- » Ability to build a tight-knit team with strong working relationships
- » Ensuring remuneration is at a sufficient level to make it a viable career option, attract younger age groups and people from all backgrounds (the Remuneration Authority decides the total amount that can be paid in remuneration to councillors in each individual council)
- » Enabling voting by majority if needed (by having an odd number of councillors).

After the next elections (2022) the new council will have the ability to review the total number of councillors.

Seven general councillors and two Māori councillors

The number of general and Māori councillors is determined by legislation. It depends on the total number of councillors to be elected for the region, and the latest available general electoral population and Māori electoral population statistics.

This table shows the options for Northland based on the formula. For the proposed council size of nine, we would have seven general and two Māori councillors.

Total council size	Māori councillors	General councillors
6	1	5
7	2	5
8	2	6
9	2	7
10	2	8
11	3	8
12	3	9
13	3	10
14	3	11



Constituencies and boundaries

Ngā Whakaahuatanga o ngā Takiwā

A constituency is an area from which voters elect their representative. As part of this review we need to look at how many constituencies we should have, and where the boundaries are, to best represent the people of Northland.

We are proposing that the two Māori councillors be elected from the region at large, rather than breaking it into two separate constituencies.

One region-wide Māori constituency (with two councillors)

While we would eventually like to establish individual Māori constituencies, we recognise this is a complex matter that needs time to get it right. We're therefore proposing to start with one region-wide constituency, to be reviewed in the next term of council when we have a better understanding of how Māori representation is working in practice.

Seven general constituencies, different boundaries

We are proposing that the seven general councillors be elected from seven different general constituencies, to keep a good spread of representation across Northland's many different communities of interest.

The map on page 8 shows the proposed boundaries. For more detail, see the maps in Appendix 1 or head online to our council's GIS viewer: <https://bit.ly/3etsmiv>

The boundaries for these proposed seven general constituencies are different from our current model, with key changes including:

- » The proposed Whangārei Central Constituency is smaller, and is confined to the city centre. There would be one councillor representing this constituency (instead of two currently), recognising that people living in

Whangārei have easy access to the Northland Regional Council's main office, its services and its councillors, whereas this is not typically the case in more remote areas of the region. A greater spread of councillors across the region would ideally make our governance arrangements more effective.

- » The outer fringes/suburbs of Whangārei are shifted into the surrounding constituencies.
- » The introduction of a new Mid North Constituency incorporating the townships of Hikurangi, Towai, Kawakawa and Morewa to ensure these communities are well represented.
- » A new constituency specific to the Bay of Islands-Whangaroa area which has been identified as a clear community of interest and experiencing considerable growth.

There are legal requirements that affect where the boundaries can go.

Each constituency must have roughly the same number of constituents, plus or minus 10% (that's 'fair representation'). Northland's general electoral population was 146,900 at June 30 2020, so each of the seven councillors must represent between 18,886 and 23,083 residents. For more detail on population estimates for the proposed constituencies see Appendix 2 on page 24.

Constituency boundaries must always coincide with Department of Statistics meshblock boundaries and match district council ward boundaries where possible.

A constituency is an area from which voters elect their representative. As part of this review we need to look at how many constituencies we should have, and where the boundaries are, to best represent the people of Northland.

Constituency names | Ngā ingoa o ngā Takiwā

To keep things consistent for our communities, we are proposing to keep the same constituency names for the general constituencies where possible. Māori names were considered for the general constituencies, but we recognise it could cause confusion between a Māori and general constituency.



The following constituency names (also shown in the earlier map) are proposed:

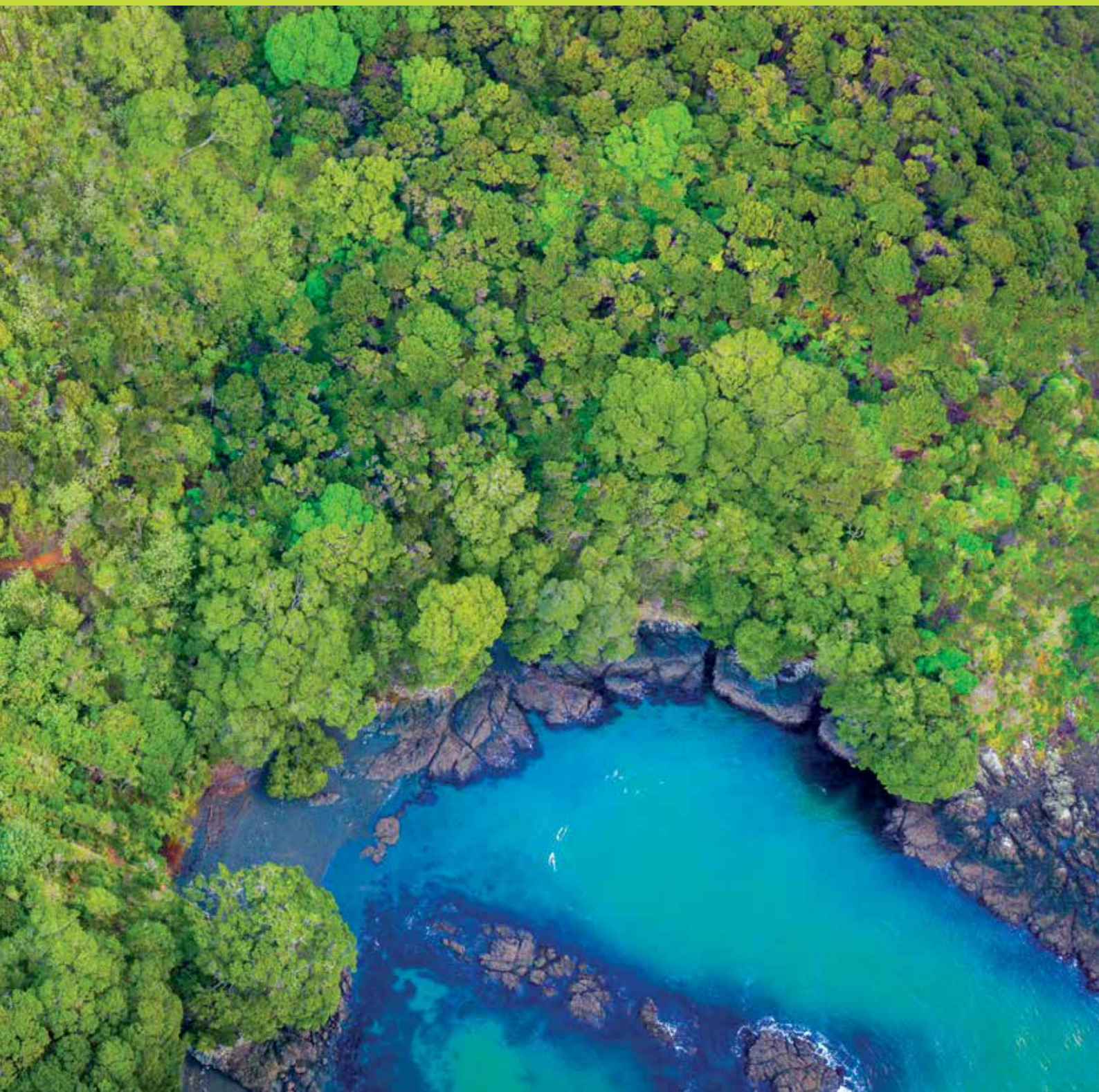
- » **Far North General:** Extending from Cape Reinga and down the west coast to Waipoua. Includes the service centre of Kaikohe.
- » **Bay of Islands – Whangaroa General:** Includes the Whangaroa Harbour, the Bay of Islands and the surrounding settlements (including Kerikeri, Waipapa, Russell and Paihia).
- » **Kaipara General:** Very similar to the current constituency; extending from Waipoua down to the southern boundary of the Northland region. Includes the service centres of Dargaville and Kaiwaka
- » **Mid North General:** The inland region stretching from Pakaraka down to the northern and western suburbs of Whangārei. Includes the townships of Hikurangi, Towai, Kawakawa and Moerewa.
- » **Coastal Central General:** The coastal fringe to the north and east of Whangārei – extending from Taupiri Bay down to Bream Head.
- » **Whangārei Central General:** Focussed on the Whangārei central business district.
- » **Coastal South General:** Incorporates the coastal fringe south of Whangārei and includes the service centres of Waipū, Ruakaka and Mangawhai.
- » **Te Raki Māori:** All of the region.

More detailed maps can be found in Appendix 1 or online on our council's GIS viewer: <https://bit.ly/3etsmiv>



Appendices

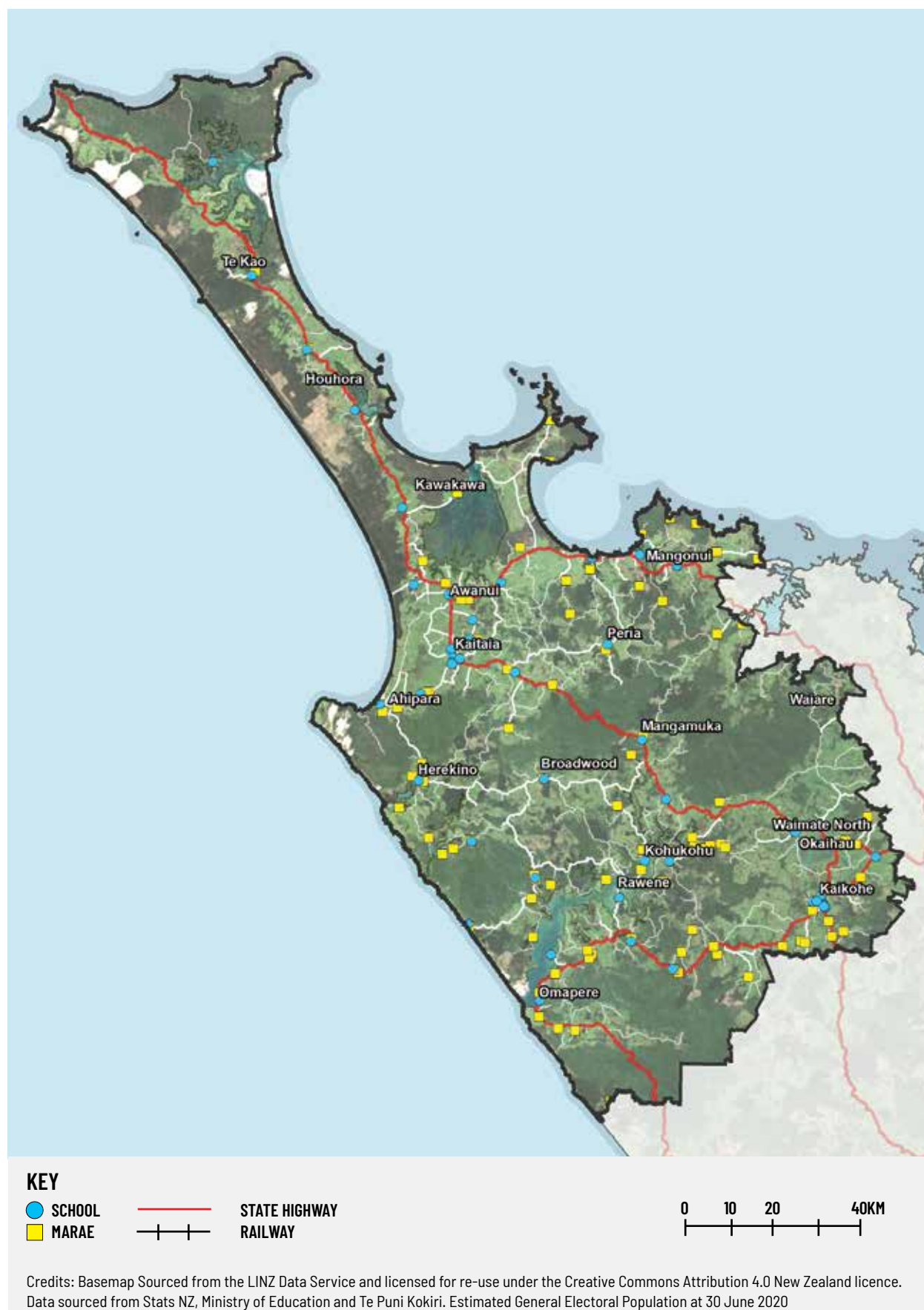
Ngā Tapirihanga



Appendix 1: Proposed constituencies

Proposed Far North General Constituency

General electoral population 21,500



Proposed Bay of Islands – Whangaroa General Constituency

General electoral population 21,100



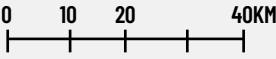
Proposed Kaipara General Constituency

General electoral population 19,900



KEY

- SCHOOL
- MARAE
- STATE HIGHWAY
- +— RAILWAY



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Proposed Mid North General Constituency

General electoral population 20,300



Proposed Coastal Central General Constituency

General electoral population 20,800



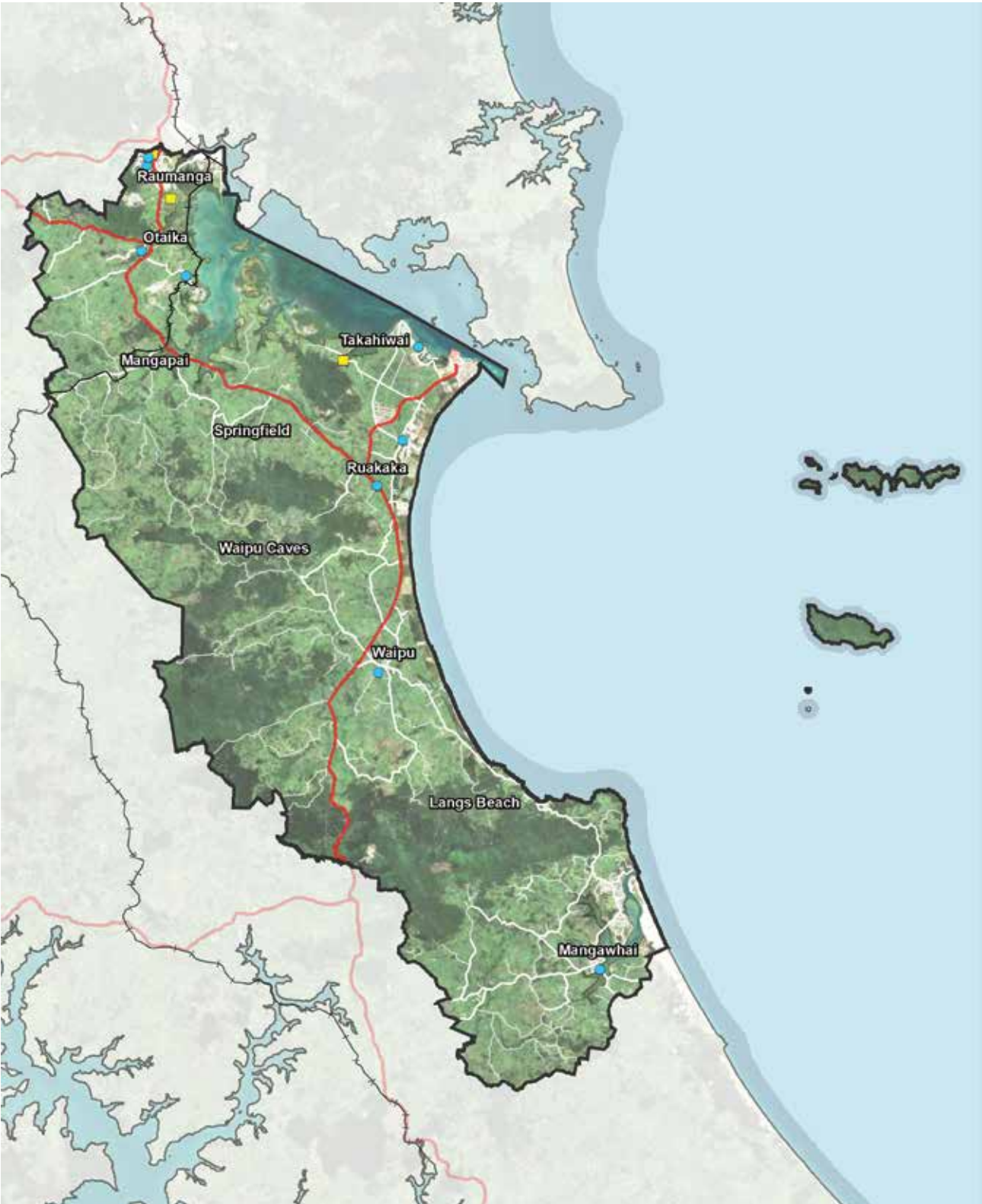
Proposed Whangārei Central General Constituency

General electoral population 22,300



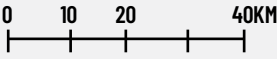
Proposed Coastal South General Constituency

General electoral population 21,000



KEY

- SCHOOL
- MARAE
- STATE HIGHWAY
- + + RAILWAY



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Proposed Te Raki Māori Constituency

Māori electoral population 47,610



Appendix 2: Population estimates

The table below shows the latest 2020 population estimates for each proposed constituency. You can see that all of the general constituencies comply with the 'Plus or minus 10% rule' with the general population falling between 18,886 and 23,083. The table also shows the population growth since 2018.

Population breakdown by constituency

Constituency	2020 General electoral population estimate	2020 Māori electoral population estimate	General population growth since 2018	Annual general population growth rate	Number of councillors	Fits +/- 10% rule?
FAR NORTH GENERAL	21,500		1,100	2.6%	1	YES
BAY OF ISLANDS – WHANGAROA GENERAL	21,100		1,150	2.7%	1	YES
KAIPARA GENERAL	19,900		600	1.5%	1	YES
MID NORTH GENERAL	20,300		850	2.1%	1	YES
COASTAL CENTRAL GENERAL	20,800		900	2.2%	1	YES
WHANGĀREI CENTRAL GENERAL	22,300		600	1.3%	1	YES
COASTAL SOUTH GENERAL	21,000		2,200	5.2%	1	YES
TE RAKI MĀORI		47,610			2	N/A
Total	146,900	47,610				



Appeal form

Representation Review 2021 – Final Proposal

The closing date for submitting an appeal is 4pm Friday, 26 November 2021

Submitting your appeal

We encourage online feedback, as it helps keep costs down and reduce our impacts on the environment:
www.nrc.govt.nz/representationmatters

Otherwise, complete this form and return it:

- » **By mail** Freepost 139690, Northland Regional Council, Private Bag 9021, Whangārei Mail Centre, Whangārei 0148
- » **By email** submissions@nrc.govt.nz
- » **In person** to our main office at 36 Water Street, Whangārei; or to any of our regional offices.

Who can make an appeal

Appeals can be made by any person or organisation who made a submission on the Representation Review 2021 – Initial Proposal. Appeals must be lodged in writing via the methods noted above.

Name/organisation (of original submitter)

Full name

Organisation

Appeal

Please note: All appeals will be considered by the Local Government Commission

Any person or organisation that has made a submission on the Representation Review 2021 – Initial Proposal may lodge a written appeal that:

- a) must identify the matters to which the appeal relates; and
- b) may raise only those matters that were raised in the original submission.

Please use the space provided on the following page to write your appeal.

Privacy statement:

Please be aware that appeals are part of a public consultation process. All information provided will be made publicly available, including names and contact details. Please see our Submissions Policy: www.nrc.govt.nz/submissionspolicy

My appeal to the Representation Review 2021 – Final Proposal is as follows:

If you have more to say, feel free to attach more pages to this feedback form.

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