



Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi  
INCORPORATED

## **MEDIA RELEASE 9 July 2026**

### **Simplifying Local Government Proposals for Te Matau a Māui, Hawke's Bay**

*Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated Chairman Bayden Barber has written to the Mayors of Te Matau a Māui, Hawke's Bay, outlining the iwi's response to the proposed Simplifying Local Government reforms for the region.*

8 July 2026

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Mayor of Wairoa District Council, Craig Little  
Mayor of Napier City Council, Richard McGrath  
Mayor of Hastings District Council, Wendy Schollum  
Mayor of Central Hawke's Bay Council, Will Foley.

**Re: Simplifying Local Government Proposals for Te Matau a Māui, Hawke's Bay.**

#### **Te Tikanga o Ngāti Kahungunu**

Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated supports a single unitary authority. As the Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Authority, we support maintaining our iwi rangatiratanga and mana motuhake (sovereignty and authority) for 95,751 iwi members from our northern boundary of Paritū (north of Nūhaka) to our southernmost boundary of Tūrakirae in South Wairarapa. We are the only iwi entity that has this geographical mandate. As Councils operating within our Tribal Territorial Authority, we wish to reinforce the importance of maintaining our ahi kā across our full rohe; therefore, a single unitary authority meets this requirement best for Te Matau a Māui, Hawke's Bay.

#### **Ngāti Kahungunu and Māori Representation**

As the Mandated Iwi Authority, Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Inc. expects to be represented at the Unitary Council table. Te Tiriti o Waitangi supports Māori representation across all facets of government in Aotearoa New Zealand, including our local Councils. We also support our whanaunga from our respective Taiwhenua and PSGEs being represented at the table and Treaty Settlement obligations being honoured. Te Matau a Māui, Hawke's Bay must have the strongest Māori representation possible to assist the Council in its work across social and economic outcomes for all communities.

To ensure that council has representation from all communities of interest, we would support the use of elected community boards that would feed into the elected unitary council. We think this is the best way to maximise the many community voices and regional nuances. However, we

see ourselves in a mana to mana, rangatira to rangatira relationship and would expect this reflected in any unitary council governance structure going forward.

### **Cost benefits to ratepayers**

We feel a unitary council best reflects the government's aim of increasing cost savings to the ratepayers through economies of scale. After infrastructure, the highest cost for Councils is human resources. Reducing the amount of human resources required should save the ratepayers millions of dollars. Governance costs should reduce by between 60- 70%, which should also be reflected across management and operations. Cost savings in procurement and efficiencies should also lighten the burden on the ratepayer. Roothing and water infrastructure costs continue to increase at unaffordable levels for ratepayers. Improving our scale and borrowing capability will help offset this burden.

### **Simplifying Local Government**

A single unitary council across Hawke's Bay is the best way to simplify local government across our region. This will improve consistency in service levels and ensure that policies and procedures such as rating and consenting reflect best value for money. The status quo does not do this well, which is why we need to change the way local government operates now and into the future.

We look forward to contributing toward the design of a local government structure that best meets the needs of our Te Matau a Māui, Hawke's Bay communities.

Nāku noa,

Bayden Barber



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*Ngāti Kahungunu Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated is a Mandated Iwi Organisation/Authority. Ngāti Kahungunu is the third largest iwi. Geographically the tribe has the second longest coastline in the country from Paritū in the North to Turakirae in the South. Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated maintains an independent position to provide research, advice and advocate for the interests, rights, values, beliefs and practices of Ngāti Kahungunu alongside our whānau and hapū. Our mission is to enhance the mana and well-being of Ngāti Kahungunu.*

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