

30 July 2022

Committee Secretariat
Justice Committee
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

By email: ju@parliament.govt.nz

Tēnā koutou katoa

DUNEDIN CITY COUNCIL SUBMISSION: ELECTORAL (MĀORI ELECTORAL OPTION) LEGISLATION BILL

1. The Dunedin City Council (DCC) appreciates the opportunity to submit on the Electoral (Māori Electoral Option) Legislation Bill (the Bill).

Submission

2. The DCC supports the Government's proposal to change the current rules for the Māori Electoral Option. At present, voters of Māori descent can change between the Māori and General Electoral rolls during a four-month period every five-six years. The proposed changes will allow these voters to change rolls at any time and as often as they wish, apart from changing rolls to vote in a by-election.
3. Specifically, the DCC is supportive of changes that:
 - enable democratic local decision making and action by, and on behalf of communities.
 - allow Māori voters to more fully engage in the democratic and electoral process.
 - provide Māori voters with flexibility and promote participation in New Zealand's democracy.
 - enable Dunedin residents to participate in the democratic process as valued and engaged citizens.
4. Through the DCC's Social Wellbeing Strategy 2013-2023, the DCC seeks to ensure that all Dunedin residents are valued citizens with a role to play in the city. The DCC supports a democratic process that is fair to all Dunedin residents, so as to allow all residents to participate in elections in a way that is meaningful to them.
5. The DCC acknowledges its Treaty of Waitangi responsibilities and is committed to working in partnership to provide opportunities for Māori to participate in and contribute to decision making processes and to have an active role in the development of Dunedin.

Conclusion

6. The DCC is committed to improving the lives and wellbeing of the people of Dunedin and ensuring access to the democratic process and is pleased to submit in overall support of the Bill.

Kā mihi,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Hawkins', with a stylized, flowing script.

Aaron Hawkins
MAYOR OF DUNEDIN