



7 August 2026

Hon Simon Watts
Minister of Local Government
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

cc Hon Chris Bishop, Minister Responsible for RMA Reform

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Hurunui, Waimakariri, Christchurch and Selwyn joint support for Head Start submission

The above councils write to collectively endorse a single proposal in the Head Start Pathway under the Simplifying Local Government workstream.

Head Start provides an important opportunity for Canterbury to shape its own future, and we believe we're stronger, and our communities will get better outcomes, when we approach it in a constructive and collaborative way.

As such we are submitting collectively one submission to establish three separate unitary councils:

- Hurunui and Waimakariri councils have endorsed joining to establish a North Canterbury Council. In Hurunui, 84 percent of 1,250 respondents backed a North Canterbury unitary authority, the clear preferred option. In Waimakariri, 91.3 percent of approximately 2,000 respondents favoured North Canterbury.
- Christchurch City Council to become a unitary authority within its existing boundaries. Over 5600 residents during their community engagement showed support for sustainable long-term growth across the wider region. Earlier this week, Council voted to retain their existing boundaries.
- Selwyn District Council to become a unitary authority within its existing boundaries. Resident surveys showed 58 percent of over 4,000 respondents supported the district continuing as a standalone authority, well ahead of any of the other options tested.

The single proposal to establish three unitary councils is one that is complementary, and our view is they represent democracy in action as well as the best outcome for wider Canterbury.

Our four councils represent approximately 83% of the total Canterbury population.

Each proposal has significant community backing, and each proposed unitary area has the growth trajectory, capacity, and capability to become a viable unitary authority.

Importantly, our organisations have a proven track record of working together across boundaries.

As such, we formally support the submission of one proposal collectively to establish three unitary councils as it represents the best outcome for our part of Canterbury and complements other wider models under development.

Given the timing of the decisions, there may be some differences in how we describe regional functions, however we are all committed to working together to seek collective agreement.

We remain committed to working constructively with Government, the Local Government Commission and neighbouring councils through the detailed design phase and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this joint proposal with you directly.



Marie Black

Mayor, Hurunui District Council



Dan Gordon

Mayor, Waimakariri District Council



Phil Mauger

Mayor, Christchurch City Council



Lydia Gliddon

Mayor, Selwyn District Council