

9 January 2020

The Representation Commission

By email: representation.commission@elections.govt.nz

Submission to the electorate boundary review – change of name of Wairarapa electorate

The Wairarapa electorate comprises three distinct communities – Wairarapa, the Tararua District and Central Hawke’s Bay, running from Ngawi in the south to Waipawa in the north. It is classified as a large electorate.

Upon the introduction of MMP, the Wairarapa electorate was formed by essentially combining the Wairarapa and Pahiatua electorates. The name Wairarapa was appropriate because the majority of the electorate’s population was in Wairarapa.

Nevertheless, subsequent boundary changes have seen the boundary move further north, consuming a significant part of Central Hawke’s Bay from the Tukituki electorate. Central Hawke’s Bay is distinctly different from Wairarapa. It’s economic and cultural connections are with Hastings and Napier to the north.

Since entering into our positions as representatives of Central Hawke’s Bay it has become evident that people do not understand why they are part of an electorate named after a region 2.5 hours’ drive away. Their preference is to be part of the Tukituki electorate or equivalent again.

We acknowledge that the representation committee has not recommended a change to the boundary, and therefore we are not advocating for one. However, we do feel there is cause to change the name of the electorate.

Other large electorates take into consideration the different communities within the boundaries – West Coast-Tasman, Clutha-Southland and Taranaki-King Country for example. For a community to feel included in an electorate it is important that it be included in the name of the electorate, where appropriate.

Therefore, we submit that the name of the Wairarapa electorate be changed to Wairarapa and Central Hawke’s Bay (or Wairarapa-Central Hawke’s Bay). Making this change would continue to acknowledge both the traditional existence of a Wairarapa electorate while also acknowledging the significant proportion of both population and area that Central Hawke’s Bay contributes to the Wairarapa electorate.

The Tararua district was formed in 1989 comprising parts of northern Wairarapa and Southern Hawke's Bay so while the district itself would not be acknowledged within the name, the economic and cultural associations of the district would. We note that communities of interest is a criteria for the committee when considering boundaries and names of electorates.

Changing the name of the Wairarapa electorate to Wairarapa and Central Hawke's Bay would acknowledge the two district communities of interest within the current boundaries.

Thank you for your consideration

Yours faithfully



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