

# Hamilton City Council Submission

## Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill

Parliament's Governance and Administration Select Committee

1 September 2025

# Improving the Wellbeing of Hamiltonians

Hamilton City Council is focused on improving the well-being of Hamiltonians through delivering to our five priorities of shaping:

- **A city that's easy to live in**
- **A city where our people thrive**
- **A central city where our people love to be**
- **A fun city with lots to do**
- **A green city**

The topic of this Council submission is aligned with all of Hamilton City Council's five priorities.

## Council Approval and Reference

This submission was approved by Hamilton City Council at its meeting held on 28 August 2025.

Submission # 812

# Key Messages

1. [\*\*Introduction\*\*](#)
2. Council appreciates the opportunity to make a submission on the **Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill** and acknowledges the considerable amount of work that is currently being undertaken in the local government space by the coalition Government.
3. We have a number of concerns about the Bill, many of which are also outlined in the local government sector representative submissions made by Taituarā and LGNZ. We support/endorse the recommendations and overall content/direction of both submissions.
4. We agree with Taituarā that implementing the Bill immediately after Royal Assent (likely before Christmas 2025) would create unnecessary disruption. Councils would be forced to amend Long-Term Plans (LTPs), consult communities, and undergo audits – all at significant cost. We support their recommendation that if the Bill proceeds in its current format, the implementation of purpose and core service changes should be from 1 July 2027, aligning with the next LTP cycle. Requiring changes before this date will generate exactly the sort of costs to the ratepayer the Bill is intended to reduce.
5. Irrespective of the Bill's focus and provisions, ongoing increases in efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency are key elements that the local government sector is always striving to improve upon.
6. [\*\*Removal of the Four Well-Beings / New List of 'Core Services'\*\*](#)
7. Councils throughout the country are justifiably frustrated at the removal/reintroduction cycle of the four well-beings since their original inception in the Local Government Act 2002, along with the consequential repurposing of local government. There needs to be a long-term cross-party working arrangement that all parties can agree on regarding the purpose of local government.
8. We support Taituarā's position on the aspect of the Bill outlining a list of 'core services' in clause 7 – [refer here](#): "*Clause seven does not require local authorities to deliver those services or prohibit local authorities from undertaking others. Our understanding of the clause is that requiring local authorities to have particular regard to these services is intended to be a kind of statutory signal that local authorities should focus on these first.*"
9. Taituarā use the term **recreational facilities** as a case in point: "*To take another example, the Bill uses the term recreational facilities intended to capture sportsgrounds, parks and the like. It's unclear whether multi-purpose facilities such as halls and community centres are likewise captured. These serve recreational purposes, but also act as a focal point or anchor for the community, especially in rural communities. The addition of the term "community amenities" would alleviate these concerns. And we note community amenities was the term used in the previous core services clause.*"
10. The core service of **waste management** is another case in point regarding the lack of a clear and meaningful definition. Council stresses that this particular term needs to encompass the whole gamut of waste management, including all the key components of waste minimisation.
11. Essentially, if core services are to be defined, then the Bill needs to be considerably more specific regarding complete and meaningful definitions.
12. In addition, new clause 6 is proposed to be introduced to the 'Purpose of local Government' ([refer here](#)), which is aimed at supporting local growth and development. However, Council is of the view that economic development in its wider sense needs to form part of the definition of the 'core services' outlined in clause 7 – [refer here](#).
13. Economic development initiatives form a critical component of Hamilton City Council's operation/functions and are imperative for both retaining existing businesses and promoting investment and business attraction opportunities for Hamilton and the greater Waikato Region.

**14. Rates Rises and the Notion of Overspending**

15. The Bill's explanatory note acknowledges that rates rises have been primarily driven by the rising costs of critical infrastructure. Providing this infrastructure is a 'core service' as defined in the Bill and will be unaffected by the narrowing of the purpose statement. These costs must still be funded, and it is likely that rates pressure will remain unless other cost efficiencies can be achieved.
16. Taituarā also challenges the narrative that councils are overspending, pointing instead to infrastructure costs as the primary driver of rate increases. Citing research from the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission, their submission highlights that global commodity prices and labour market pressures (especially post-COVID) are largely outside councils' control. Taituarā advocates for investment in supply chain resilience and workforce development rather than legislative restrictions. We support this position.
17. In reality, the main components of a council's annual expenditure are three waters and transport.
18. In addition, over the past 60 years, rates revenue has remained constant at around 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) despite councils taking on significantly more responsibilities in that time. In contrast, over that same time period, central government taxation as a percentage of GDP has increased notably.
19. As we have noted in previous submissions, the current rating system can never be wholly sufficient for a metro such as Hamilton that is undergoing unprecedented levels of growth, and which acts as a hub to a much larger sub-region. Addressing the shortcomings of the current funding and financing system is an essential requirement that must be introduced before any limitation on councils' ability to collect rates.
20. For example, Council has, via previous submissions (including our two submissions to the Panel for the Review into the Future for Local Government) advocated for central government to investigate returning GST on rates to councils as a funding stream, as well as the use of other various funding and financing tools, such as allowing councils to charge rates against Crown-owned properties e.g. schools.

**21. Rates Capping**

22. Page 3 of the Bill refers to the possibility of rates capping being introduced, presumably through a future Bill. It is expected that this would seek to cap rates increases related to activities that are not defined as 'core' in this Bill.
23. We therefore support Taituarā's position with regard to rate capping, that, in the first instance, that clause 7 (specifying a list of what the 'core services' of a local authority are) be deleted from the Bill entirely.
24. While it is difficult to comment without having seen any detail on what rate capping would look like in practice, we are concerned that rate capping will be a blunt instrument that does not recognise the drivers of the rates rises that councils are facing or the varying contexts in which councils are operating.
25. We are also concerned that stipulations from central government on how much councils can charge in rates to fund local services and facilities goes against the localism agenda that the government has previously supported. If there is clear community support for certain initiatives, demonstrated (for example) through submissions on the Long-Term Plan, it would lead to a democratic deficit if these cannot be delivered because of the rate capping.
26. We also note that if rate capping is to be introduced and to take effect in the next corporate planning cycle (from 1 July 2027), it is essential that the details are clear by mid-2026 at the latest. A long lead-in time is required to develop Long-Term Plans.

**27. Introduction of Council Profiles**

28. Council supports any initiatives that improve transparency and public understanding of the crucial role that councils play in their community, so it welcomes the government's decision to make available information regarding council performance.

29. However, we have a number of concerns about the council profiles published on 31 July 2025 by the Department of Internal Affairs, which can be viewed in greater detail at: [DIA Council profiles | Hamilton City Council](#)
30. For example, some of the comparisons that will inevitably be made from the data are misleading due to vast differences in the contexts in which different councils are operating. In particular, the challenges Hamilton faces as the fastest growing city in the country are completely different to the challenges faced by many of the councils in our comparator group.
31. The focus on rates increases does not give any recognition to the **level of rates**. Hamilton had the lowest average residential rates of any major city in New Zealand prior to the commencement of the 2024-34 Long-Term Plan, which, in part, is why we've had significant increases in the last two years. This context is not provided when comparing our rates rise against other councils. We are concerned it will be similarly overlooked if the signalled rate capping is introduced.
32. We note that households in New Zealand pay (on average) \$2,900/year in rates versus (on average) \$37,000/year in taxes – **only 7% of household contributions go to local government**.
33. **Treaty of Waitangi – Partnership with Maaori**
34. Clause 16 of the Bill ([refer here](#)) would repeal section 57(3) of the principal Act and thereby remove any requirement to consider whether tikanga Maaori is a relevant skill or knowledge set when appointing members to the boards of Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs).
35. Understanding tikanga Maaori helps build strong relationships with Maaori communities, ensuring that their perspectives and needs are considered in governance decisions. This balanced approach not only enhances the effectiveness of governance but also promotes equity and sustainable development.
36. We agree with Taituarā's position that tikanga Maaori incorporates values of seeking consensus, respect, care, stewardship, intergenerational equity and relationship building that are all directly relevant to the operations of most CCOs.
37. We further submit that some tikanga Maaori competence on a CCO is essential for discharging any Te Tiriti obligations the CCO may have.
38. Council would like to emphasise that the Bill's provisions should not result in any negative consequences/implications on the partnership arrangements/agreements that Maaori have with councils throughout the country.

## Introduction

39. Hamilton City Council welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to Parliament's Governance and Administration Select Committee on the **Local Government (System Improvements) Amendment Bill** (referred to as the Bill throughout this submission).
40. We note that the overall stated aim of the Bill is to seek to alleviate pressure on council rates, by amending the purpose and role of local government so that councils focus on specific core services and "spending on the basics".
41. Council acknowledges the considerable amount of work that is currently being undertaken in the local government space by the coalition Government.
42. However, we have a number of concerns about the Bill, many of which are also reiterated in the local government sector representative submissions made by Taituarā and LGNZ. We support/endorse the recommendations and overall content/direction of submissions made by both Taituarā and LGNZ.
43. We agree with Taituarā that implementing the Bill immediately after Royal Assent (likely before Christmas 2025) would create unnecessary disruption. Councils would be forced to amend Long-Term Plans (LTPs), consult communities, and undergo audits – all at significant cost. We also support their recommendation that if the Bill is not modified through the Select Committee process, the implementation of purpose and core service changes should be delayed until 1 July 2027, aligning with the next LTP cycle.
44. Irrespective of the Bill's focus and provisions, ongoing increases in efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency are key elements that the local government sector is always striving to improve upon.
45. Hamilton City Council clearly has a vested and ongoing significant interest in the current and future state of local government in New Zealand, with much of the Council's recent thinking in this space (i.e. around greater efficiency, effectiveness and transparency) outlined in our submissions to the:
  - **Review into the Future for Local Government (October 2022 Draft Report): Panel for the Review into the Future for Local Government** (submission lodged on 3 March 2023) – [refer here](#)
  - **Future of Local Government Review: Panel for the Review into the Future for Local Government** (submission lodged on 30 June 2022).
46. Although we acknowledge that the findings/recommendations from the **Review into the Future for Local Government** did not progress after the formation of the coalition government in November 2023, much of the overall sentiment/position outlined in the two submissions referenced above remains highly relevant and is reflected in this submission.
47. This submission primarily focuses on the following three areas, which are of key concern to Council.
  - Removal of the Four Well-Beings / New List of 'Core Services' / Rates Rises – Capping.
  - Introduction of Council Profiles.
  - Treaty of Waitangi – Partnership with Maaori.

# Removal of the Four Well-Beings / New List of 'Core Services' / Rates Rises – Capping

48. **Removal of the Four Well-Beings / New List of 'Core Services'**
49. As noted in a recent article on the Bill by Simpson Grierson,<sup>1</sup> *"The Bill is the latest episode in a tug-of-war between successive National and Labour governments about the statutory purpose in section 10 of the LGA. The current framing (put in place by Labour in 2019, replacing that of National in 2012, which in turn had replaced that of Labour in 2002) says the purpose of local government includes promoting the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future. The Bill will remove reference to the 'four well-beings', which the Government considers provides authority for councils to spend money on activities which stray from core services."*
50. Councils throughout the country are justifiably frustrated at the removal/reintroduction cycle of the four well-beings since their original inception in the Local Government Act 2002, along with consequential changes to the purpose of local government. To overcome this, we believe that there needs to be a long-term cross-party working arrangement that all parties can agree on regarding the purpose of local government – otherwise, the ongoing 'flip-flopping' of this particular provision will continue to cause confusion and inefficiency, serving no one's purpose.
51. Taituarā's submission notes that clause 7 – [refer here](#) *"does not require local authorities to deliver those services or prohibit local authorities from undertaking others. Our understanding of the clause is that requiring local authorities to have particular regard to these services is intended to be a kind of statutory signal that local authorities should focus on these first...The range of services councils provide moves over time as community preferences, technology and social norms change. It would be unusual in the modern era for a city of any size not to offer some form of outdoor multipurpose venue (as in a stadium)...Defining a set of core services, no matter how carefully crafted, will always raise questions of definition and shift focus to the activities around the margins."*
52. Clause 11A of the Bill (Core services to be considered in performing role) lists the following services that are to be the core services of a local authority:
  - (a) network infrastructure.
  - (b) public transport services.
  - (c) waste management.
  - (d) civil defence emergency management.
  - (e) libraries, museums, reserves, and other recreational facilities.
53. We support the following concerns outlined in Taituarā's submission around the Bill's provision of defining a relatively 'narrow' set of core services to be delivered by councils:
  - *"Defining a set of core services, no matter how carefully crafted, will always raise questions of definition and shift focus to the activities around the margins. Seeking clarification on these types of 'line call' issues will lead local authorities to revert to risk-averse behaviours, such as commissioning legal advice or proposing measures to empower local legislation, which the 2002 rewrite of the Local Government Act aimed to diminish or eliminate. This tendency towards risk aversion is compounded by an environment that has become more litigious and less trusting of government in all its forms."*

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<sup>1</sup> [Simpson Grierson: Local Government \(System Improvements\) Amendment Bill: The purpose statement pendulum swings again for local government \(15 July 2025\)](#).

- Taituara then go on to use the term **recreational facilities** as a case in point: “*To take another example, the Bill uses the term recreational facilities intended to capture sportsgrounds, parks and the like. It’s unclear whether multi-purpose facilities such as halls and community centres are likewise captured. These serve recreational purposes, but also act as a focal point or anchor for the community, especially in rural communities. The addition of the term “community amenities” would alleviate these concerns. And we note community amenities was the term used in the previous core services clause.*”
- “*The list’s incompleteness manifests in other ways. Local communities would expect councils to provide certain sanitary facilities, such as cemeteries, crematoria, and public toilets. However, clause seven does not clearly capture these facilities.*”

54. The core service of **waste management** is another case in point regarding the lack of a clear and meaningful definition, which in this case needs to encompass the whole gamut of waste management, including all the key components of waste minimisation.

55. Essentially, if core services are to be defined, then the Bill needs to be considerably more specific regarding complete and meaningful definitions.

56. This Bill proposes to replace the current provision with a revised purpose statement – largely restoring the version that was in place from 2012 through to 2019, with one key addition, i.e. the proposed new purpose statement will emphasise the delivery of good-quality local infrastructure and public services in a cost-effective manner, ensuring effective regulatory performance.

57. In line with the Government’s emphasis on economic growth, a new clause is proposed to be introduced, which is aimed at supporting local growth and development. However, this new clause is focused on paragraph (b) in clause 10 of the Bill’s proposed new purpose statement, i.e. “*The purpose of local government is to meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services, and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses.*”

58. At a minimum, Council is of the view that economic development in its wider sense needs to form part of the definition of core services. Economic development initiatives form a critical component of Hamilton City Council’s operation/functions and are imperative for the likes of retaining existing businesses as well as promoting investment and business attraction opportunities for Hamilton and the greater Waikato Region.

59. The economic development operations/functions that Council undertakes are extensive and go far beyond the economic development functions envisaged by the Bill.

60. Hamilton City Council’s **Economic Development Committee** is responsible for governing Hamilton’s economic agenda and investment development opportunities consistent with Council’s vision for the city and to enhance the well-being of Hamiltonians. The Economic Development Committee’s ‘Terms of Reference’ comprise 15 key focus areas ([refer here](#)), highlighting the breadth and relative complexity of what is involved in the economic development arena – far more so than what is proposed in the Bill.

61. The Bill’s revised purpose might lead councils to rethink their involvement in certain activities, although this is likely to happen only rarely. The proposed/updated wording highlights the need for “good quality...public services,” but this phrase is broad and open to interpretation. Terms such as “good quality”, “most cost-effective”, and “core services” are vague/ambiguous and could be challenged in court, creating uncertainty in decision-making.

62. Despite the change in language, councils may still be able to consider well-being, just under a different name. Some of the changes in other parts of the Bill may not have much real effect, since the new terms, like using “community interests” instead of “well-being”, are still broad enough to cover similar ideas.

### 63. Rates Rises and the Notion of Overspending

64. As noted by Simpson Grierson,<sup>2</sup> “*While the Government’s desire to alleviate rates pressure for communities is admirable, whether the new framing will actually assist to address the underlying issues leading to rates increases is questionable. This is because, as the Bill’s explanatory note acknowledges, rates rises have been primarily driven by the rising costs of critical infrastructure. Providing this infrastructure is a core service as defined in the Bill and will be unaffected by the narrowing of the purpose statement. These costs must still be funded, and it is likely that rates pressure will remain unless other cost efficiencies can be achieved.*”
65. Although Council notes the government’s signalling for local government to have a narrower ‘core services’ focus with the introduction of clause 7, as well as the removal the four well-beings, neither of these aspects is likely to have a significant effect on the government’s stated aim of a reduction in council expenditure and, ultimately, rates.
66. Taituarā also challenges the narrative that councils are overspending, pointing instead to infrastructure costs as the primary driver of rate increases. Citing research from the New Zealand Infrastructure Commission, their submission highlights that global commodity prices and labour market pressures (especially post-COVID) are largely outside councils’ control. Taituarā advocates for investment in supply chain resilience and workforce development rather than legislative restrictions. We support this position.
67. In reality, the main components of a council’s annual expenditure are three waters and transport. The so-called ‘nice to haves’ that the government is calling into question account for a minor component of a council’s overall annual budget.
68. In addition, over the past 60 years, rates revenue has remained constant at around 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) despite councils taking on significantly more responsibilities in that time. In contrast, over that same time period, central government taxation as a percentage of GDP has increased notably.
69. As we have noted in previous submissions, the current rating system can never be wholly sufficient for a metro such as Hamilton that is undergoing unprecedented levels of growth, and which acts as a hub to a much larger sub-region. Addressing the shortcomings of the current funding and financing system is an essential requirement that must be introduced before any limitation on councils’ ability to collect rates.
70. For example, Council has, via previous submissions (including our two submissions to the Panel for the Review into the Future for Local Government) advocated for central government to investigate returning GST on rates to councils as a funding stream, as well as the use of other various funding and financing tools, such as allowing councils to charge rates against Crown-owned properties e.g. schools.

### 71. Rates Capping

72. Page 3 of the Bill refers to the possibility of rates capping being introduced, presumably through a future Bill: “*The Government is investigating tools for limiting council expenditure on certain activities, such as the rate peg (maximum percentage amount by which a council may increase its general income for the year) used in New South Wales. This amendment is intended to encourage local authorities to adopt the sort of financial management principles that a rates capping system in New Zealand would be intended to foster.*” It is expected that this would seek to cap rates increases related to activities that are not defined as ‘core’ in this Bill.
73. Taituarā notes in their submission that the aspect of potential rate capping is inextricably linked to the prescription of core services outlined in clause 7 of the Bill. i.e., “*Clause seven does not require local authorities to deliver those services or prohibit local authorities from undertaking others. Our*

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<sup>2</sup> [Simpson Grierson: Local Government \(System Improvements\) Amendment Bill: The purpose statement pendulum swings again for local government \(15 July 2025\)](#).

*understanding of the clause is that requiring local authorities to have particular regard to these services is intended to be a kind of statutory signal that local authorities should focus on these first.”*

74. We therefore support Taituarā’s position on the aspect of potential rate capping, which recommends in the first instance that clause 7 (specifying a list of what the core services of a local authority are) be deleted from the Bill entirely.
75. While it is difficult to comment without having seen any detail on what rate capping would look like in practice, we are concerned that rate capping will be a blunt instrument that – in keeping with some of the provisions of this Bill and the surrounding narrative – does not recognise the drivers of the rates rises that councils are facing or the varying contexts in which councils are operating.
76. We are also concerned that stipulations from central government on how much councils can charge in rates to fund local services and facilities goes against the localism agenda that the government has previously supported. If there is clear community support for certain initiatives, demonstrated (for example) through submissions on the Long-Term Plan (as happened with some spending proposals in the 2024-34 Long-Term Plan that the government might deem ‘nice to have’), it would lead to a democratic deficit if these cannot be delivered because of the rate capping.
77. We also note that if rate capping is to be introduced and to take effect in the next corporate planning cycle (from 1 July 2027), it is essential that the details are clear by mid-2026 at the latest. A long lead-in time is required to develop Long-Term Plans. The legislative changes regarding water services that were introduced shortly before 2024-34 Long-Term Plans were due led to significant additional work and costs for councils, which, to its credit, the government recognised by providing significant flexibilities to councils for developing their Long-Term Plans. Similar flexibilities will be required unless the detail on rate capping is made clear in good time.

## Introduction of Council Profiles

78. **Making Sense of the Government’s New Council Profiles**
79. The new council profiles, which compare key metrics across all councils in New Zealand (including information on council demographics, rates revenue, debt, staffing and expenditure, with benchmarking based on groupings of similar councils) were published by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) on 31 July 2025, with the aim being to improve transparency and accountability in local government.
80. The Minister of Local Government, the Hon. Simon Watts, has stated that *“Some ratepayers are getting more and more fed up with rising rates hitting pockets harder than ever. This isn’t fair during a cost-of-living crisis where many Kiwis are doing it tough. It is important that ratepayers can see how their council is performing and what it is delivering for their community. That’s why the Government is putting clear facts and figures directly into the hands of ratepayers. When ratepayers know more about how their council is performing and where their money is going, they can engage more effectively and ask the tough questions.”<sup>3</sup>*.
81. While supporting transparency and building public understanding, Hamilton City Council has a number of concerns about the council profiles, which can be viewed in greater detail at: [DIA Council profiles | Hamilton City Council](#)
82. **Our Key Concerns of the Profiles**
83. Unless sufficient context is provided, comparisons can be misleading due to vast differences in council services and challenges. In particular, the challenges Hamilton faces as the fastest growing city in the country are completely different to the challenges faced by many of the councils in our comparator group.

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<sup>3</sup> Stronger Accountability for your Rates – [Beehive.govt.nz release](#) (31 July 2025).

84. The focus on rates increases does not give any recognition to the **level of rates**. Hamilton had the lowest average residential rates of any major city in New Zealand prior to the commencement of the 2024-34 Long-Term Plan, which, in part, is why we've had significant increases in the last two years. This context is not provided when comparing our rates rise against other councils. We are concerned it will be similarly overlooked if the signalled rate capping is introduced.
85. In addition, the rates increase data provided by DIA includes revenue from new properties, which inflates figures for fast-growing cities like Hamilton.
86. The Balanced Budget metric used by DIA is less nuanced than Hamilton's own "Balancing the Books" measure – for example, treating capital revenue as if it were everyday revenue.

#### **87. Council's Financial Strategy and Debt**

88. Council uses debt strategically to fund major infrastructure, avoiding the much higher rate increases that would otherwise be necessary, and ensuring those who will benefit from the infrastructure contribute towards its cost. We completed \$909 million in capital projects over three years to June 2024 – nearly four times the annual rates revenue.
89. We maintain a debt-to-revenue position well below our 280% cap, and significantly below the Local Government Funding Authority's 350% allowance for high-growth councils.

#### **90. Staffing and Services**

91. Staff numbers vary widely across councils and don't reflect outsourced services or asset responsibilities.
92. Council continues to ensure staff levels are appropriate for the services our community wants and needs. In the past financial year, Council has already reduced headcount by 98 FTEs through a series of restructures and reductions of some workstreams.

#### **93. Household Contributions**

94. Households in New Zealand pay (on average) \$2,900/year in rates versus (on average) \$37,000/year in taxes – **only 7% of household contributions go to local government**.

#### **95. Audit Concerns**

96. Provisions around mandatory performance measures and activity groupings may increase audit costs and compliance complexity and therefore introduce ambiguity, especially around terms such as "good quality."
97. Councils need clarity on the activities required to be reported on, with a sufficient lead time ahead of Long-Term Plans being developed, to ensure they have the necessary systems and information available.

## **Treaty of Waitangi – Partnership with Maaori**

98. Hamilton City Council is committed to honouring the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi through its relationship with Kiingitanga, Waikato-Tainui, mana whenua, and maataa waka within Hamilton Kirikiriroa – [refer here](#)
99. In particular, Hamilton City Council and Waikato-Tainui have a strong and mutually beneficial partnership to promote better well-being outcomes through a range of agreed projects.
100. In 2012, Hamilton City Council entered into a Joint Management Agreement (JMA) with Waikato-Tainui to work together on restoring and protecting the health and well-being of the Waikato River for future generations ([refer here](#)).
101. The JMA subsequently led to the establishment of the Waikato-Tainui and Hamilton City Council Co-Governance Forum, which supports Waikato-Tainui and the Council to:

- Build a strong, mutually beneficial relationship.
- Provide opportunities for collaboration that promote better well-being outcomes through agreed projects.
- Meet obligations to restore and protect the Waikato River.

**102.** We also work with Hapuu Ngaati Maahanga, Ngaati Tamainupoo, Ngaati Wairere, Ngaati Korokii and Ngaati Hauaa to ensure their role as kaitiaki and mana whenua is reflected in decision-making relating to the management of the natural and physical resources of Hamilton Kirikiriroa.

**103.** Te Rūnanga o Kirikiriroa represent Maataawaka and Pasifika peoples living in Hamilton Kirikiriroa, and provide advice and information, and represent the views of Maataawaka in the development of Council strategies, policies, and plans.

**104.** In collaboration with our Treaty partners, our strategy **He Pou Manawa Ora Pillars of Wellbeing** ([refer here](#)) was developed/adopted by Hamilton City Council – the vision being that Kirikiriroa celebrates its whole history, including its unique Maaori heritage, and ensures everyone has a voice in developing its future.

**105.** Such partnerships are of crucial importance for the development of ongoing projects undertaken in Hamilton between Hamilton City Council and Maaori.

**106.** We recognise that the principles of partnership, participation, and protection also underpin the relationship between the government and Maaori under the Treaty of Waitangi.

**107.** Clause 16 of the Bill ([refer here](#)) would repeal section 57(3) of the principal Act and thereby remove any requirement to consider whether tikanga Maaori is a relevant skill or knowledge set when appointing members to the boards of Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs).

**108.** Understanding tikanga Maaori helps build strong relationships with Maaori communities, ensuring that their perspectives and needs are considered in governance decisions. This balanced approach not only enhances the effectiveness of governance but also promotes equity and sustainable development.

**109.** We agree with Taituarā's position that tikanga Maaori incorporates values of seeking consensus, respect, care, stewardship, intergenerational equity and relationship building that are all directly relevant to the operations of most CCOs.

**110.** We further submit that some tikanga Maaori competence on a CCO is essential for discharging any Te Tiriti obligations the CCO may have.

**111.** Council would like to emphasise that the Bill's provisions should not result in any negative consequences/implications on the partnership arrangements/agreements that Maaori have with councils throughout the country.

## Further Information and Hearings

- 112.** Should Parliament's Governance and Administration Select Committee require clarification of the submission from Hamilton City Council, or additional information, please contact **James Clarke** (Corporate Planning and Advocacy Manager) on **027 808 9580**, or email [James.Clarke@hcc.govt.nz](mailto:James.Clarke@hcc.govt.nz) in the first instance.
- 113.** Hamilton City Council representatives **do wish to speak** at the Governance and Administration Select Committee hearings in support of this submission.
- 114.** We would also welcome the opportunity to have ongoing discussions around the key areas of this submission with Parliament's Governance and Administration Select Committee and key government representatives.
- 115.** Thank you for providing Hamilton City Council with an extension to the official 27 August 2025 submission closing date through to 1 September 2025 to lodge our final submission.

Yours faithfully



**Lance Vervoort**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

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