**SUBMISSION ON ELECTION BOUNDARY PROPOSALS**

The election boundary proposals 2025 have proposed a significant change for the Otaki Electorate and the Levin and Foxton areas of Horowhenua in particular.

In the proposal Levin and Foxton are separated from the rest of the current Otaki Electorate and combined with areas north from Manawatu District Council and Rangitikei District Council to form the ‘Rangitikei Electorate’.

As an area Levin and Horowhenua has a strong connection to Otaki as a ‘community of interest’ and there are many community links between Otaki and Levin, Foxton and Shannon. It is great to be reunited with Shannon and the rest of Horowhenua. The local iwi boundaries and services (Muaupoko Tribal Authority and Raukawa services) encompass Otaki, Levin, Foxton, Shannon and areas in between. Otaki Town while in the KDC area is also in the Mid Central health district and share health services and similar concerns and priorities on these matters. I regularly attend appointments in Otaki and friends tell me that local schools have inter schools sports between Levin and Otaki regularly. We share community events, markets and speakers and issues of concern.

Kapiti-Horowhenua region has long been linked as a community of interest in working together. Residents move and commute to work between the areas. Now with the expressway built and the Otaki to North of Levin expressway build due to start the economic and transport link between our communities and further South is set and confirmed.

The Rangitikei District Council areas which are in the proposed Rangitikei Electorate are distant and of a markedly different composition being predominantly small, spread out rural populations. We in Levin have no connection or relationship with Rangitikei District and think the feasibility of building one between urban areas of Levin and rural areas of particularly Northern Rangitikei District to be incredibly difficult. I had to look on a map to locate place names in the area and read up about them on the district council website. I think these areas will have a much closer affinity to any of the other adjacent electorates who have greater connection to them. To illustrate a point. The driving distance from Levin to Taihape is 1hr37mins according to google maps. It is 2hrs to Moawhango. This is not the furthest point in Rangitikei. But distance is not the biggest issue. These rural areas deserve electoral representation that represents them and their needs as rural areas. As do Levin and Foxton as growing medium urban areas. This is significantly challenging when combined in the same electorate.

I propose then that:

* 1. Areas of Rangitikei District be moved into other nearby Electorates with which they have closer affinity and more communities of interest. In particular areas **North and East of Hunterville.** This would include the towns of Ohingaiti, Mangaweka, Utiku, Taihape, Moawhango and other areas north to Kaimanawa Forest and East to Ruahine Forest Park. I think given the populations in these towns this should be achievable and preferable for all concerned.
  2. Preferably areas in South West Rangitikei District (Marton, Bulls, Turikina and coastal towns etc) be placed in to electorates with which they have greater connection such as Whanganui which is much closer. I acknowledge that being more populous towns this is likely not achievable.
  3. Otaki and Otaki Beach be kept in the same electorate with Levin.

*My preference is of course to stay with all of the Otaki electorate in moving south as this is our community of interest. It is where our closest community links are and even the transport links. I acknowledge though that change must occur somewhere so this is a wish unlikely to happen.*

* 1. A more suitable name for the electorate should be chosen that is representative of the whole electorate. Rangitikei is not an appropriate name. I have heard people suggest Manawatu Electorate (better) but think an entirely different name that is not already in use to avoid any confusion would be much preferable. Would be appropriate to ask local iwi perhaps.