**OBJECTION (SUBMISSION) AS TO PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGE(S)**

**EAST COAST AND ADJOINING ELECTORATES**

Our objection is to the proposed change in the boundary between the electorates of East Coast and Napier and, as a suggested solution, would also involve boundaries to the Wairarapa and Tukituki electorates.

Principal reason for the objection is founded on the failure of the Representation Commission's Proposed 2025 Changes ("RCP25") to adequately adhere to the objectives to be taken into account in setting electorate boundaries including:

* Population distribution
* Communities of interest
* Geographical features
* Connectivity and communications
* Preservation of existing boundaries

Only on the last-mentioned factor does RCP25 appear to conform to an objective.

As far as East Coast is concerned, the (proposed) further encroachment by the Napier electorate on the southern boundary of East Coast (started in 2020 review) fractures a clear relationship between Gisborne as the centre of commerce and administration and the rural hinterland reaching into hill country in a sparsely populated corner of an already vast electorate.

Areas identified in RPC25 (intended for a switch from East Coast to Napier) largely encompass horticulture, cropping and agricultural land, stock finishing and lifestyle holdings as well as rural towns and urban settlements around the State Highway 2 corridor between Gisborne and Opotiki - areas with little or no connection to Napier. This change would reportedly involve circa 1300 in population terms.

Additionally, the present (and proposed) southern boundary of East Coast should be shifted southward to align more or less (subject to mesh block cells) with the local (Gisborne District Council) and regional (Tairawhiti) - unique Unitary authority.

In attempting to rebalance population as a main consideration between electorates, RCP25 misses an opportunity to reconfigure the four electorates on the eastern seaboard of the North Island which, under RCP25, would have a population and variance from the 69,875 quota as follows:

* East Coast: 68,768 (-1,107, -1.6%)
* Napier: 67,012 (-2,863, -4.1%)
* Tukituki: 70,370 (+495, +0.7%)
* Wairarapa: 72,929 (+3,054, +4.4%)

Total: 279,079 (average 69,769)

It would seem that an upward shift of the boundaries from Wairarapa to East Coast (involving Tukituki and Napier) would bring the populations closer to the average reducing the variance.

Particular reasons for the change involve distance, geographic aspects, connectivity and communications as well as the community of interest between corners of the East Coast electorate and the obvious administrative centres. RCP25 has the Motu district (destined for inclusion in the Napier electorate) some 3.5 hours drive time to Napier but one hour for Gisborne.

Further, the fragile road linkages on SH2 as the main connector across the region was evidenced by hurricane Gabrielle with some of the roads inoperable for a period - and where relief and reconstruction resources were overseen by the Tairawhiti unitary authority.

This submission has not addressed the western edge of East Coast where the Murupara/Minginui towns (SW corner of electorate) or the Maketu-TePuke/Te Puna (NW edge of East Coast) might feature in any fine tuning of populations. This can be addressed in an oral submission.

In proposing the southward shift to the Gisborne District Council/Tairawhiti boundary, this would take in largely sheep and beef hill country plus forestry as well as cropping and horticulture land use and involve overall districts known as Wharerata, Muriwai, Manutuke, Ngatapa, Hangaroa, Tiniroto, Otoko, Rakuroa and Matawai - areas currently in the Napier electorate.

Whilst no population figures are available for these areas, I put the General (non-Maori) population at (say) 400 which, together with the 1300 proposed under RCP25 would involve a gain of 1700 into East Coast.

According, a rebalancing of the (General) population on the eastern seaboard of the North Island would involve an upward shift in boundaries as follows:

* Wairarapa surrenders 2,800 population to Tukituki and becomes 70,129
* Tukituki gains 2,800 but surrenders 3,200 pop. to Napier becoming 69,970
* Napier gains 3,200 but surrenders 1,700 pop. to East Coast to be 68,512
* East Coast increases by 1,700 population from Napier to become 70,468

Total General population: 279,079

An enclosed map shows a revised East Coast/Napier electorate boundary but leaves open the final boundary adjustments to Napier/Tukituki/Wairarapa.

I wish to be heard in support of the Objection/submission herein.