

Wards, Boards and Boundaries for Auckland Council

We have been keeping up a running commentary on progress towards the establishment of the Auckland Council in this newsletter, but it is not until today that we are able to get a clear sense of the form of the new Council.

For the purposes of the October 2010 elections the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009 left it up to the Local Government Commission ("the Commission") to:

- divide Auckland into wards;
- determine the number, names, and boundaries of the wards;
- determine the number of elected members for each ward.

In addition the Commission was given the role of determining:

- the number and names of local board areas within Auckland;
- the boundaries of:
 - each local board area; and
 - electoral subdivisions, if any, of each of those areas;
- the number of elected members of the local board for each of the local board areas.

Although the Act gives certain directions to the Commission it has a wide discretion in these matters. Today the Commission has announced its preliminary findings, including provision for 12 wards across the new Council with a total of 20 councillors, not including the Mayor. The councillors will be spread over four single member wards and eight two-member wards as follows:

Rodney	1 member
Franklin	1 member
Whau	1 member
Maungawhau-Hauraki Gulf	1 member
Hibiscus-Albany-East Coast Bays	2 members
North Shore	2 members
Papakura-Manurewa	2 members
Howick-Pakuranga-Botany	2 members
Manukau	2 members
Waitakere	2 members
Mt Albert-Mt Roskill	2 members
Orakei-Maungakiekie	2 members

At the second tier the Commission has opted for 19 local boards with members as follows:

Rodney	7 members
Hibiscus-Albany-East Coast Bays	9 members
Glenfield-Birkenhead	6 members
Takapuna-Devonport	5 members
Waitakere	9 members
Whau	7 members
Mt Albert	7 members
Mt Roskill	6 members

Maungawhau	5 members
Waiheke	5 members
Great Barrier	5 members
Orakei	7 members
Maungakiekie-Tamaki	6 members
Mangere	5 members
Otara-Papatoetoe	7 members
Howick-Pakuranga-Botany	9 members
Papakura	5 members
Manurewa	7 members
Franklin	9 members

Within the local boards there are electoral divisions.

Although the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act directs that there should be between 20-30 local boards, the Commission has exercised its statutory discretion to provide only 19 local boards on the grounds that this best provides for effective representation of communities of interest.

The Commission has also determined the southern boundary of the district with the Waikato Region losing part of the Waiuku urban area, parts of Pukekohe and Buckland north of the Waikato River. The areas in the Mangatawhiri and Mangatangi catchments will be included in the Waikato Region and Waikato District, and the area centred on Kaiaua (between the Mangatangi Stream catchment and the Firth of Thames) goes to the Hauraki District. Regional parks in the area south of the border will be vested in the Auckland Council, and Watercare Services will retain ownership of the dams in the Hunua Ranges.

A copy of the report and the maps describing the wards and local board areas is available at http://www.lgc.govt.nz/lgcwebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Auckland-Governance-Proposals-for-Wards-Local-Boards-and-Boundaries-for-Auckland!OpenDocument.

The Commission's release of its proposals is right on time in terms of the tight timeframe it is operating under in order to meet its 1 March 2010 deadline for final determinations. The report follows a month of consultation with affected local authorities and interested groups, and responses are now sought by 11 December.

This is a big call in the busy lead up to Christmas and New Year, particularly on those already exhausted by the preceding rounds of consultation, and for Council staff struggling to meet the demands of ATA as it progresses its implementation proposals. However it is necessarily tight in order for the Commission to finalise its proposals and meet the statutory deadline.

When coupled with the recent release by ATA of its proposed management structure for the Auckland Council – see at <http://www.ata.govt.nz> – the picture of what Auckland local governance might look like in a year from now is slowly beginning to emerge.

Our LG Law Partners & Senior Associates are:

Melinda Dickey

Partner

t: (09) 979 2210

e: dickey@brookfields.co.nz

Andrew Green

Partner

t: (09) 979 2172

e: green@brookfields.co.nz

Linda O'Reilly

Partner

t: (09) 979 2167

e: oreilly@brookfields.co.nz

Andrew Cameron

Consultant

t: (04) 499 9824

e: cameron@brookfields.co.nz

Matthew Allan

Senior Associate

t: (09) 979 2128

e: allan@brookfields.co.nz

John Young

Senior Associate

t: (09) 979 2155

e: youngj@brookfields.co.nz

John Watson

Senior Associate

t: (09) 979 2262

e: watson@brookfields.co.nz

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Auckland t 09 379 9350
f 09 379 3224
Manukau 09 262 2145
09 379 3224
Wellington 04 499 9824
04 499 9822
www.brookfields.co.nz



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