

Local Government in NZ

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Local government in New Zealand consists of 78 local, regional and unitary councils.

The elected members of these councils are chosen every three years by voters in their communities to represent them. The elected members employ a Chief Executive to run the everyday business of the council. The Chief Executive employs all other council managers and staff.

Councils typically meet monthly and base their decision-making on the preferences of their communities, the commitments of previous councils, central government requirements and the policy platforms they were voted in on.

Like central government, local government draws its legitimacy from Parliament and operates on the basis of an electoral mandate provided by citizens.

The local government sector consists of:

- 11 regional councils;
- 61 territorial authorities – 11 are city councils and 50 are district councils; and
- Six unitary councils – which are territorial authorities with regional council responsibilities.

The 78 councils have about 1600 elected members. The key elected members roles are mayors, regional council chairs, councillors, local board and community board members.

Many councils have second tier or sub-municipal bodies which are also elected. These are known as community boards or local boards. There are currently 110 community boards and 21 local boards across the country, with the local boards only operating in Auckland.

While the average population per council is approximately 85,000 residents, the range between the largest and smallest council extends from 1.44 million residents in Auckland to 600 in the Chatham Islands.

Local Government Illustrated

We have commissioned this poster illustrating a wide range of everyday activities and services that councils perform.

A high resolution image of the poster is available here for free and may be duplicated: [LG Illustration HighRes.pdf](#)



Local government basics

Find out how councils work, what responsibilities and activities they are concerned with and how you can have a say in your local council

Read more

Remuneration

The Remuneration Authority is responsible for setting the remuneration of all elected members.

Read more

Local government finance

Councils provide the local public services and local infrastructure that communities need to survive and prosper. Nothing, however, is free. Local services need to be paid for and local government has a limited range of funding tools by which to meet the expectations and need of not only today's communities but the communities of the future.

[Read more](#)

Council maps and websites

Council boundary maps of the North and South Island and a comprehensive list of all of New Zealand's regional, district and city council websites.

[Read more](#)

Council operations

How do councils work? And what and who is involved?

Including information about: Local government staff, Council Controlled Organisations (CCOs), Sub-municipal bodies, Portfolio systems and Standing committees

[Read more](#)

Resources

A comprehensive list of links to related New Zealand local government organisation websites.

[Read more](#)

Community boards

What are community boards, what are their role in the community and who is involved involved with them?

[Read more](#)

Mayors Taskforce For Jobs

The Mayors Taskforce for Jobs is a nationwide network of mayors working on the issues of work and livelihood in their communities. It focuses on youth employment and engagement in local communities.

[Read more](#)

Council Māori engagement

Resources regarding engagement between councils and Iwi, Hapu and Māori groups.

[Read more](#)

2016 Local Elections

[Read more](#)

2019 Local Elections

[Read more](#)



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