



FAQ's

What is a Māori Ward?

Māori wards provide a way for Māori to contribute to local decision-making and have representation at Council.

Electors enrolled on the Māori electoral roll would vote for candidates standing for Māori wards. Similarly, electors enrolled on the general electoral roll would vote for candidates standing for general wards.

“Wards” are the parts of a Council area that have been determined by population and communities of interest for the purpose of electing representatives to the Council. These can be either general wards or Māori wards.

Why are we looking introducing Māori wards?

We're reviewing how all our communities are represented locally. This is called a representation review, and under the law we're required to do this at least once every six years. As part of this review, there is the option to establish Māori wards.

The purpose of a representation review is to make sure that the communities in our city are fairly and effectively represented at Council.

Councils are also required to provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to the decision-making processes under the Local Government Act 2002. Establishing Māori wards is one way to achieve this, which is another reason they are being considered.

Who decides if Hutt City Council introduces Māori wards?

When it comes to deciding how underrepresented groups get more of a say at the Council table, it's appropriate that those groups lead that conversation. The views of iwi/Māori and Mana Whenua in particular, will be key in whether Council proceeds with Māori wards, which is why we're holding a wānanga in late August to talk it through. The Council will then decide whether or not to establish Māori wards.

We're joining with Upper Hutt City Council in these conversations, as Mana Whenua cover both local authority areas and their preference will influence UHCC's representation review as well.

What about improving the representation of other underrepresented groups?

The representation review is looking at all aspects of how we can better reflect the views of different groups and communities within our city to be fully representative of everyone who lives here. That could include certain local communities and socio-economic groups, younger people, disabled people and renters to name just a few. These groups will be given the opportunity to have a say on how they want to be represented.

What would the addition of a Māori ward mean for the overall number of wards and councillors?

The number of other wards and councillor positions need not be reduced as a result of introducing a Māori ward. The final number of wards and councillors will be decided as part of the overall review.

The number of Lower Hutt residents currently on the Māori electoral roll indicates that one Māori ward with one Māori ward councillor, could be introduced.

Who can stand for a Māori ward?

You can stand for Council if you are a New Zealand citizen, aged over 18, and enrolled to vote. You don't need to be of Māori descent or enrolled on the Māori roll to stand for the Māori ward, and you don't need to live in Lower Hutt.

Likewise, people of Māori descent can stand for any seat at Council, including at-large and council ward seats.

Who can vote in a Māori ward?

You can vote in a Māori ward if you are on the Māori electoral roll. Only New Zealand Māori and the descendants of New Zealand Māori can choose to be on the Māori electoral roll.

For those who are enrolling for the first time, they can choose if they want to be on the Māori electoral roll or the general electoral roll.

You can change your roll type at any time, except:

In the 3 months before a general parliamentary or local government election

Before a parliamentary by-election if the change would move you into the electorate where the by-election is being held.

Would Māori ward voters be able to vote for the same number of councillors as voters in other wards?

Using the current numbers of Lower Hutt residents on the Māori electoral roll, there could be one Māori ward covering the whole city with one Māori ward councillor. Currently there are six wards in Lower Hutt also with one councillor each.

Currently, there are a further six councillors elected across the whole city. Electors in a Māori ward would also be able to vote for these six councillors.

However, the current representation structure may change as a result of the representation review.

Could the number of Māori wards and Māori ward councillors go up or down in future?

Yes, it is possible. For this to happen, either the number of electors on the Māori roll would need to change quite significantly, or there would need to be an increase in the total number of councillors to be elected to Hutt City Council.

Would Māori ward voters also vote for a Mayor?

Yes, just like voters in other wards.

If you are on the Māori election roll you will vote for the mayor and for the Māori ward councillor.

If you are on the general election roll you will vote for the mayor and vote for a ward councillor (in the area where you live).

Everyone gets two votes.

Would a Māori ward councillor only represent Māori?

Like all councillors, a Māori ward councillor would represent the residents in their ward, but they also make a declaration once elected, to act in the best interests of the city as a whole.

What does Hutt City Council currently do to include Māori in decision making?

Council has developed Tākai Here (memoranda of partnership) with the five iwi organisations and two marae representing Mana Whenua and iwi Māori in Te Awa Kairangi ki Tai Lower Hutt ([External link](#)). These take a covenant approach, reflect iwi plans and align with Council and iwi aspirations. Council staff meet regularly with representatives of these organisations to ensure Mana Whenua have a voice in decisions that affect them.

What other Council's have Māori wards?

In the 2022 Local elections, 35 councils had Māori wards/constituencies. In the Wellington region, Wellington City, Porirua and Masterton have a Māori ward.