**Script for Minister of Local Government video launching Māori Wards stage 2 public consultation**

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| Whakataka te hau ki te uru,  Whakataka te hau ki te tonga.  Kia mākinakina ki uta,  Kia mātaratara ki tai.  E hī ake ana te atākura  He tio, he huka, he hau hu.  Tihei Mauri Ora.  Tēnā koutou katoa. | Cease the winds from the west  Cease the winds from the south  Let the breeze blow over the land  Let the breeze blow over the ocean  Let the red-tipped dawn come with a sharpened air.  A touch of frost, a promise of a glorious day.  Greetings to you all. |

Public consultation is now open on changes to local government processes for Māori wards and constituencies. This is the second part of a two-stage process that began late last year. Your feedback will be used to inform the next changes the government makes to Māori ward processes for councils.

Local government elected representatives should reflect their communities. Councils have the ability to use Māori and general wards at their elections to ensure that representatives from different parts of their communities can be elected.

It is also part of local authorities’ responsibilities to establish and maintain processes to provide opportunities for Māori to contribute to the decision-making processes of their local authority. Maori wards are one way they can do this.

Earlier this year, an amendment to the Local Electoral Act 2001 was passed to prevent binding polls from being held on whether councils should have Māori wards or Māori constituencies. The poll provisions had proven to be an unfair barrier to improving the democratic representation of Māori interests.

The amendment also provided councils with a fresh opportunity to make decisions on Māori wards in time for the 2022 local elections. Since the amendment was made in February, 32 new councils will adopt Māori wards in time for the 2022 local elections. This brings the total number of councils with Māori wards to 35.

This is a significant step forward for Māori representation in local government. Diversity around the council table is important and so is the need to uphold the Treaty of Waitangi/ Te Tiriti O Waitangi. But there’s more work to do.

We need to make enduring changes for the 2025 elections and beyond. We are now consulting on the next stage of the process to align changes for future elections.

Councils are required to make decisions about Māori wards and general wards in two different ways depending on what type of ward they considering. Having two different processes is confusing. I want to know how the separate processes can be bought closer together to make it easier for councils to make decisions about how communities are represented, and so that everyone understands how the system works.

There are 6 key differences between the Māori wards and general wards process:

* The requirements for councils to consider ward systems;
* The timing of decisions;
* Opportunities for public input;
* Decision-making rights and the role of the Local Government Commission;
* How and when wards can be discontinued; and
* The types of polls that councils can hold.

We’ve released a consultation document that outlines what the Government needs to consider when deciding how to bring together the Māori wards process and general wards process. You can download a copy from the Department of Internal Affairs website, [www.dia.govt.nz](http://www.dia.govt.nz).

Through this consultation, we want to know whether you think the 6 key differences should be addressed, and if so how. Your feedback will help to determine how the law is improved.

The government has already agreed that establishing Māori wards is a decision for councils to make. This consultation is about improving about how these decisions are made beyond 2025.

You can provide your views by using the feedback form provided in the consultation document or by visiting the Department of Internal Affairs website at [www.dia.govt.nz](http://www.dia.govt.nz).

Once consultation closes, I’ll consider your feedback and Cabinet will decide how we move forward. It is my intention to have any legislative changes in place after the 2022 local government elections.

Please, share your views, I’d love to hear what you think on any of the changes to Māori wards and constituency processes in local government.

We look forward to hearing from you

Noho ora mai (stay well, goodbye)