

From: Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <Jock.Martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 27 July 2026 3:30 p.m.
To: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Subject: FW: Head Start Thoughts
Attachments: Headstart v6.docx

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Hills, FYI 😊

Jason (Jock) Martin
Mayor Clutha District Council
Mobile: 022 433 7813
Email: jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz



From: Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <Jock.Martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>
Sent: Sunday, July 26, 2026 10:22 AM
To: mayor@codc.govt.nz; Mel Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>; Sophie Barker <sophie.barker@dcc.govt.nz>
Cc: Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <Jock.Martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>
Subject: Head Start Thoughts

Mayoral Whanau,

I want to share my thoughts on a possible collective entry into the Head Start pathway under the Government's Simplifying Local Government reform programme, reading Warrens body language didn't convince me a letter will be suffice please see attached, "Have we been viewing the **9 August 2026** deadline primarily as a target, rather than as an opportunity to gain **more time to refine our proposals and keep us actively engaged in the process?** " I'm merely putting this out there as an alternative to consider which still requires trimming as it's a starting point but will need to act swiftly as I'm conscious of our extraordinary meetings for some of us this week, if we agree in principle. This initiative presents a unique opportunity for us to shape the future of local governance in our region, enabling us to address the evolving needs of our communities and streamline our decision-making processes.

It's important to note that while we have not yet finalised a complete reorganisation plan, entering the Head Start pathway does not require us to submit a fully developed plan? by **9 August 2026**. Instead, we can present a high-level outline that demonstrates our commitment to reform and our collaborative approach to governance. This flexibility allows us **more time** to further refine our proposal during the detailed design phase. (**gives us time & keeps us in control of the game**)

If we do not engage in this process, we risk being placed in the backstop model, where decisions about our governance structures will be made without our input. This would limit our ability to influence outcomes and could impose solutions that do not align with the best interests of our constituents.

Our collaborative efforts to date have laid a strong foundation. We have engaged with our communities and mana whenua to gather their perspectives, and this feedback will be instrumental as we move forward in developing our proposal.

I encourage each of you to consider this initiative as we work together to present a unified front to the Government. Let us seize this opportunity to ensure that our region's governance reflects the needs and aspirations of our communities while promoting efficiency and accountability.

Thank you for your consideration, Together, we can create a brighter future for our region, and we are the best people to create that future not the **backstop**.

Timeline of the Government's Proposal

Date	Milestone
May 2026	Head Start opens
August 2026	Cabinet agrees proposals in principle
September 2026	Outline proposals submitted
March 2027	Cabinet confirms proposals
May 2027	Cabinet approves legislation
Q3/Q4 2027	Legislation enacted
Q1 2028	Proposal implementation begins
October 2028	Backstop begins
	Nominations for local elections
	Local elections

Nga Mihi

Jason (Jock) Martin

Mayor Clutha District Council

Mobile: 022 433 7813

Email: jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz



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Subject: Proposal to Enter the Head Start Pathway for Simplifying Local Government

Opening

On behalf of the Otago councils involved in this proposal, we are writing to confirm our joint commitment to advancing work under the Simplifying Local Government reform programme over the next six months. We wish to enter the Head Start pathway to further our collaborative approach, integrating regional council functions into our models. This will allow us to present well-founded alternatives to our constituents for public consultation, ensuring their voices matter while maintaining the appropriate scale and focus.

Purpose

The purpose of this proposal is to develop an outline that aligns with the Head Start pathway and supports the government's assessment of our initiative. This will enable central government to make informed decisions on which proposals should progress to the next phase for detailed design. By participating in the Head Start process, we aim to streamline our governance structures and enhance service delivery, ultimately serving our communities better.

Context

The Government's Simplifying Local Government Head Start Policy presents councils with the opportunity to shape reorganisation on our own terms. This reform signifies the most substantial changes to local government in New Zealand since 1989. The Otago councils have a solid foundation of cross-council collaboration to draw upon. The Otago Mayoral Forum and Chief Executives Forum provide established governance channels for coordinating regional positions, while the Otago Central Lakes Regional Deal exemplifies our ability to collaborate on shared priorities, governance, and delivery.

Since the announcement of the policy, Otago's councils have responded swiftly and in unison, keeping the door open for submitting a Head Start proposal. This reflects the strength of our existing arrangements and our shared intent to engage with this opportunity proactively. Although our initial collaborative efforts have not yet yielded a clear "best option" for amalgamation, we are committed to building on this groundwork in the coming months, moving toward a more detailed joint focus on priorities, engagement, and options.

What We've Done Together

In response to the Government's policy announcement, Otago's councils committed to a comprehensive programme of work to explore the Head Start opportunity, which included:

- **Conducting a Region-Wide Survey:** We engaged the Otago community on reform issues, resulting in 1,820 responses across five districts. This provided a consistent dataset highlighting regional priorities such as affordable rates and quality services while also revealing local nuances.
- **Commissioning Morrison Low Advisory:** We developed an evidence base covering communities of interest, planning system alignment, representation, governance structures, and financial benchmarking. This informed our initial Head Start options analysis, which was presented to the Mayoral Forum on July 3, 2026.
- **Engaging with Mana Whenua Collectively:** We fostered ongoing dialogue with Ngāi Tahu leaders regarding the reform programme, ensuring their perspectives are integrated into our approach.
- **Keeping Councillors Informed and Involved:** Through updates, joint briefings, and individual workshops, we ensured that district-level perspectives shaped our collaborative efforts.

This collaborative work has laid a strong foundation for our ongoing engagement with our communities and stakeholders. It aligns with the government's vision of simplifying local governance, reducing duplication, and ensuring accountability.

Why We're Continuing to Work Jointly

A collaborative approach enables us to engage collectively with mana whenua and the community, ensuring that our councils operate from a shared, consistent, and comparable evidence base. Amalgamation inherently requires collaboration, and under the Simplifying Local Government initiative, any viable option will involve multiple councils. Therefore, a joint conversation is essential to reflect a genuinely shared future rather than a single perspective.

The government has indicated a clear intention to remove unnecessary layers of bureaucracy, such as regional councils, in favour of empowering mayors through Combined Territories Boards (CTBs). This approach would streamline regional decision-making and strengthen accountability, which aligns with our goals for effective governance.

Continuing our collaborative approach will ensure that any new structures proposed are recognised as a collective design from the region, giving Otago's communities a stronger

voice and allowing us to share the costs and resources necessary for the analysis and development of options.

What We're Doing Next

As we move forward, we will assess options for Otago based on the existing Morrison Low analysis. This will include modelling how the former Otago regional council functions can be delivered, such as the structure of a Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO) and exploring alternative boundary configurations. These options will serve as tools for exploration rather than fixed proposals, enabling us to seek public consultation effectively.

In line with the government's proposals, we will develop our regional reorganisation plans, assessing how councils across the region can best collaborate to deliver efficient and effective local infrastructure, public services, and regulatory functions. These plans will be tested against criteria that support national priorities, ensure financial responsibility, and improve service delivery.

We acknowledge this letter **as our intention to join the Head Start pathway**. We are committed to refining our collaborative approach and developing our detailed proposals.

Timeline

- **Outline proposals:** Ongoing discussions and preparations leading to submission in the future.
 - **Cabinet agreement in principle:** September 2026.
 - **Detailed design phase:** October 2026 to March 2027.
 - **Cabinet confirmation of final proposals:** May 2027.
 - **Legislation enacted:** Q1 2028.
 - **Local body elections:** October 2028, after which the backstop will commence.
-

Closing Remarks

Otago's councils remain committed to the objectives of local government reform and to discovering better, more innovative ways to deliver services for our communities—not merely adjusting current settings. We anticipate achieving significant progress by February 2027 and look forward to presenting our proposal for the Head Start pathway to further enhance our collaborative efforts.

Thank you for your consideration.

LGOIMA SR.35901 RELEASE

From: Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <Jock.Martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 28 July 2026 5:09 p.m.
To: Richard Saunders; Tamah Alley; Mel Tavendale; John Glover; Sophie Barker; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Cc: Peter Kelly; Steve Hill; Alex Parmley; Michelle Morss; Sandy Graham
Subject: RE: Options for Regional Function Delivery

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Thankyou Richard, Appreciate that.

Jason (Jock) Martin
Mayor Clutha District Council
Mobile: 022 433 7813
Email: jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz



From: Richard Saunders <Richard.Saunders@orc.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 28 July 2026 12:19 pm
To: mayor@codc.govt.nz; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <Jock.Martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>; Mel Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>; Sophie Barker <sophie.barker@dcc.govt.nz>; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz>
Cc: Peter Kelly <peter.kelly@codc.govt.nz>; Steve Hill <Steve.Hill@Cluthadc.govt.nz>; Alex Parmley <aparmley@waitaki.govt.nz>; Michelle Morss <michelle.morss@qldc.govt.nz>; Sandy Graham <sandy.graham@dcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Options for Regional Function Delivery

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Afternoon Mayors

As discussed last week please find attached a high level summary of the options to deliver regional functions in a multiple unitary model. While there are a number of different options identified, from discussions with other regional CE's the two favoured models are

1. CCO

2. Shared services model with one unitary taking the lead agency role

As the discussions in Otago progress we are happy to do some further work on one or more of the models if that is required.

Regards
Richard



Richard Saunders

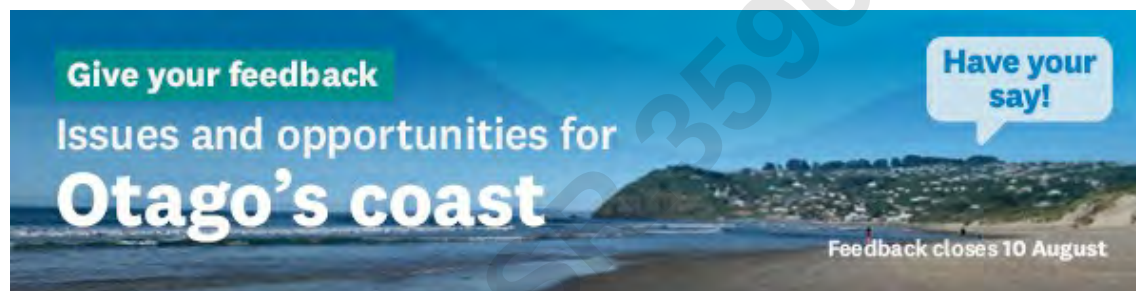
Chief Executive
Tumu Whakarae

Executive Leadership

7(2)(a) | Richard.Saunders@orc.govt.nz

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From: Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 29 July 2026 12:42 p.m.
To: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Subject: Resolutions

Categories: LG Reform

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Hi Hilary,

Resolutions as passed:

That Council:

1. Receives the report and accepts the level of significance.
2. Directs staff to prepare a Headstart proposal based on the following parameters:
 - a. A unitary council comprising the full areas of Central Otago District Council, Clutha District Council, and Queenstown Lakes District Council.
 - b. Recognition that an option may exist for the Waihemo Ward of Waitaki District and rural areas of Dunedin City, including Middlemarch and the Taieri Catchment, to be incorporated into the proposed unitary authority.
 - c. Community councils with rating powers being identified as the primary mechanism for retaining local representation and community voice.
 - d. The opportunity to explore bespoke legislative arrangements being included within the proposal framework.
 - e. The ability to further develop and refine options relating to the proposed unitary authority prior to undertaking public consultation.
 - f. The inclusion of review and exit mechanisms should future circumstances warrant reconsideration of the arrangement.
3. Notes that the draft proposal will be circulated to councillors for review once prepared.
4. Notes that submission of the proposal will require the agreement and joint participation of Clutha District Council and/or Queenstown Lakes District Council.
5. Authorises Her Worship the Mayor to sign the proposal on behalf of Central Otago District Council for submission by the prescribed deadline of 9 August 2026.
6. In the event that another council does not agree to a joint Headstart proposal, authorises Her Worship the Mayor to sign a joint letter of intent.

Thanks,
Tamah

Tamah Alley

Mayor - Zone 6 Chair



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mayor@codc.govt.nz

Alexandra 9320

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LGOIMA SR.35901 RELEASE

From: John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 29 July 2026 1:27 p.m.
To: Ruby Shaw; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin; Sophie Barker; Melanie Tavendale; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Subject: RE: CODC head start resolution

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Hi Ruby,

“the QLDC Councillors will want to understand the discussion that led to CODC adopting a new position compared to the one that was until recently the preferred option of the Otago Mayors. We note that CDC will make their decision tomorrow and that will be a factor that needs to be taken into account when we consider the subject at our meeting on Monday”

Regards, John Glover

John Glover | Mayor

Queenstown Lakes District Council

E: John.Glover@qldc.govt.nz

P: Please call my EA, Ange Hart on +64 3 450 9131



Please note that all appointments scheduled with the Mayor are publicly available and published on our website. You can view the calendar here: [QLDC - Mayor John Glover](#)

From: Ruby Shaw <ruby.shaw@alliedmedia.co.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 29 July 2026 1:20 PM

To: Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>; John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>; Sophie Barker <sophie.barker@dcc.govt.nz>; Melanie Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <hilary.calvert@orc.govt.nz>

Subject: CODC head start resolution

Afternoon,

The CODC today voted to prepare a headstart proposal of a unitary authority of the full areas of CODC, CDC and QLDC and leaving the door open to Waitaki's Waihemo Ward and Dunedin's rural areas.

What do you make of their decision?

Would such a proposal be accepted by the government?

For Clutha and Queenstown Lakes, how will it affect your upcoming meetings on the topic, bearing in mind a majority of affected councils (ie. 2/3) need to agree on a proposal.

For Waitaki and Dunedin, what do you make of the offer to take up rural areas of your districts? What consultation will happen with residents in these potentially affected areas? How will a decision on the potential inclusion be made?

Anything else to add?

My deadline is 5pm today,

Kā mihi,

Ruby



Ruby Shaw

Reporter

Otago Daily Times

M: 022 014 4125

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W: www.odt.co.nz

LGOIMA SR.35901 RELEASE

From: Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 29 July 2026 1:30 p.m.
To: John Glover; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin; Mel Tavendale; Sophie Barker; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Subject: Fw: Resolutions

Categories: LG Reform

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Hi Otago Mayors and Chair,
 Here are the resolutions passed by our council today. We eagerly await the discussion of Clutha and QLDC, and we also discussed the possibility of a "rural unitary" sharing some services with a "city unitary" in the future as a possibility. I remain committed to the friendship ;)
 See you Friday
 Tamah

Resolutions as passed:

That Council:

1. Receives the report and accepts the level of significance.
2. Directs staff to prepare a Headstart proposal based on the following parameters:
 - a. A unitary council comprising the full areas of Central Otago District Council, Clutha District Council, and Queenstown Lakes District Council.
 - b. Recognition that an option may exist for the Waihemo Ward of Waitaki District and rural areas of Dunedin City, including Middlemarch and the Taieri Catchment, to be incorporated into the proposed unitary authority.
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 - f. The inclusion of review and exit mechanisms should future circumstances warrant reconsideration of the arrangement.
3. Notes that the draft proposal will be circulated to councillors for review once prepared.
4. Notes that submission of the proposal will require the agreement and joint participation of Clutha District Council and/or Queenstown Lakes District Council.
5. Authorises Her Worship the Mayor to sign the proposal on behalf of Central Otago District Council for submission by the prescribed deadline of 9 August 2026.
6. In the event that another council does not agree to a joint Headstart proposal, authorises Her Worship the Mayor to sign a joint letter of intent.

Thanks,
Tamah

Tamah Alley

Mayor - Zone 6 Chair



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Alexandra 9320

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From: John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 29 July 2026 1:38 p.m.
To: Marianna Brook; Sophie Barker; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC); Tamah Alley
Cc: Michelle Morss
Subject: Mayoral forum call this afternoon

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Good afternoon all,

I will be unable to join the call this afternoon as I am at a function starting at 5pm though will join Fridays forum online.

Given the rapidly changing (political) landscape around headstart in this region and mindful that CDC will make a decision tomorrow, I think it is not appropriate for our interim CE to join the call this afternoon in my absence.

Regards,

John

John Glover | Mayor

Queenstown Lakes District Council

E: John.Glover@qldc.govt.nz

P: Please call my EA, Ange Hart on +64 3 450 9131



Please note that all appointments scheduled with the Mayor are publicly available and published on our website. You can view the calendar here: [QLDC - Mayor John Glover](#)

From: Mel Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 29 July 2026 4:08 p.m.
To: Ruby Shaw; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin; John Glover; Sophie Barker; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Cc: Helen Pickering
Subject: Re: CODC head start resolution

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Hi Ruby,

Answers below:

1. What do you make of Central Otago's decision?

Central Otago, like all of us, is also operating with tight timeframes, and making decisions in a tough environment. Every council needs to consider the options in front of it and choose the pathway it believes is best for its own communities.

2. Would such a proposal be accepted by the Government?

Unsure

What do you make of the offer to take up rural areas of your districts?

The decision should ultimately sit with those most effected. Waitaki will progress a proposal for the whole of Waitaki together with our northern neighbours, with the door remaining open for further discussions on our southern boundary. We want the strongest future arrangement for all of Waitaki, and one that gives our communities a strong voice at the table.

What consultation will happen with residents in these potentially affected areas? How will a decision on the potential inclusion be made?

We intend to have further conversations with our Waihemo community, with clear information, local engagement and a strong understanding of the implications. Our starting point is that Waitaki communities deserve to be heard, and their interests must be central to any conversation about boundary changes.

Additional Comment:

I believe the Simplifying Local Government reforms give us an opportunity to fix a broken, antiquated and overburdened system. My non-negotiables for the reforms are not losing the local connection and local voice, or any one council or councils being disadvantaged for the advantage of another.

I believe every council and every community must benefit by the reforms.

Kind regards

Mel Tavendale
Mayor

Waitaki District Council
+64 3 433 0300 | mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz
20 Thames Street | Private Bag 50058

Ōamaru 9444 | New Zealand

www.waitaki.govt.nz



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From: Ruby Shaw <ruby.shaw@alliedmedia.co.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 29 July 2026 1:19 pm

To: Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>; John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>; Sophie Barker <sophie.barker@dcc.govt.nz>; Mel Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <hilary.calvert@orc.govt.nz>

Subject: CODC head start resolution

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For Clutha and Queenstown Lakes, how will it affect your upcoming meetings on the topic, bearing in mind a majority of affected councils (ie. 2/3) need to agree on a proposal.

For Waitaki and Dunedin, what do you make of the offer to take up rural areas of your districts? What consultation will happen with residents in these potentially affected areas? How will a decision on the potential inclusion be made?

Anything else to add?

My deadline is 5pm today,

Kā mihi,

Ruby

Ruby Shaw

Reporter

Otago Daily Times

M: 022 014 4125

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LGOIMA SR.35901 RELEASE

From: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Sent: Thursday, 30 July 2026 1:02 p.m.
To: Sophie Barker; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin; John Glover; Mel Tavendale; Tamah Alley
Subject: Mayoral forum correspondence

Hi all,
I notice from an email sent by Sophie starting with Mayoral forum (that was not sent to me) that I had been left off the list.
I would appreciate it if each of you can check that when you mean a communication to the mayoral forum that I am part of the group?
Cheers,
Hil



Hilary Calvert
Chairperson

| Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz

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From: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Sent: Thursday, 30 July 2026 1:30 p.m.
To: Sophie Barker; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin; John Glover; Mel Tavendale; Tamah Alley
Subject: Re: Mayoral forum correspondence

All good ta.



Hilary Calvert

Chairperson

Elected Council Representatives

From: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 30 July 2026 13:07:45
To: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz>; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>; John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>; Mel Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: Mayoral forum correspondence

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Huuuuge apologies Hilary. I am very sorry that I left you off the list. My fault entirely and I'm very sorry!!

Kā mihi

All the best

Sophie Barker

Mayor of Dunedin

Te Koromatua o Ōtepoti

M 021 349 843 | **E** mayor@dcc.govt.nz

Kaunihera a-rohe o Ōtepoti | Dunedin City Council

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From: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 30 July 2026 13:02:29
To: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>; John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>; Mel Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>

Subject: Mayoral forum correspondence

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Cheers,
Hil



Hilary Calvert
Chairperson

| Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz

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From: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Sent: Thursday, 30 July 2026 5:20 p.m.
To: Tamah Alley; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin
Subject: Fw: For information - copy of letter sent to Minister re LG Reform
Attachments: 2026 07 30 Letter to Min Watt & Min Bishop - Local Government Reform.pdf

FYI



Hilary Calvert
Chairperson
Elected Council Representatives

From: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2026 5:08 PM
To: Councillors <Councillors@orc.govt.nz>
Cc: Richard Saunders <Richard.Saunders@orc.govt.nz>
Subject: For information - copy of letter sent to Minister re LG Reform

Dear Councillors
For your information, please find attached letter sent to Ministers Watt and Bishop.
Kind regards
Di
EA to the Chair

Sent on behalf of Chair Hilary Calvert



Hilary Calvert
Chairperson

| Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz

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30 July 2026

Hon Simon Watts
Minister for Local Government
S.Watts@ministers.govt.nz

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister for RMA Reform
chris.bishop@parliament.govt.nz

Dear Ministers Watts and Bishop,

I am writing on behalf of Otago Regional Council to acknowledge the positive progress being made by councils in Otago in responding to the Head Start opportunity, and to reaffirm our commitment to contributing constructively to the development and implementation of the Government's local government reform programme.

Otago Regional Council supports the Government's intent to simplify and strengthen local government, reduce duplication, improve accountability, and create a more efficient system that enables councils to plan and deliver for their communities. We recognise the importance of enabling growth and improving decision-making, while ensuring the natural environment remains a central consideration in reform design and implementation. This is particularly important in Otago, given the scale and diversity of our region, the significance of freshwater and coastal environments, and the need to manage natural resources at a catchment scale.

We also acknowledge that Otago's territorial authorities are considering different options as part of the current local government reform process. Our focus is on supporting constructive, informed conversations that help achieve successful outcomes for the people and environment of Otago. We anticipate any successful outcome would include each river catchment being contained within a unitary authority.

As reform progresses, we would welcome continued engagement with Ministers and officials on how catchment-based environmental management can be effectively reflected in the new system. This should align with natural systems, not administrative boundaries, with clear accountability and consistent standards across catchments. We consider this essential to ensuring reform delivers practical, durable arrangements that work for communities and support long-term environmental outcomes.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this important national conversation and look forward to working with you and your officials as the reforms move from policy design into implementation.

Yours sincerely



Hilary Calvert
Chairperson

From: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Sent: Friday, 31 July 2026 1:45 p.m.
To: Sophie Barker; Mel Tavendale; John Glover; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin; Tamah Alley
Subject: ORC letter to the minister
Attachments: Letter from ORC Chair Hilary Calvert - Local Government Reform.eml



Hilary Calvert
Chairperson

| Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz

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From: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) [Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz]

To: s.watts@minister.govt.nz; chris.bishop@parliament.govt;

Sent: Thursday, 30 July 2026 5:06:46 p.m.

Subject: Letter from ORC Chair Hilary Calvert - Local Government Reform

Attachments: orc-logo-png-125px_6ba7d464-04aa-4e72-a0b6-65e3bcc6d940.png (6 KB); facebook-logo-blue-circle-large-transparent-png_4b54f44a-c12d-4aaf-a929-03b16184c327.png (2 KB); linkedin-circle-logo-for-signature_1a487568-4962-4633-a528-10dd42d6893d.png (2 KB); youtube-circle-logo-for-signature_cd5605db-dfce-4a18-bca9-cb6ee6f79ea3.png (1 KB); 2026 07 30 Letter to Min Watt & Min Bishop - Local Government Reform.pdf (150 KB);

Kia ora

Please find attached letter to Hon Simon Watts and Hon Chris Bishop from Chair Hilary Calvert on behalf of Otago Regional Council.

Kind regards



Hilary Calvert
Chairperson

| Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz

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Hilary Calvert
Chairperson

From: Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <Jock.Martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 31 July 2026 7:05 p.m.
To: Sophie Barker; John Glover; Melanie Tavendale; Tamah Alley; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC); Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin
Cc: Steve Hill; Peter Kelly; Sandy Graham; Michelle Morss; Richard Saunders; Alex Parmley
Subject: FW: Clutha Council Amalgamation

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Councillor Simm's assertion that this proposal is driven by "naked self-interest" is particularly troubling. It is essential that we approach this process with a commitment to collaboration and mutual respect, rather than allowing personal opinions to overshadow the collective interests of our region.

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I look forward to continuing our efforts to create a unified and effective governance structure for Otago.

RNZ email below

Cheers Jock

Jason (Jock) Martin

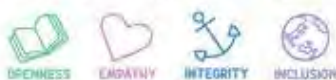
Mayor Clutha District Council

Mobile: 022 433 7813

Email: jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz



Empowering our communities to thrive and look after our spaces for future generations.



TEAM

From: Patrick 7(2)(a)
Sent: Friday, 31 July 2026 12:07 pm
To: Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <Jock.Martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>
Cc: ellen.odwyer@rnz.co.nz
Subject: Clutha Council Amalgamation

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Good afternoon Jock,

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I can be reached at this email address or on my cellphone number 7(2)(a).

Really looking forward to hearing from you,

Patrick.

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LGOIMA SR.35901 RELEASE

From: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Sent: Saturday, 1 August 2026 9:47 a.m.
To: Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin; Sophie Barker; Tamah Alley; Melanie Tavendale; John Glover
Subject: Re: Clutha Council Amalgamation

Thanks for your comments Jock.

Andrews comments are an unhelpful contribution to the conversation particularly at this point and with a personal attack flavour.

Respectful dialogue around our table is and will remain important.

What I see is a group of mayors grappling with issues they had no warning of when they were elected and a desire to work towards solutions which are in their view in the best interests of their constituents.

Good on all of you who are charged with engaging with government on these issues for your various attempts.

We are all in this together.

Whatever marks end up on pieces of paper around council boundaries if this process has taught us nothing more it has brought us to a closer understanding that we are all part of a continuous environmental and community area. Our Otago connections need nurturing and our South Island connections need strengthening.

There are opportunities available in this process for win win solutions for us all.

For increased and nuanced local voices to be heard better in Wellington, for more efficient and better services for our people giving better value to residents and ratepayers, and more accountability and transparency around particularly where decisions are made and who they are made by.

Feel proud of your work to date, and let's go with enthusiasm into helping the advisors to government understand what we believe will work well for us all.

Cheers,

Hil



Hilary Calvert

Chairperson

Elected Council Representatives

From: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz>

Sent: Friday, July 31, 2026 9:06 PM

To: Councillors <Councillors@orc.govt.nz>; Richard Saunders <Richard.Saunders@orc.govt.nz>

Subject: Fw: Clutha Council Amalgamation



Hilary Calvert

Chairperson

| Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz

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From: Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <Jock.Martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>

Sent: Friday, July 31, 2026 7:05 PM

To: Sophie Barker <sophie.barker@dcc.govt.nz>; John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>; Melanie Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz>; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <Jock.Martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>

Cc: Steve Hill <Steve.Hill@Cluthadc.govt.nz>; Peter Kelly <peter.kelly@codc.govt.nz>; Sandy Graham <sandy.graham@dcc.govt.nz>; Michelle Morss <michelle.morss@qldc.govt.nz>; Richard Saunders <Richard.Saunders@orc.govt.nz>; Alex Parmley <aparmley@waitaki.govt.nz>

Subject: FW: Clutha Council Amalgamation

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In response to the questions posed by RNZ, I believe it is crucial to engage in a fair and respectful dialogue about the future of our local governance. As we continue this conversation, I encourage all council members to put aside divisive rhetoric and work together to find solutions that benefit the entire Otago Region.

I look forward to continuing our efforts to create a unified and effective governance structure for Otago.

RNZ email below

Cheers Jock

Jason (Jock) Martin

Mayor Clutha District Council

Mobile: 022 433 7813

Email: jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz



From: Patrick 7(2)(a)
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Cc: ellen.odwyer@rnz.co.nz
Subject: Clutha Council Amalgamation

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I can be reached at this email address or on my cellphone number 7(2)(a) [REDACTED].

Really looking forward to hearing from you,

Patrick.

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LGOIMA SR.35901 RELEASE

From: John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>
Sent: Saturday, 1 August 2026 9:56 a.m.
To: Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin; Sophie Barker; Melanie Tavendale; Tamah Alley; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Cc: Steve Hill; Peter Kelly; Sandy Graham; Michelle Morss; Richard Saunders; Alex Parmley
Subject: RE: Clutha Council Amalgamation

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Good morning Jock,

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However, what I would say is that this is a foreseeable result of proposing something where there isn't agreement on the issues and the proposal may not have been adequately daylighted, discussed or consulted with DCC/QLDC Councillors and residents.

Which is precisely why I had recommended that we preserved our collective position and set up a working group with a couple of councillors from each District to work together on a function, then form approach to local government across the region.

We needed to be collaborative to get the best result for the region and my observation is that now seems to be dead in the water.

Regards, John

John Glover | Mayor

Queenstown Lakes District Council

E: John.Glover@qldc.govt.nz

P: Please call my EA, Ange Hart on +64 3 450 9131



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From: Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <Jock.Martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 31 July 2026 7:05 PM
To: Sophie Barker <sophie.barker@dcc.govt.nz>; John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>; Melanie Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; mayor@codc.govt.nz; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <hilary.calvert@orc.govt.nz>; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <Jock.Martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>
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Email: jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz



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From: Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <Jock.Martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>
Sent: Sunday, 2 August 2026 9:13 a.m.
To: John Glover; Sophie Barker; Melanie Tavendale; Tamah Alley; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Cc: Steve Hill; Peter Kelly; Sandy Graham; Michelle Morss; Richard Saunders; Alex Parmley
Subject: RE: Clutha Council Amalgamation

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Morena all, John I appreciate your viewpoint and I'm sorry to hear that you feel our efforts are "dead in the water." While you may not agree with the decisions made by the Clutha District Council and Central Otago District Council, I encourage you and your council to challenge the vision behind them.

The draft **Simplifying Local Government Head Start Outline Proposal: Unitary Council – Central Otago, Clutha, and Queenstown Lakes Councils** is a living document meant for collaboration; it is not the end of the conversation. The combined area of QLDC, CODC, and CDC spans approximately 2,500,000 hectares, with 2,460,000 hectares (98%) consisting of rural land.

It is crucial that we focus on the options that matter most, particularly the stewardship of our environment and the well-being of all our communities.

Regards Jock

Jason (Jock) Martin
Mayor Clutha District Council
 Mobile: 022 433 7813
 Email: jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz



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Cc: Steve Hill <Steve.Hill@Cluthadc.govt.nz>; Peter Kelly <peter.kelly@codc.govt.nz>; Sandy Graham <sandy.graham@dcc.govt.nz>; Michelle Morss <michelle.morss@qldc.govt.nz>; Richard Saunders <richard.saunders@orc.govt.nz>; Alex Parmley <aparmley@waitaki.govt.nz>

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Great to see everyone today, I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with the recent comments made by Dunedin City Councillor Andrew Simms regarding my position on the proposals for amalgamation in the Otago region. His remarks, as reported by RNZ, reflect a misunderstanding of the intentions behind my proposal and dismiss the genuine efforts of smaller councils to advocate for their communities.

Councillor Simms described my proposal as "quite an aggressive stance by a couple of small councils," and referred to it as "a ridiculous notion" that "nobody was taking seriously." These comments are not only disparaging but also undermine the collaborative spirit we should strive for in our discussions about local governance. It is disappointing to see an elected member of the Dunedin City Council resort to such rhetoric, which does little to foster constructive dialogue.

I want to clarify that my proposal to incorporate areas like Taieri and Strath Taieri into a new Otago Unitary

Authority is motivated by the desire to create a governance structure that better serves the diverse needs of all our rural communities. This is not an attempt to undermine Dunedin's significance; rather, it is an effort to build a cohesive model that recognises the strengths of each area while ensuring that rural voices are heard. Councillor Simm's assertion that this proposal is driven by "naked self-interest" is particularly troubling. It is essential that we approach this process with a commitment to collaboration and mutual respect, rather than allowing personal opinions to overshadow the collective interests of our region.

In response to the questions posed by RNZ, I believe it is crucial to engage in a fair and respectful dialogue about the future of our local governance. As we continue this conversation, I encourage all council members to put aside divisive rhetoric and work together to find solutions that benefit the entire Otago Region.

I look forward to continuing our efforts to create a unified and effective governance structure for Otago.

RNZ email below

Cheers Jock

Jason (Jock) Martin

Mayor Clutha District Council

Mobile: 022 433 7813

Email: jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz



From: Patrick 7(2)(a)
Sent: Friday, 31 July 2026 12:07 pm
To: Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <Jock.Martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>
Cc: ellen.odwyer@rnz.co.nz
Subject: Clutha Council Amalgamation

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Good afternoon Jock,

My name is Patrick 7(2)(a) and I am working on a story for RNZ about the proposals for the Otago region regarding upcoming amalgamation of councils. I just tried to ring but was unable to reach you so I've put my questions in written form for you to respond below.

I came across comments from **Dunedin City Councillor Andrew Simms** where he was critical of comments you made in the ODT about the proposals for amalgamation. I have put the link to the post below.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1PLr8vL7jq/>

Do you think these comments are a fair representation of your position?

Is there anything you'd like to correct him on?

I then rang Andrew earlier this morning. He said his preferred option would be for all of Otago to exist under one unitary council.

What would be your concerns under such a system?

Why was Dunedin excluded in the proposal you outlined?

What will you do if the government rejects your preferred proposal?

I also wanted to give you the chance to respond to some of the comments Andrew made in that phone call.

He described this proposal as "**quite an aggressive stance by a couple of small councils**", he also said it was "**a ridiculous notion**", and that "**nobody was taking it seriously**". He also claimed it was **motivated by naked self interest**.

I can be reached at this email address or on my cellphone number **7(2)(a)**.

Really looking forward to hearing from you,

Patrick.

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From: Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <Jock.Martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>
Sent: Sunday, 2 August 2026 12:51 p.m.
To: Peter Kelly; Michelle Morss; john.glover@qldc.govt.nz; Richard Saunders; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Cc: Tamah Alley; Steve Hill; Saskia Righarts
Subject: RE: First Draft SLG Proposal QLDC-CODC-CDC
Attachments: Mountains to the Sea. The Why.docx

[Caution: External Email] This email originated from outside ORC. Do not click links or open attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe. Use the Phish Alert Button to report this email if you think it is suspicious.

Kia ora,

Thankyou Peter & Saskia for the speedy draft I will catchup with Steve re the detail, please see attached my “**rural hat**” thoughts in the meantime.

Cheers Jock

Jason (Jock) Martin
Mayor Clutha District Council
 Mobile: 022 433 7813
 Email: jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz



From: Peter Kelly <Peter.Kelly@codc.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 31 July 2026 3:32 pm
To: Michelle Morss <michelle.morss@qldc.govt.nz>; john.glover@qldc.govt.nz; Richard Saunders <richard.saunders@orc.govt.nz>; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz>
Cc: Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <Jock.Martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>; mayor@codc.govt.nz; Steve Hill <Steve.Hill@Cluthadc.govt.nz>; Saskia Righarts <Saskia.Righarts@codc.govt.nz>
Subject: First Draft SLG Proposal QLDC-CODC-CDC

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Kia ora koutou,

Here is the first draft as promised. Comments or thoughts most welcome.

Ngā mihi

Peter

Peter Kelly

Chief Executive Officer | Te Tumu Whakarae



+64 27 360 8736

Peter.Kelly@codc.govt.nz

1 Dunorling Street, Alexandra 9320

www.codc.govt.nz

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Mountains to the Sea, “The Why”

Otago's economy features a sharp geographic split between high-density tourist hubs and massive, sparsely populated pastoral lands.

The integrated economic summary of the **Otago region** below combines its rural agrarian powerhouses with the services-driven engine of the **Queenstown-Lakes District**. (2,500,000 hectares, with 2,460,000 hectares (98%) consisting of rural land)

- **Animal Population:** 3.85 million sheep and 300,000 beef cattle.
- **Human Population:** 253,900 residents.
- **Sheep-to-Human Ratio:** 15 to 1.
- **Cattle-to-Human Ratio:** 1.2 to 1.
- **Total Animal Density:** Over **16** four-legged livestock animals per person.
- **National Standing:** Otago ranks 3rd nationally for total sheep population.

Macro Economic Breakdown:

The entire Otago region generates an annual economic output of **\$19.07 billion**, accounting for **4.4% of New Zealand's total national GDP**.

- **The Primary Sector (\$1.96 Billion):** Makes up 10.3% of the regional economy, nearly double the national primary sector average of 5.8%. This is split into **Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing** (\$1.34 billion) [1, 2, 3] and **Mining** (\$623.3 million, which accounts for 20% of New Zealand's entire national mining output).
- **Downstream Processing (\$365.3 Million):** Added value from regional meat works and dairy plants.
- **Export Revenue:** Over 70% of Otago's export revenue is fuelled by dairy (\$933M), meat (\$786.6M), and fruit (\$516.7M).
- **The Commercial Service Shift:** Driven heavily by Queenstown, commercial services, construction, and tourism infrastructure comprise the remainder of the region's wealth.

📍 District Comparison: Pastoral vs. Tourism Economies

The table below highlights how wealth generation shifts from raw physical commodities to experience-based tourism as you move across the region.

District	Total District GDP	Primary Industry GDP	Share of Local Economy	Dominant Economic Driver
Queenstown-Lakes	\$4,790 million	~\$65 million	1.35%	Tourism, Accommodation, & Construction
Clutha District	\$3,069 million	\$1,299 million	42.3%	Pastoral Dairy, Meat, & Forestry
Central Otago	\$2,000 million	\$319.5 million	16.0%	Viticulture & Premium Horticulture

🏠 Queenstown-Lakes District: The Experience Engine:

- **Service Dominated:** Driven heavily by global tourism, **Accommodation and Food Services** alone contribute **\$751.6 million (16.2%)** to its local economy.
- **Rapid Infrastructure:** **Construction (\$546 million)** and **Real Estate (\$419.4 million)** make up over 20% of local GDP to support rapid population and resort growth.
- **Decoupled from Farming:** Topography and high land values mean the primary sector contributes less than 1.4% to local economic output.

🚜 Clutha District: The Pastoral Engine:

- **Farming Dominated:** Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing represent **42.3%** of Clutha's entire economy.

- **Industrial Processing:** Feeds major downstream regional manufacturing hubs, including Silver Fern Farms (Fineland meat works) and Fonterra (Stirling dairy factory).

 Central Otago District: The Horticulture Hub:

- **High-Value Orchards:** Relies on a highly specialized mix of **premium viticulture (wine)** and stone fruit horticulture.

LGOIMA SR.35901 RELEASE

From: John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 3 August 2026 7:19 p.m.
To: Tamah Alley; jock.martin
Cc: Sophie Barker; Mel Tavendale; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Subject: amalgamation

[Caution: External Email] This email originated from outside ORC. Do not click links or open attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe. Use the Phish Alert Button to report this email if you think it is suspicious.

Good evening Tamah & Jock,

I'm aware that our decision today did not land where you had hoped it would and that there are likely unknown consequences for all of our councils going forward. I imagine feelings are as warm as the southerly blasting through this evening.

The irony that we're all trying to do the best for our communities is not lost on me when 'best' has so many different interpretations around the region to the point that we could not, collectively, describe a model that all could agree to.

Which is why I'd hoped we could have made time for further conversations and had confidence in ourselves (and others) that we would have landed an agreed outcome. One person might have the vision and insight to identify what that looks like, but unless we take everyone on the journey to understand that vision, we lose our followers.

We are where we are. It might be that two different head start proposals coming from Otago puts us in the too difficult basket for MCERT, and unless Ministers want to make an example of us, we might all be back around a table having a go at this again.

If that is the case, I'd love to think we would have the time to have the conversations we needed to have prior to today, fully involve our councillors and get an agreed outcome.

It's clear that emotions and feelings are running high – we're a long way from being Jocks "tight five" which saddens me. Happy to re-group at any stage if there is appetite to do so. Appreciate that the outcomes for Gore & Waitaki are still uncertain so who knows where to from here.

Stay snug .

Regards, John

John Glover | Mayor

Queenstown Lakes District Council

E: John.Glover@qldc.govt.nz

P: Please call my EA, Ange Hart on +64 3 450 9131



Please note that all appointments scheduled with the Mayor are publicly available and published on our website. You can view the calendar here: [QLDC - Mayor John Glover](#)

From: Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 4 August 2026 9:26 a.m.
To: John Glover; jock.martin
Cc: Sophie Barker; Mel Tavendale; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Subject: Re: amalgamation

Categories: LG Reform

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Morning OMF,

I think the irony is that you've pursued effectively what we've proposed, but have said Clutha is not welcome and directed them to go somewhere they didn't want to. It feels a bit like it's two proposals cobbled together so that Dunedin meets the criteria to put in a proposal. (Sorry Sophie, it's not personal and I know you were keen on Dunedin Unitary but no ability to put that forward at this point)

While my councillors have been fully involved the whole way through, I understand that is not the case for every council table.

I personally feel we're not a long way from Jock's five. This is politics. There are no hard feelings — we're all under the pump to get something done to the best of our ability.

Given how many fellow elected members and CE's have passed away in the last few weeks I am very mindful of the huge amount of pressure everyone is under. It's a shame it's not a joint sector meeting at the end of the week but see you soon Jock and Mel.

Sophie - if you're free for an 0845 coffee tomorrow let me know, I'm popping down ☺

We're all still friends — "feel the awahi" as Jock would say.

Cheers,
 Tamah

Tamah Alley

Mayor - Zone 6 Chair



☎ +64 27 662 2609
 ✉ mayor@codc.govt.nz
 📍 Alexandra 9320
 🌐 www.codc.govt.nz

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From: John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, August 3, 2026 7:18 PM
To: Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>; jock.martin <jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>
Cc: Sophie Barker <sophie.barker@dcc.govt.nz>; Mel Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <hilary.calvert@orc.govt.nz>
Subject: amalgamation

Good evening Tamah & Jock,

I'm aware that our decision today did not land where you had hoped it would and that there are likely unknown

consequences for all of our councils going forward. I imagine feelings are as warm as the southerly blasting through this evening.

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Stay snug .

Regards, John

John Glover | Mayor

Queenstown Lakes District Council

E: John.Glover@qldc.govt.nz

P: Please call my EA, Ange Hart on +64 3 450 9131



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From: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Sent: Tuesday, 4 August 2026 9:43 a.m.
To: Tamah Alley; John Glover; jock.martin
Cc: Sophie Barker; Mel Tavendale
Subject: Re: amalgamation

Hi OMF- hopefully not OMG!

Warren and co will now have the difficult task of advising the ministers. They will be trying in the next while to see what can be made of what they see.

What they will see from Otago is everyone wanting to give feedback into what is important in each local area, and a genuine desire to engage.

They will see pieces from both proposals which will be helpful in the overall way forward. They will see what we understand to be the challenges.

They will look at how local voices and scale and the environment can all be accommodated for the best.

Otago is giving them the information which will help, and these interactions will continue.

As Winston Churchill once said

'Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end.

But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.'

Cheers,

Hil



Hilary Calvert
Chairperson

| Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz

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From: Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 04 August 2026 07:26:09
To: John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>; jock.martin <jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>
Cc: Sophie Barker <sophie.barker@dcc.govt.nz>; Mel Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: amalgamation

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Morning OMF,

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Sophie - if you're free for an 0845 coffee tomorrow let me know, I'm popping down ☺

We're all still friends — "feel the awahi" as Jock would say.

Cheers,
Tamah

Tamah Alley

Mayor - Zone 6 Chair



+64 27 662 2609

mayor@codc.govt.nz

Alexandra 9320

www.codc.govt.nz

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From: John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>

Sent: Monday, August 3, 2026 7:18 PM

To: Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>; jock.martin <jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>

Cc: Sophie Barker <sophie.barker@dcc.govt.nz>; Mel Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <hilary.calvert@orc.govt.nz>

Subject: amalgamation

Good evening Tamah & Jock,

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The irony that we're all trying to do the best for our communities is not lost on me when 'best' has so many different interpretations around the region to the point that we could not, collectively, describe a model that all could agree to.

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If that is the case, I'd love to think we would have the time to have the conversations we needed to have prior to today, fully involve our councillors and get an agreed outcome.

It's clear that emotions and feelings are running high – we're a long way from being Jocks "tight five" which saddens me. Happy to re-group at any stage if there is appetite to do so. Appreciate that the outcomes for Gore & Waitaki are still uncertain so who knows where to from here.

Stay snug .

Regards, John

John Glover | Mayor

Queenstown Lakes District Council

E: John.Glover@qldc.govt.nz

P: Please call my EA, Ange Hart on +64 3 450 9131



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From: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Sent: Thursday, 6 August 2026 3:56 p.m.
To: Ruby Shaw; Mel Tavendale; Tamah Alley; John Glover; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin; Sophie Barker
Subject: Re: Amalgamation

Hi Ruby.

My reflections on the process are as follows. They are not the views of the ORC, merely comments from my personal observations of the process.

With the benefit of hindsight the process so far could have been better progressed by the government asking each council what they considered important to their people, in as much detail as they feel would be useful.

The government officials could then have attempted to create unitary councils which best appeared to meet the needs as expressed, together with the wishes of government.

The boundaries which came out of that process could then have been finessed with further local input.

Asking mayors who have promises to act in the best interests (only) of their patch was likely to be fraught.

But we are family in Otago. We share a port. We share a general approach to central government. We will make it work.

Having this initial process last longer would just have been troubling for longer.

The officials in Wellington who will advise the government at least have something to work with if the headstarts go in as anticipated.

The present government and any new government will go ahead with this. It is just a matter of whether each individual council makes the changes as government decrees in 2 years or 5.

Uncertainty for longer will not help those who are most affected.

Our council has provided resources to help the mayors in their deliberations. You would need to ask our CE Richard Saunders about the details.

Cheers,

Hilary



Hilary Calvert
Chairperson



| Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz

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From: Ruby Shaw <ruby.shaw@alliedmedia.co.nz>

Sent: Thursday, 06 August 2026 10:22:58

To: Mel Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>; John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>; Sophie Barker <sophie.barker@dcc.govt.nz>; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz>

Subject: Amalgamation

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Morning,

As the three-month period for merger proposals comes to a close, I wondered if you had any reaction or reflections on the process so far?

Some councillors have said councils may have to repair relationships which have been broken during the process.

Do you believe relationships have been damaged through this process? In what way?

Do you anticipate having to repair them down the track?

Why it is important to repair/maintain these good relationships with neighbours?

In the past few days, we've reported comments from a few elected officials in Otago, most recently Ben Bell, critical of the speed and scope of the amalgamation reform, on top of other reform, such as RMA changes. Has developing head start proposals cost your council additional time, council resources or money? Could you put a figure on how much this has cost your council?

How much did Otago Mayoral Forum spend on reports and surveys?

It seems Otago's five councils are on track to submit three different head start proposals.

What should residents make of that?

What do you think the government might make of that?

Do you anticipate any of the applications will be progressed?

How do Otago's efforts compare to councils elsewhere in New Zealand?

Anything else to add?

My deadline is 1pm tomorrow (Friday),
Kā mihi,
Ruby

Ruby Shaw

Reporter

Otago Daily Times

M: 022 014 4125

P: (03) 477 4760 Ext: 8162

A: 52 Stuart Street

PO Box 517

Dunedin

9016

W: www.odt.co.nz

 **Otago Daily Times**

From: Mel Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 7 August 2026 9:43 a.m.
To: Ruby Shaw; Tamah Alley; John Glover; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin; Sophie Barker; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Subject: Re: Amalgamation

[Caution: External Email] This email originated from outside ORC. Do not click links or open attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe. Use the Phish Alert Button to report this email if you think it is suspicious.

Good morning Ruby,

Mayors across the country have worked to get the best outcomes for their communities. In the short timeframes, it has been challenging to work through the necessary relationship building and detail to do this as well as we would have liked. It has been heartening to see the efforts put in, and the ongoing conversations that are happening around amalgamation.

We are all advocating for our communities, but success looks different from different angles. We all genuinely get on well; we are all professionals and will continue working together for the best outcomes for our communities.

Head Start timeframes have put a huge amount of pressure on our work programme. Waitaki have concerns about standing up work on spatial plans in both Otago and Canterbury, and the increased cost and resource required for that. We would like this process to allow for future arrangements and for a single spatial plan process in Waitaki. There is plenty of other examples like this, which will need to be worked through in detailed design. This needs to be meaningful change in the way we operate, not just a bolting together of councils.

Resource for the Otago Mayoral Forum work was provided by ORC.

Waitaki are entering a proposal that we believe will deliver the best outcomes for our community, including addressing catchment and local voice concerns. The Otago Mayoral Forum provided extra information to help inform individual Council decisions, but the decision always sat with Councils. Each Council in Otago have made what they believe to be the best decision for their communities. The ultimate decision sits with government, based on the process to date, it is very hard to pre-empt the outcome.

Kind regards

Mel Tavendale
 Mayor

Waitaki District Council
 +64 3 433 0300 | mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz
 20 Thames Street | Private Bag 50058
 Ōamaru 9444 | New Zealand
www.waitaki.govt.nz



From: Ruby Shaw <ruby.shaw@alliedmedia.co.nz>

Sent: Thursday, August 6, 2026 12:22 PM

To: Mel Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>; John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>; Sophie Barker <sophie.barker@dcc.govt.nz>; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz>

Subject: Amalgamation

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What should residents make of that?

What do you think the government might make of that?

Do you anticipate any of the applications will be progressed?

How do Otago's efforts compare to councils elsewhere in New Zealand?

Anything else to add?

My deadline is 1pm tomorrow (Friday),

Kā mihi,

Ruby

Ruby Shaw

Reporter

Otago Daily Times

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 **Otago Daily Times**

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LGOIMA SR.35901 RELEASE

From: Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 7 August 2026 10:19 a.m.
To: Mel Tavendale; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC); jock.martin; John Glover; Sophie Barker
Subject: Fwd: Amalgamation

Categories: Media, LG Reform

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Hi Ruby,
 Here is a response from me - attached to your questions below.

Cheers
 Tamah

Tamah Alley
Mayor - Zone 6 Chair



+64 27 662 2609
 mayor@codc.govt.nz
 Alexandra 9320
 www.codc.govt.nz

If you have received this email and any attachments to it in error, please take no action based on it, copy it or show it to anyone.
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Subject: Re: Amalgamation

Morning,
 As the three-month period for merger proposals comes to a close, I wondered if you had any reaction or reflections on the process so far?
 It's been an intense three months and a steep learning curve for everyone involved. We've gone from a standing start to developing proposals about the future of local government on a very compressed timeframe. While positions have evolved along the way, Otago's mayors have continued talking and working through the issues together, which reflects the strength of the relationships across our region.

Some councillors have said councils may have to repair relationships which have been broken during the process.
 Do you believe relationships have been damaged through this process? In what way?
 Do you anticipate having to repair them down the track?
 Why it is important to repair/maintain these good relationships with neighbours?

I don't think relationships have been broken, but they have been tested. That's understandable when councils are weighing different priorities and futures under significant time pressure. The reality is that Otago mayors will continue working together on regional issues long after these proposals are decided. Maintaining strong relationships matters because our communities are connected, and many of the challenges we face are shared.

In the past few days, we've reported comments from a few elected officials in Otago, most recently Ben Bell, critical of the speed and scope of the amalgamation reform, on top of other reform, such as RMA changes. Has developing head start proposals cost your council additional time, council resources or money?
Could you put a figure on how much this has cost your council?

Developing our proposal has required additional staff time and resources, but we're fortunate to have a capable team that has adapted quickly to take this work on.

The scale of reform has been significant, touching almost every aspect of what councils do. Responding to these changes has required substantial staff effort alongside delivering our core responsibilities, including Long Term Plan work. Once this process was set in motion, our focus became making the strongest possible case for Central Otago within the timeframe provided. That's where we've directed our energy

How much did Otago Mayoral Forum spend on reports and surveys?
You would need to get the exact figure from the Mayoral Forum lead (Mayor Mel)

It seems Otago's five councils are on track to submit three different head start proposals.
What should residents make of that?
What do you think the government might make of that?

Every council has approached this process by asking what's best for its own community, so it's not surprising we've arrived at different conclusions. Otago's councils are diverse in their geography, growth pressures, priorities and aspirations, and a one-size-fits-all answer was never guaranteed.

What residents should take from that is that councils have engaged seriously with the task and put forward proposals they believe best reflect their communities' interests, and ability to contribute in the future. As for what Government makes of it, that's ultimately a matter for them. Our responsibility has been to present the strongest possible case for Central Otago, and we've done that.

Do you anticipate any of the applications will be progressed?
That's ultimately a decision for Government, so I don't want to speculate on outcomes. What I can say is that we've put forward a proposal we believe is well considered, meets the objectives of the process, and reflects what's best for our community. We'll continue to advocate strongly for that case as the Government works through its decisions.

How do Otago's efforts compare to councils elsewhere in New Zealand?

Having spent today with rural and provincial leaders from around the country in Wellington, I can say with confidence that this process hasn't been smooth sailing anywhere. I think councils here have approached the challenge thoughtfully and in good faith.

Anything else to add?

Whatever happens with the Head Start applications, our focus remains the same: protecting Central Otago's identity, keeping communities connected to local decision-making, and ensuring a sustainable future for ratepayers. Those priorities have shaped our response to this process and will continue to guide us as we work through whatever comes next.

My deadline is 1pm tomorrow (Friday),
Kā mihi,
Ruby

<image001.png>

Ruby Shaw

Reporter

Otago Daily Times

M: 022 014 4125

P: (03) 477 4760 Ext: 8162

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W: www.odt.co.nz

From: John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>
Sent: Saturday, 8 August 2026 8:30 a.m.
To: Tamah Alley; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin; Tamah Alley; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Subject: FW: Head Start proposal - Dunedin City Council and Queenstown Lakes District Council
Attachments: Head Start Outline Proposal - Dunedin and Queenstown Lakes .pdf; Head Start Proposal -joint cover letter from the Mayors of Dunedin and Queenstown Lakes (BK).pdf

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Morning all,

I've been out and about and largely off grid the last couple of days. I'm forwarding these to you as am not sure if anyone else has thought to do so.

Cheers,

John

John Glover | Mayor

Queenstown Lakes District Council

E: John.Glover@qldc.govt.nz

P: Please call my EA, Ange Hart on +64 3 450 9131



Please note that all appointments scheduled with the Mayor are publicly available and published on our website. You can view the calendar here: [QLDC - Mayor John Glover](#)

From: Danielle Tolson <Danielle.Tolson@dcc.govt.nz>
Sent: Friday, 7 August 2026 4:52 PM
To: Office Of The Mayor <Office.Mayor@dcc.govt.nz>; Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>; John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>; Ange Hart <ange.hart@qldc.govt.nz>
Cc: Gina.Huakau <Gina.Huakau@dcc.govt.nz>; Nicola Morand <Nicola.Morand@dcc.govt.nz>; Berkay Kocak <Berkay.Kocak@dcc.govt.nz>; Michelle Morss <Michelle.Morss@qldc.govt.nz>
Subject: FW: Head Start proposal - Dunedin City Council and Queenstown Lakes District Council

Kia ora koutou

Please find below the submission email to MCERT for the joint Head Start proposal, which has been sent today.

Kā mihi
 Danielle

From: Danielle Tolson

Sent: Friday, 7 August 2026 4:48 p.m.

To: 'SimplifyingLocalGovernment@mcert.govt.nz' <SimplifyingLocalGovernment@mcert.govt.nz>

Cc: Berkay Kocak <Berkay.Kocak@dcc.govt.nz>; Gina Huakau <Gina.Huakau@dcc.govt.nz>; Nicola Morand <Nicola.Morand@dcc.govt.nz>; Michelle Morss <Michelle.Morss@qldc.govt.nz>

Subject: Head Start proposal - Dunedin City Council and Queenstown Lakes District Council

Kia ora

Please find attached a joint proposal to Head Start from Dunedin City Council (DCC) and Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC), along with a covering letter from Mayor Sophie Barker and Mayor John Glover.

If you have any questions about this proposal, please contact me at this email address, or through the phone numbers below.

I am also the contact person for any queries specific to Dunedin.

For any queries specific to Queenstown Lakes, please contact:

Michelle Morss

Interim Chief Executive

Queenstown Lakes District Council

Phone: 03 450 1743

Email: michelle.morss@qldc.govt.nz

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this proposal.

Kā mihi

Danielle Tolson

Danielle Tolson (Ngāti Pākehā Finnish Saami. Her/she/ia)

KAITĀTARI - KAUPAPA HERE | POLICY ANALYST - CORPORATE POLICY GROUP

P 03 477 4000 | **DD** 03 474 3320 | **E** danielle.tolson@dcc.govt.nz

Dunedin City Council, 50 The Octagon, Dunedin

PO Box 5045, Dunedin 9054

New Zealand

www.dunedin.govt.nz





Head Start Outline Proposal

Coastal Otago and Inland Otago Unitary Authorities

Executive summary

This proposal establishes two unitary authorities within Otago, supported by a shared regional services structure for functions requiring scale, specialist capability and regional coordination.

The proposal builds on the strengths of Otago's two largest centres - Dunedin and Queenstown - which together provide the region's largest concentration of population, infrastructure capability, planning expertise, regulatory capacity, specialist services, educational institutions, economic activity and investment attraction.

The proposal also builds directly on the agreed Otago Central Lakes (OCL) Regional Deal. The Regional Deal recognises the increasingly integrated nature of the inland economy and provides a strong platform for future growth, infrastructure investment and governance integration.

The proposal captures many of the benefits of two unitary authorities through shared regional services. It establishes a practical pathway to greater integration while maintaining momentum for reform. The proposal is deliberately evolutionary rather than disruptive. It simplifies governance, strengthens regional capability and future proofs options for the region.

The proposal creates:

Coastal Otago Unitary Authority

- Dunedin City
- Clutha District
- Waitaki District (subject to Waitaki's final boundaries)

Inland Otago Unitary Authority

- Queenstown Lakes District
- Central Otago District

Regional functions currently delivered by the Otago Regional Council would be delivered through a shared regional services structure operating across both unitary authorities.

The proposal recognises that catchments provide an enduring framework for integrated planning, investment and stewardship across Otago.

This proposal simplifies governance, strengthens capability, supports planning reform, reduces duplication and creates a pathway for future consolidation.

We recognise that Otago's needs are diverse, while at the same time the region is becoming increasingly interconnected. We propose that two unitary authorities, supported by shared regional services, provide the best balance of scale, capability, local voice, regional integration, and future flexibility.

Strategic case for change

Otago's current governance arrangements reflect historic boundaries rather than modern communities, infrastructure networks, catchments, growth pressures and service needs.

The region currently supports multiple councils, governance structures and service delivery models across a relatively small population base.

Councils face rising infrastructure costs, growing regulatory obligations, workforce constraints and increasing competition for specialist capability.

Reform provides an opportunity to work in partnership with Ngāi Tahu, reduce duplication and support the new planning system. It also, subject to detailed analysis, has the potential to:

- strengthen capability
- improve financial sustainability
- support economic growth
- better align governance with communities and catchments
- create authorities better equipped to respond to future challenges.

A single Otago-wide unitary authority could be a future option. Achieving this, however, would require significant further work to ensure effective governance, fair representation, strong Treaty relationships, efficient service delivery, appropriate regional functions, and broad community support.

Two unitary authorities for Otago

The proposed model establishes:

- an Inland Otago Unitary Authority centred on Queenstown Lakes and Central Otago
- a Coastal Otago Unitary Authority centred on Dunedin and Clutha, with Waitaki's future position to be determined
- shared regional services delivering functions best undertaken at regional scale.

The model simplifies governance, builds capability and preserves future options. This proposal assumes existing boundary lines, but this would be addressed during detailed design.

Leveraging Otago's strengths

The proposal is centred on two authorities working together to deliver on shared regional priorities.

Together they provide the region's greatest concentration of:

- planning capability
- infrastructure expertise
- regulatory capability
- specialist professional services
- educational and research institutions
- economic activity
- population growth
- investment attraction.

The proposed structure allows both centres to support surrounding districts while retaining strong local representation and accountability. The proposal utilises the strengths that already exist within the region and makes them available across Otago.

Across the two proposed authorities there are strengths in both the urban and rural economies.

Urban Otago

Otago's urban centres are key drivers of the regional economy and provide services that support the region. They are home to major tertiary education and healthcare institutions, attract significant visitor activity through tourism, and are increasingly contributing to economic growth through a developing tech sector. Together, these industries support employment, innovation, and investment, strengthening Otago's role as a regional hub.

A two-unitary-authority model would provide a stronger foundation for coordinating growth, infrastructure, housing, and economic development across Otago's urban areas. With greater scale and capability, the new authorities would be better positioned to support the continued success of the education, healthcare, tourism, and technology sectors while delivering more integrated planning and services for communities.

Rural Otago

Otago's rural economy is a defining feature of the region, underpinning local communities, employment, exports, and infrastructure investment. Sheep and beef farming remain central to land use across much of inland and northern Otago, while dairy production is a major contributor in areas such as North Otago and parts of Central Otago. The region has also developed internationally recognised viticulture industries, particularly in Central Otago, alongside a growing horticultural sector producing cherries, apples, apricots and other high-value crops. Together, these industries depend on effective management of water resources, transport networks, biosecurity, environmental regulation, and workforce planning across council boundaries.

A two-unitary-authority model would provide an opportunity to align governance more closely with the distinct characteristics and needs of Otago's rural areas while strengthening strategic decision-making at scale. Two unitary authorities may be better placed to coordinate land-use planning, freshwater management, climate resilience, rural infrastructure, and economic development across connected catchments and productive landscapes. This would help ensure the needs of farming, viticulture and horticulture communities are considered holistically, while providing the capacity and resources needed to support the continued growth and resilience of Otago's primary production sector.

Inland Otago

The Inland Otago Unitary Authority would comprise:

- Queenstown Lakes District
- Central Otago District.

This proposal builds directly on the agreed *Queenstown Lakes–Central Otago Regional Deal*.

The Regional Deal recognises common challenges relating to growth, housing, transport, tourism, infrastructure investment and economic development. The two councils are already increasingly planning and investing together.

The proposed unitary authority formalises and strengthens that existing direction. It provides a potential governance structure for a partnership that is already recognised as central to the future development of Inland Otago.

Coastal Otago

The Coastal Otago Unitary Authority would comprise:

- Dunedin City
- Clutha District



Coastal Otago has strong economic, transport, education, health, infrastructure and service connections across the coastal corridor and lower catchments.

Dunedin's scale, institutional capability and regional service capacity provide a strong foundation for a Coastal Otago authority and a regional shared service model.

Waitaki's future position is yet to be determined.

Waitaki

Waitaki District Council has indicated a preference to explore an amalgamation option with South Canterbury. If this option does not proceed, Waitaki's future alignment within Otago will require reconsideration.

Major catchments, environmental systems and regional functions extend across existing administrative boundaries and require integrated management. There is potential for parts of Waitaki District, including the Waihemo Ward, to align with a Coastal Otago model.

Waitaki is identified as a key matter to be addressed through the detailed design phase of this proposal.

Regional capability and shared services

This proposal focuses on building regional capability, not simply amalgamating existing councils. Its core purpose is to retain, strengthen and deploy specialist capability across Otago at a regional scale.

It would establish shared and co-ordinated functions that would be managed across the two unitaries, creating opportunities where scale creates value.

Regional functions could include:

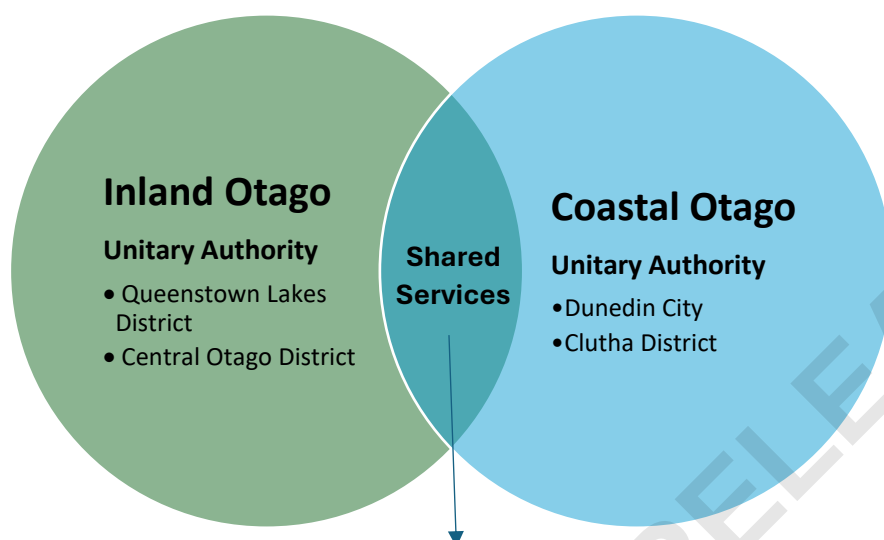
- regional spatial planning
- natural environment planning
- catchment management
- flood protection
- biosecurity
- environmental monitoring
- public transport planning
- regional transport coordination
- science and technical services
- growing specialist capabilities
- other agreed regional functions.

Governance and delivery arrangements for shared services would be developed during detailed design. For example, a CCO model may provide a single regional organisation with the scale and specialist capability to deliver shared services efficiently while remaining accountable to the participating unitary authorities.

We propose:

Regional functions should largely continue to be delivered at regional scale, even where democratic governance is organised through two subregional unitary authorities.

Two Unitary Authorities



The shared services could potentially be delivered through a Council-Controlled Organisation (CCO) or devolved to local unitaries. Examples include:

- regional spatial planning
- natural environment planning
- catchment management
- flood protection
- biosecurity
- environmental monitoring
- public transport planning
- regional transport coordination
- science and technical services

Figure 1: Proposed Unitary Authorities in Otago

Government Priorities

Supporting the new planning system

The proposal strongly supports implementation of the Government's proposed planning reforms.

The current structure requires planning, infrastructure and environmental management functions to be coordinated across multiple organisations.

The proposed model reduces the number of planning authorities while retaining a coordinated regional capability.

It would provide:

- integrated regional spatial planning
- coordinated infrastructure investment planning
- stronger catchment-based environmental management
- consistent science and monitoring capability
- improved alignment of transport, land use and infrastructure planning

- fewer planning organisations
- clearer accountability.

Sharing regional services is particularly important because it ensures that regional planning, environmental management and catchment functions continue to operate through a coordinated regional framework.

Economies of scale and service rationalisation

The proposal enables financial resilience while preserving local accountability.

This could benefit:

- procurement leverage
- specialist capability
- organisational resilience
- financial sustainability
- infrastructure planning
- delivery capability.

Existing service delivery arrangements vary across Otago, including water services.

The proposal leaves current delivery decisions in place and avoids predetermining future service models.

The detailed design phase will focus on opportunities for greater coordination, shared capability, service rationalisation and efficiency where these would improve outcomes for communities.

Ngāi Tahu and Treaty Settlements

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu has described the Head Start reforms as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to modernise local government structures and develop governance arrangements that are fit for the future of Te Waipounamu communities. This proposal is consistent with that objective and seeks to better align future governance structures with catchments, regional capability and enduring partnership arrangements.

The proposal recognises Ngāi Tahu as mana whenua and acknowledges the four principles identified by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu:

- Local government boundaries should align with the Ngāi Tahu takiwā boundary.
- River catchments should be the primary determinant of unitary council boundaries within the Ngāi Tahu takiwā.
- A joint takiwā-wide entity should be established to provide shared back-office and specialist functions on behalf of new unitary councils.
- Future arrangements should incorporate genuine cooperation between councils and Papatipu Rūnanga.

The proposal aligns strongly with the principles relating to catchment-based governance, the establishment of a shared regional services model providing specialist capability across the region, and genuine cooperation with Papatipu Rūnanga. The question of how future governance boundaries relate to the Ngāi Tahu takiwā is identified as a key matter for detailed design and engagement with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and affected Papatipu Rūnanga.

The proposed shared regional services model supports integrated planning and environmental management at the catchment scale, creates a regional centre of expertise for planning, science,



environmental management and other specialist services, and provides a structure capable of supporting stronger regional engagement with Ngāi Tahu and Papatipu Rūnanga.

Detailed design would be undertaken in partnership with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and affected Papatipu Rūnanga to ensure Treaty settlement arrangements continue with equivalent effect and that future governance arrangements appropriately reflect mana whenua aspirations.

Local voice and representation

Reform should protect local voice while creating a simpler and stronger local government system. Local accountability would remain central to detailed design.

The detailed design phase would consider:

- wards
- community boards
- local boards
- place-based governance arrangements
- rural representation
- mana whenua participation mechanisms
- other forms of local democratic representation.

We propose:

Regional matters should be managed at regional scale. Local matters should remain close to the communities affected by them.

Closing Statement

This proposal provides a practical and achievable pathway to reform. It is the preferred model for detailed investigation. It builds regional capability, aligns with the new planning system, and creates a model for future collaboration that will benefit local communities. It also addresses the critical matters that must be resolved before Otago can responsibly determine its final structure: formal public consultation, Ngāi Tahu partnership, catchments, Waitaki, planning reform, service delivery, local voice, financial implications and long-term governance scale. As this work progresses, we remain committed to working with Otago mayors and neighbouring regions to further consider boundary and catchment arrangements.

Indicative Timeline (October 2026 – March 2027)

If accepted in principle by Cabinet in September 2026, participating councils will establish a working group to oversee development of the final proposal. The indicative timeline will run from October 2026 to March 2027 and culminate in submission of a final proposal to Government in March 2027. Cabinet consideration of the final proposal is expected in May 2027.

October – November 2026

Community Engagement

- Commence engagement with communities, businesses and stakeholders.

Boundaries and Waitaki

- Commence assessment of Waitaki alignment options, including Waihemo Ward.
- Analyse catchment, service delivery, representation and community of interest implications.
- Define the coastal / inland boundaries.
- Draught special plan modelling and boundary mapping.

Ngāi Tahu Partnership

- Establish partnership process with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and affected Papatipu Rūnanga.
- Commence review of Treaty settlement implications.

Regional Services

- Confirm design principles for shared regional services.
- Confirm the scope of regional functions.

November – December 2026

Governance and Representation

- Develop representation and local governance options.
- Assess ward, community board and local board models.

January – February 2027

Planning Reform and Catchment Management

- Finalise regional spatial planning arrangements.
- Finalise integrated catchment management arrangements.

Financial and Organisational Design

- Complete organisational design.
- Assess assets, debt and liabilities.
- Assess costs, including transition costs, ongoing operating costs and rating impacts.

Formal Public Consultation

- Special Consultative Procedure begins (Section 83 LGA 2002)
- Statement of Proposal, Summary Document, Public Notice, and Submission Process is undertaken.

March 2027

- Confirm preferred structure and arrangements.
- Submit final proposal to Government.

Office of the Mayor



7 August 2026

Simplifying Local Government
Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions, and Transport
Via email: SimplifyingLocalGovernment@mcert.govt.nz

Kia ora koutou

HEAD START OUTLINE PROPOSAL: COASTAL OTAGO AND INLAND OTAGO UNITARY AUTHORITIES

1. Thank you for the opportunity to submit a Head Start outline proposal.
2. The Dunedin City Council and the Queenstown Lakes District Council have worked together on a proposal that establishes two subregional unitary authorities within Otago, supported by a shared regional services structure for functions requiring scale, specialist capability, and regional coordination.
3. The proposal builds on the strengths of Dunedin and Queenstown as Otago's two largest centres, which together provide infrastructure capability, planning expertise, regulatory capacity, specialist services, educational institutions, economic activity, and investment attraction.
4. The proposal creates two subregional unitary authorities:
 - an Inland Otago Unitary Authority centred on Queenstown Lakes and Central Otago
 - a Coastal Otago Unitary Authority centred on Dunedin and Clutha, with Waitaki's future position to be determined.
5. The two proposed authorities will be supported by shared regional services, delivering functions undertaken across Otago.
6. In submitting this proposal, we note that there is a lack of detail provided on the expectations of councils to fund and provide resourcing to implement any changes decided as part of this reform process. Information and clarity about support from central government, including financial support, would be appreciated to assist with forward and contingency planning in preparation for implementation of any changes.
7. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss the Head Start outline proposal for the Coastal and Inland Otago unitary authorities with you.

Kā mihi

A blue ink signature of Sophie Barker.

Sophie Barker
MAYOR OF DUNEDIN
TE KOROMATUA O ŌTEPOTI

A black ink signature of John Glover.

John Glover
MAYOR
QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL

From: Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>
Sent: Monday, 10 August 2026 9:14 a.m.
To: John Glover; Sophie Barker; Mel Tavendale; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Cc: jock.martin
Subject: Fw: CODC-CDC-QLDC HEADSTART PROPOSAL
Attachments: Headstart Proposal Final.pdf; Appendix 1 Otago Mayoral Forum LG Reform Survey Report.pdf; Appendix 2 Morrison Low Report.pdf; Appendix 3 Morrison Low Supplementary Report.pdf; Appendix 4 Letter from Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu.pdf

Categories: LG Reform

[Caution: External Email] This email originated from outside ORC. Do not click links or open attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe. Use the Phish Alert Button to report this email if you think it is suspicious.

Morning all,
 Here's our proposal if you're interested in having a look.
 Hope you all had a great weekend.

Many thanks,
 Tamah

Tamah Alley

Mayor - Zone 6 Chair



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 Alexandra 9320
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Head Start pathway

Simplifying Local Government

Outline Proposal: Provincial Council – Central Otago, Clutha and Queenstown Lakes Councils



We welcome the opportunity to present this Head Start proposal for Minister's consideration. We recognise that local government cannot continue to operate as it currently does, and the rate increases we have seen in recent years cannot continue.

We have worked collaboratively with councils across Otago to understand the opportunities, risks and implications of local government reform, recognising that different communities may have different preferences regarding future arrangements. In presenting this proposal we have heard loud and clear in our communities that retaining local voice and making sure rural and provincial communities' interests are represented are critical in any reform of local government.

In presenting this proposal, we have responded positively to the Government's direction for reform by delivering meaningful efficiencies and a more sustainable local government structure, while also positioning our communities for long-term success through strong local representation, responsive decision-making and services that remain connected to the people they serve.

Rivers do not become weaker when they come together. The Manuherekia, Kawarau, Cardrona, Pomahaka and many others all retain their own character, communities and catchments, yet together they form the Mata-Au/Clutha, one of New Zealand's most significant river systems. This proposal is founded on a similar principle. Our communities are distinct, with different histories, economies and priorities, but they are also connected by shared catchments, transport corridors, labour markets and common challenges. The task before us is not to erase those differences, but to create a governance structure that allows communities to remain strong locally while working more effectively together where it makes sense to do so. That is the opportunity presented through the Head Start process.

Like our people, this proposal is practical and pragmatic. It is a starting point for a deeper conversation with our communities, with mana whenua, with neighbouring councils, and with Central Government.

Ki uta ki tai. From the mountains to the sea.



Mayor Tamah Alley

on behalf of Central Otago District Council



Mayor Jock Martin

on behalf of Clutha District Council

The Proposal

We propose the creation of a new provincial council comprising Central Otago, Clutha and Queenstown Lakes District Councils. This delivers on simplifying local governance, with governance undertaken through a provincial authority and a Dunedin-based metropolitan authority, while ensuring regional functions continue to be delivered through appropriate shared arrangements where necessary. Detailed design work would determine which regional council functions are best exercised by the new metropolitan and provincial authorities and which are best delivered through shared arrangements. A core principle of the proposal is that no essential regional function will be weakened through reorganisation. Functions such as regional planning, catchment management and other activities requiring coordination across Otago would continue to be delivered through appropriate shared arrangements where this provides the most effective outcome.

An option exists for the more rural areas of Dunedin City (such as Middelmarsh and the Taieri catchment) to join as this proposal is further developed. Likewise, even though Waitaki District Council resolved to consider options outside of the Otago region, they are open to the Waihemo Ward (including Palmerston and Dunback) being considered in an Otago reorganisation. Queenstown-Lakes has some bespoke challenges, and it could be through this reform that the communities of Wānaka, Lake Hāwea, and Luggate gain a stronger voice through a formation of specialist governance oversight mechanisms. We are supportive of this, should that be what is in the best interests of these communities and as proposals are further developed in the next couple of months.

While the expectation is that the majority of regional functions would sit with the new authorities, the detailed design phase would also consider whether some cross-boundary functions, such as catchment management, regional spatial planning and environmental monitoring, are best delivered through a shared regional entity.

A geographical map demonstrating the proposal – at the full potential extent from the mountains to the sea – is included on the following page as *Figure 1*.

Given that retaining local voice and ensuring rural interests are represented are crucial to our communities, we propose establishing community councils with limited rating powers and clearly defined responsibilities. The intent is not to recreate separate local authorities, but to provide communities with the ability to make decisions on local priorities and, where supported by their community, raise targeted funding for agreed local projects, facilities and services within parameters set through legislation and the provincial council's long-term planning process.

We must work with our communities and Government on what this looks like. We would look to achieve efficiencies through delivery of functions at the unitary level (e.g. finance, human resources, information services) and ensure local voice is retained by having a higher level of input into localised functions.

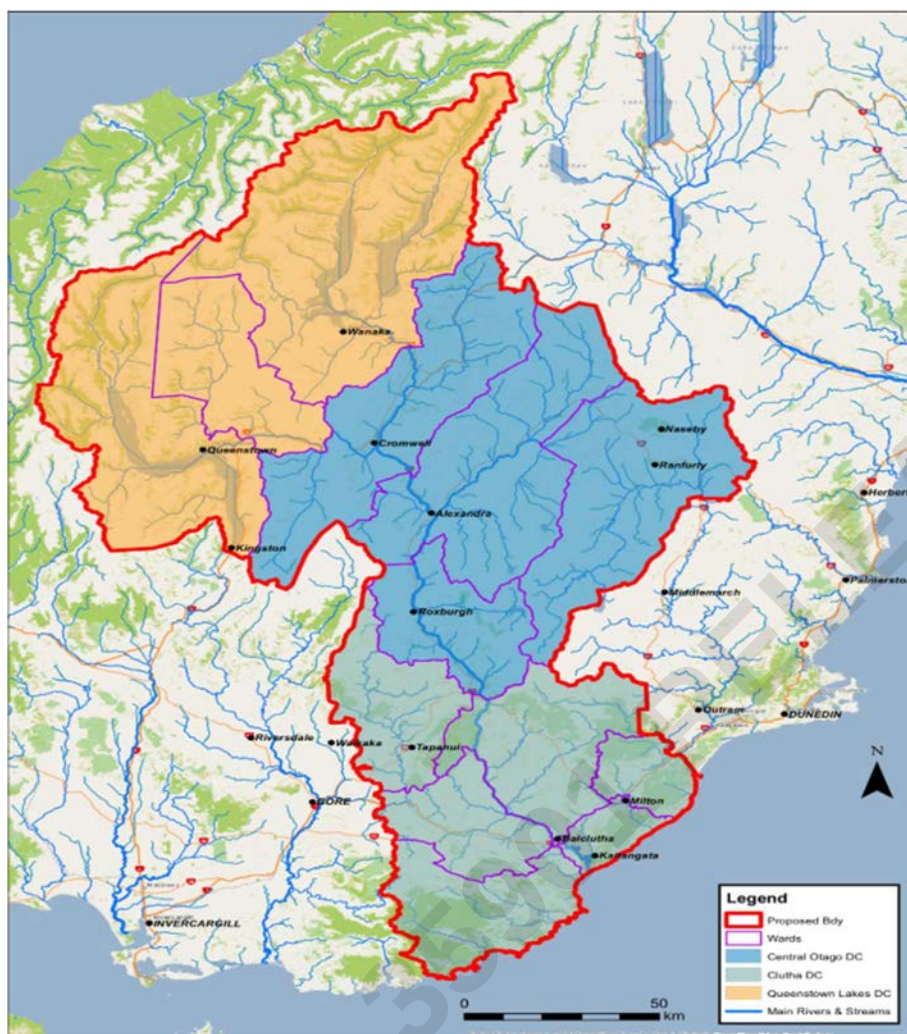


Figure 1: Map of proposed new provincial authority area

This proposal is not asking communities to pretend they are all the same. Communities like Balclutha and Wānaka do not need to have identical priorities, economies, pressures or identities for this model to work. The point of the proposal is that a town like Balclutha would retain meaningful decision-making over the things that matter to the Balclutha community, just as Wānaka and the Upper Clutha would have strong, place-based oversight of the issues that matter locally to them. We are particularly enthusiastic about the opportunity to recognise Wānaka, Lake Hāwea, Luggate and the wider Upper Clutha as a community of sufficient scale, identity and importance to have its own community council, with the ability to rate for local priorities and make decisions for the people who live there. That is the strength of this model: it creates the scale needed for efficiency, while protecting the local voice, local identity and local accountability that communities have told us they do not want to lose.

In further working through this proposal, we would like to examine bespoke legislative arrangements to enable this new provincial council to operate efficiently, as well as ensuring our communities remain well represented.

Our proposal intends that detailed design work on costings, efficiencies, representation, boundaries and functions of both the new provincial council and community councils will enable consultation that is easy to understand, generates a high level of engagement and

stands up to audit scrutiny. We wish to also have review and exit mechanisms into the backstop process should future circumstances warrant reconsideration of the arrangement. Any exit, if required, would occur prior to submission of the full business case in March 2027.

This proposal has been informed by an Otago-wide community survey (attached as *Appendix 1*) and a report commissioned by the Otago mayors to understand the impacts of different options (Morrison Low reports attached as *Appendices 2 & 3*).

This proposed approach is driven by several key priorities:

- *Fit*: Grouping these three districts creates a coherent economic and environmental unit. Clutha District Council has much in common with Central Otago, including the strong primary industries economy driven by agriculture, horticulture and viticulture. Likewise the Central Otago district has much in common with Queenstown-Lakes, with growth and tourism contributing strongly to both these areas. Clutha also contributes significant agricultural, forestry, processing and manufacturing activity, reinforcing the importance of a diversified provincial economy that is not dependent on a single industry or growth driver.
Having a diverse economy across these three areas makes for a strong grouping. Morrison Low identified strong communities of interest across the inland subregion, particularly through shared labour markets, housing pressures, transport movements, tourism flows, environmental systems and economic activity. The proposed provincial authority reflects relationships that already exist between communities rather than creating new ones.
- *Empowered Community Councils are Non-Negotiable*: To directly combat the community's fear of the loss of local identity and the marginalisation of rural voices the cornerstone of our governance structure is "community councils with rating powers." This ensures that while regional functions are scaled up, local services and decisions remain firmly localised on existing boundaries.
- *Shared Catchments and Corridors*: This amalgamation makes geographical and environmental sense because all three districts are inextricably linked by the Mata-Au/Clutha river system. It also formalises the interconnected transport corridors and economic realities that are already the focus of our ongoing Regional Deal negotiations.
- *A Bespoke, Flexible Solution*: The Head Start pathway provides the unique opportunity to work with Government on the best arrangement for our communities, this allows us to include review and exit mechanisms, ensuring a safety net for our communities, and providing the necessary time to accurately map services to the right level of governance.
- *Continuity of Regional Environmental Planning*: We recognise the risk of fragmenting wider environmental management. To address this, we propose to investigate a "shared regional entity," governed jointly by the new subregional authorities, to handle cross-boundary spatial planning and catchment management seamlessly.

- **Affordability and Efficiency:** In direct response to public surveys identifying affordable rates and quality infrastructure as top priorities, this model removes unnecessary governance layers. By reducing duplication and leveraging targeted economies of scale, we aim to deliver better financial sustainability for our ratepayers.

Eligibility

This proposal meets the eligibility criteria for the Head Start pathway as outlined in the Government's policy document and guidelines.

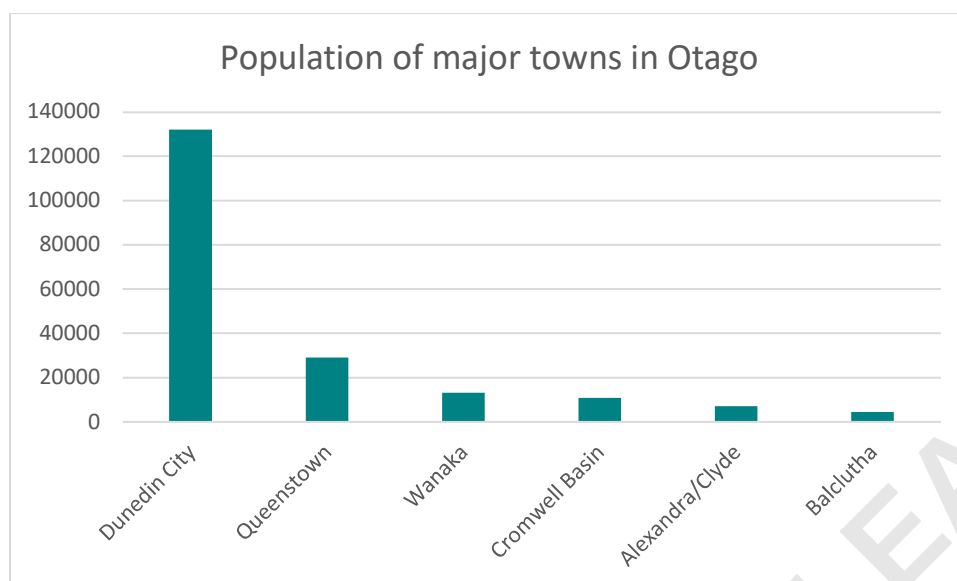
The proposal would amalgamate three existing territorial authorities (Central Otago District Council, Clutha District Council, and Queenstown Lakes District Council) and would look to transfer or jointly govern the regional council functions currently undertaken by the Otago Regional Council (ORC) within these boundaries to the newly formed unitary council and Dunedin City Council. This achieves the Government's goal of resulting in fewer local authorities overall, creating a simpler and more understandable local government system where communities have a clearer line of sight between the services they receive, the decisions being made, and the council responsible for them.

Queenstown Lakes is considering an alternative option. That option would see Clutha District Council join into a metropolitan authority with Dunedin City Council. Queenstown Lakes joining with Central Otago is consistent across both proposals.

Our proposal is stronger because it better reflects the interests of the communities, particularly ensuring provincial community voices are not lost in these reforms. The risk of this has been a consistent message from our communities since the '*Simplifying Local Government*' announcement.

There are significant size differences in populations that have impacts on representation, fairness, and consistency in the delivery and level of services. Within our proposal, communities of interest are much more relative in size. Dunedin City's population of 132,800 dominates and dwarfs the interests of other communities, to the detriment of the Clutha District's largest township, Balclutha – 4,460, and the district as a whole (18,000).

Population estimates across Central Otago and Queenstown-Lakes boundaries are difficult to measure. The following graph uses estimated figures drawn from economic development reports to illustrate this distinction:



Our proposal ensures that communities of interest are relative in size and scale, with fair representation and levels of service. Dunedin City Council would become a single metro unitary authority with some shared services.

A key test of any reform proposal will be whether communities see it as creating a genuinely new governance model, rather than extending the reach and influence of existing council centres. For many Central Otago and Clutha residents, a proposal perceived as being dominated by Queenstown or Dunedin is unlikely to attract local support.

Central Otago and Clutha have our own identity, geography, rural communities, service challenges, infrastructure pressures and economic mix.

While Central Otago and Queenstown Lakes are closely connected through employment, tourism, transport, housing and growth pressures, Central Otago residents have been clear that reform must not come at the expense of local voice or create the sense that decisions are being pulled toward the largest and fastest-growing centre. Any new structure must feel balanced, fair and genuinely representative of all communities within it, including rural communities and smaller towns.

This proposal seeks to avoid the perception of takeover by creating a new provincial authority, supported by empowered community councils, rather than extending the existing identity, priorities and governance culture of one council over neighbouring districts.

This arrangement will deliver clearer accountability and more effective delivery of key regional functions, particularly regarding the interconnected transport corridors, economic development, and environmental catchment management of the inland and southern lakes areas. Otago is also a geographically significant area and the divergent issues and distance between Dunedin City and the wider Central Otago area requires bespoke arrangements that are best delivered by two independent unitary councils.

The Head Start process is specifically intended to test competing proposals and support detailed design work before final decisions are made. The strong economic, environmental,

transport and planning connections across the proposed area mean this option warrants further consideration through the next stage of the process.

We acknowledge the Government's concern that multiple unitary authorities within a single region could fragment the delivery of important regional functions. For that reason, this proposal has been designed around the principle that regional planning, catchment management and other functions requiring coordination across Otago will continue to be undertaken through shared arrangements where appropriate. The proposal seeks to create clearer accountability at a subregional level without losing the benefits of coordinated action where a regional approach remains necessary.

While a single Otago-wide unitary authority remains one possible model, the combination of Otago's geography, the substantial differences between provincial and metropolitan communities, and the need to preserve meaningful local representation mean two complementary authorities provide a more practical balance between efficiency, accountability and local democracy. This provincial authority would cover 25,021 square kilometres; an area Auckland Council could fit into five times over.

This conclusion is reinforced by stakeholder submissions and independent analysis, including support from the business community, Federated Farmers, and economic development assessments that identify a strong alignment of interests across the proposed Southern Lakes-Central Otago area while recognising the distinct characteristics of coastal Otago communities.

Queenstown Lakes is a major tourism and services economy, Central Otago is a nationally significant horticultural and viticultural producer, and Clutha is one of New Zealand's strongest agricultural and processing districts. Together these sectors create a more resilient economic base than any one district could provide alone, supporting jobs, businesses and communities throughout the Mata-Au/Clutha catchment.

Supports the New Planning System

This proposal supports implementation of the new planning system.

The Government's Planning Bill requires all local authorities within a region to jointly prepare a regional spatial plan covering at least a 30-year horizon. These plans will guide urban development, infrastructure investment, environmental limits and land use across each region. Regional spatial planning is therefore already underway and must continue regardless of the outcome of local government reorganisation.

Otago councils have been preparing for these reforms for some time. Planning managers from across Otago have been meeting regularly to progress regional spatial planning, with participation from Kāi Tahu through Aukaha and Te Ao Mārama. Regional spatial planning has also been identified as a priority by the Otago Mayoral Forum and the Otago Chief Executive Forum, with work underway to establish dedicated programme governance and project leadership.

In recognition of the reforms, Otago councils established an Interim Regional Spatial Planning Governance Group to provide elected member oversight until statutory arrangements are confirmed. The purpose of this work is to maintain momentum, develop regional planning processes, and ensure the region is ready to transition into the formal planning framework once legislation is enacted. The arrangements have been deliberately designed to remain flexible and adaptable while both local government reform and Regional Deal discussions continue.

The Government has confirmed that any subregional unitary authorities established through the Head Start process must continue to participate in regional spatial planning. The Planning Bill also allows for subregional planning to sit within, and inform, the wider regional spatial plan. This creates a natural fit with the proposed provincial and metropolitan model.

Climate change further reinforces the need for planning at both regional and subregional scales. Many of the challenges facing the proposed unitary area, including infrastructure resilience, climate adaptation, natural hazards, housing growth and transport investment, do not align neatly with existing council boundaries. The Mata-Au/Clutha catchment, growth pressures across the Queenstown Lakes and Central Otago corridor, and adaptation work already underway in places such as Glenorchy and the Clutha delta demonstrate the importance of coordinated planning across communities and catchments.

A future Otago Central Lakes Regional Deal is also likely to focus on many of the same issues as the regional spatial plan, including infrastructure, housing, transport, climate adaptation and growth sequencing. The proposed provincial authority aligns closely with this geography and can help provide a coherent framework for implementation while remaining connected to wider regional planning arrangements.

The proposed shared regional entity would provide continuity for regional spatial planning, catchment management and cross-boundary coordination. Rather than requiring planning arrangements to be rebuilt following reorganisation, it would allow existing regional planning work to continue while ensuring local implementation remains responsive to community needs.

Climate adaptation is also becoming increasingly specialised. Larger organisations are better able to attract and retain expertise in hazard management, infrastructure resilience, environmental science, adaptation planning and community engagement. This proposal would provide greater organisational capacity to plan for, respond to and invest in long-term climate resilience across the inland subregion.

The proposed area is already linked by shared transport corridors, including State Highways 6 and 8, freight movements, tourism flows and commuter patterns. These connections increasingly require planning and investment decisions to be considered at a subregional rather than district scale.

Notably, the geography emerging through the new planning system, Regional Deal discussions, climate adaptation programmes and Kāi Tahu feedback is broadly consistent with the geography proposed through this provincial authority.

Simplifies Local Governance

Local government is complex by design. Parliament sets the legislative framework, while local authorities are responsible for applying that framework in ways that reflect local circumstances, priorities and aspirations. Effective local government is built from the bottom up. It works best when decisions are made as close as possible to the people affected by them, while larger-scale issues are managed at the scale needed to achieve efficient and effective outcomes.

This proposal simplifies local governance by creating clearer accountability for regional and district functions while preserving strong local decision-making. Simplification is not measured by the number of councils alone. It is measured by whether residents can understand who makes decisions, who is accountable for them, and how they can influence outcomes.

By combining territorial authority and regional council functions within a single provincial authority, residents have a clearer line of sight between decisions and decision-makers. Issues such as land use, transport, infrastructure, economic development and environmental management are closely connected in practice yet are currently spread across multiple organisations. Bringing these functions together reduces duplication, aligns planning and investment decisions, and removes unnecessary complexity for communities, businesses and central government agencies.

The principle underpinning this proposal is that decisions should sit at the lowest effective level. Matters such as catchment management, strategic transport planning and regional infrastructure are better addressed at a subregional scale. Decisions about local facilities, local priorities and community outcomes should remain close to the communities they affect.

Morrison Low notes that larger authorities are most successful when accompanied by a strong second tier of local governance. The report also identifies limitations with traditional community board models, whose powers can be changed through delegation by the governing council. Our proposal responds to that challenge through community councils with rating powers and clearly defined responsibilities. This would provide a more durable and meaningful form of local representation, while maintaining the benefits of a simplified governance structure.

While the proposed shared regional entity introduces a coordinating mechanism for region-wide spatial planning and catchment management, its role is deliberately narrow and focused. It is intended to preserve integrated management of issues that cross unitary boundaries, rather than recreate a separate layer of local government.

Ultimately, simplification should not mean centralisation. Regional decisions should be made regionally, local decisions should be made locally, and residents should have a clear understanding of who is responsible for both.

Economies of Scale

This proposal seeks to address the community's highest priorities regarding affordability, infrastructure and long-term financial sustainability, while maintaining strong local representation and accountability. Survey results show affordable rates and quality infrastructure are consistently among the highest priorities for residents across the region. The objective is not scale for its own sake. The objective is to achieve the scale needed to deliver services efficiently and effectively, while retaining local decision-making through empowered community councils.

The Queenstown Business Chamber of Commerce has noted that combining the rapid growth pressures of Queenstown Lakes with the urban regeneration focus of Dunedin within a single Otago-wide authority risks creating competing priorities rather than genuine economies of scale. By contrast, a provincial authority would bring together communities that already share economic, housing, labour market, transport and infrastructure connections.

Lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the pitfalls of a region being dominated by one industry, such as tourism. While tourism experienced significant disruption, the primary sector and associated processing industries continued to operate as essential services, supporting employment, exports, food production and animal welfare. This proposal brings together three districts with different but complementary economic backbones, making it much more resilient to future economic shocks.

These efficiencies would come not only from reduced governance duplication, but also from aligning planning, investment and service delivery functions that are currently spread across multiple organisations.

Economies of scale are not simply about reducing costs. They are also about having the capability and capacity to deliver. A larger provincial authority would be better placed to attract and retain specialist staff, manage major infrastructure programmes, undertake long-term planning and respond to increasingly complex regulatory requirements. It would create opportunities to share expertise, strengthen organisational resilience and reduce reliance on external consultants while maintaining local decision-making through community councils.

Additional efficiencies would be available through consolidated procurement, shared information technology systems, unified asset management, integrated service delivery and coordinated infrastructure investment. A single organisation would be better positioned to leverage purchasing power, reduce duplication of back-office functions and make more strategic long-term investment decisions across the subregion.

The proposal also offers benefits beyond traditional economies of scale. Communities across Central Otago, Queenstown Lakes and Clutha already experience many issues at a subregional level, including housing affordability, workforce availability, transport connections, tourism pressures, infrastructure capacity and climate adaptation. Managing these interconnected issues through a single organisation should improve coordination, reduce duplication and support more effective decision-making.

Affordable rates were identified as the top priority across the region, selected by 64% of respondents. Quality services and infrastructure were selected by 58% of respondents. This proposal seeks to respond directly to those priorities by reducing unnecessary duplication, strengthening organisational capability and ensuring resources can be directed towards delivering outcomes for communities rather than managing administrative complexity.

Maintains Local Voice

Local voice is one of the biggest concerns people have about local government reform. Feedback in Otago has consistently reflected a preference for more direct participation in democracy, a ground-up approach to decision-making, and a belief that local people are best suited to balance place-based trade-offs. Community feedback consistently reflects concern they will lose local identity, local representation, and local decision-making. These concerns are legitimate and need to be addressed through the design of any new structure, not simply acknowledged. This is key to maintaining public confidence and democratic accountability.

Strong communities are built when people feel connected to the places they live and believe they can influence decisions that affect them. We see the value of that every day in the volunteers who run halls, support emergency responses, coach sport, organise events and look after local facilities. We also see that strength reflected in how communities respond to and recover from disasters, severe weather events and other local challenges.

Loss of identity was a primary concern in the local government reform survey and is a critical factor in determining the appropriate governance structure.

- Loss of identity was raised by 49% of Central Otago respondents, 50% of Clutha respondents, and 46% of Queenstown Lakes respondents.
- Keeping decisions local was strongly valued, chosen by 68% of respondents in Central Otago and 63% in Clutha.

Local government should be organised at the scale needed to deliver services efficiently, while keeping decision-making as close as possible to the communities affected by those decisions. That is one of the key reasons we support an inland subregional model rather than a single Otago-wide unitary authority. As highlighted by the Queenstown Business Chamber, a provincial authority of approximately 100,000 residents allows for significantly greater local influence than a province-wide authority of approximately 260,000.

Morrison Low notes that larger unitary authorities can reduce the influence of individual communities unless there is a strong second tier of local governance. The report also identifies limitations with traditional community board models, as their powers depend on delegation from the governing council and can change over time. Our proposal responds directly to that challenge through community councils with rating powers and legislatively defined responsibilities, providing a more durable and meaningful form of local representation.

It would bring together communities that already share economic, transport, housing and environmental interests, while avoiding the risk that decision-making becomes concentrated

around the largest urban centres. Communities such as Roxburgh, Tapanui, Alexandra, Wānaka, Cromwell, Balclutha and Lawrence would remain visible and significant within the governance structure.

Geography matters. Communities need elected representatives who understand local conditions, can attend local events, and can be present when issues arise. It is difficult to describe the practical impact of service delivery across an area this size – comparable to many countries. It takes more than four hours to travel from Glenorchy to Waiholo. Without a strong community council model, it would be unworkable for elected members to both influence decisions and remain accessible to locals.

Ultimately, simplification should not come at the expense of local democracy. The success of any reorganisation will depend on whether people in places like Otarehua, Naseby, Ranfurly, Roxburgh, Heriot, Lawrence, Clyde, Kingston, Lake Hāwea, Glenorchy, Tarras, Makarora, and Owaka still feel they have a voice, know who represents them, and can influence decisions about their own communities.

Deliverability

We are confident this proposal can be designed, implemented and operationalised in time for the October 2028 local authority elections.

A key strength of this proposal is that it builds on existing relationships, existing governance forums and existing areas of collaboration rather than requiring councils to establish entirely new ways of working. The mayors would be supported by highly experienced chief executives leading stable organisations through this process. Central Otago District Council, Clutha District Council and Queenstown Lakes District Council already work together across a range of regional issues and are currently engaged in joint work programmes relating to regional economic development, transport, emergency management, climate adaptation and Regional Deal negotiations. Existing relationships between elected members, chief executives and senior staff provide a strong foundation for progressing detailed design and implementation.

Implementation would be overseen through a Joint Transition Board comprising the mayors and chief executives of participating councils, alongside representative councillors. The Transition Board would be supported by a dedicated programme team seconded from participating organisations and supplemented where necessary with specialist external expertise. This approach recognises the importance of maintaining business-as-usual service delivery while creating sufficient capacity to undertake detailed design work.

The proposal is also strengthened by the substantial amount of work already underway across the region. Councils are preparing for implementation of the new planning system through the establishment of an Interim Regional Spatial Planning Governance Group, officer working groups and dedicated project leadership. These arrangements have been deliberately designed to remain flexible and adaptable while local government reform, Regional Deal negotiations and planning reform continue to evolve. This provides a practical platform for transition regardless of the final governance arrangements adopted.

A future provincial authority would also benefit from existing communities of interest and established patterns of collaboration. The proposed area already functions as an interconnected economic and environmental system, linked by the Mata-Au/Clutha catchment, shared transport corridors, labour markets, tourism activity and infrastructure networks. This reduces implementation risk when compared with arrangements that seek to bring together communities with significantly different planning, growth and economic priorities.

Councils across the proposed area have demonstrated an ability to establish new shared delivery arrangements through initiatives such as Southern Waters, alongside collaborative work on Regional Deals, emergency management, transport and spatial planning.

We acknowledge that significant challenges will need to be addressed during the detailed design phase. These include the allocation of regional council functions, assets and liabilities, integration of information technology systems, workforce transition arrangements, representation design, service harmonisation and the transfer of environmental science, monitoring and regulatory capability. Each of these challenges is manageable but will require dedicated resources, early planning and clear governance oversight.

Climate adaptation and natural hazard management will also be an important consideration. Existing adaptation programmes such as the Head of Lake Whakatipu initiative, Clutha delta adaptation planning and work on resilience across the Mata-Au/Clutha catchment demonstrate the need to retain and strengthen specialist capability through any transition. Future governance arrangements will need to ensure that climate resilience, catchment management and long-term infrastructure planning continue seamlessly throughout the implementation period.

The proposal deliberately adopts a staged approach. The detailed design phase would allow councils, mana whenua, communities and central government to work through governance, representation, funding and operational matters before legislative implementation. This reduces delivery risk and creates the opportunity to test assumptions, refine arrangements and resolve issues before the new entity becomes operational.

Central government support will be important to the success of the proposal. Bespoke enabling legislation will be required to establish the new governance arrangements and provide for community councils with rating powers and clearly defined responsibilities. This legislative flexibility is one of the key advantages of the Head Start pathway and will allow governance arrangements to be tailored to the needs of the inland Otago communities they are intended to serve.

Overall, this proposal is considered realistic, achievable and capable of implementation within the Government's proposed timeframe. It builds on existing partnerships, aligns with current regional planning initiatives, and provides a practical pathway to reform while maintaining continuity of service delivery and democratic representation.

We welcome the opportunity to work alongside mana whenua, the Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport, and other government agencies to co-design the

detailed implementation pathway and ensure communities are supported through the transition process.

Timeline:

We are confident we can do the required work to develop the business case by March 2027. Specifically, while not pre-empting any decisions of Cabinet in September, over the next few weeks we will begin the background work to enable this business case to be developed. Our intended approach is as follows:

- September to October 2026: Refinement of options for delivery of services
- November to December 2026: Public consultation on options
- December 2026 to February 2027: Prepare business case on preferred way forward
- March 2027: Formally present business case to councils.

Treaty Settlements

The proposed provincial authority sits entirely within the Kāi Tahu takiwā. We welcome recent letters from Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu supporting the Head Start process (attached as appendices 4 and 5). Their view that this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to modernise local government reflects the importance of getting these decisions right. We are open to exploring opportunities to share specialist expertise and support services across the South Island where that would improve capability and reduce duplication. This aligns with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu's proposal for a joint Takiwā/South Island Centre of Expertise and could support both the new provincial and metropolitan authorities and the shared regional entity.

The principles outlined by Kāi Tahu align closely with the thinking behind this proposal. It reflects the importance of river catchments. The Mata-Au/Clutha already connects our communities environmentally, economically and culturally. The Mata-Au/Clutha is generally recognised as New Zealand's highest-volume river by mean flow, discharging around 614 m³ per second. It is also the largest river by water outflow and has the largest catchment in the country. It makes sense that governance arrangements recognise this strong connection from headwater to coast as well.

Strong working relationships with Papatipu Rūnaka need to remain a core part of how local government operates in our area. As the proposal is developed, we will continue discussions with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and local Kā Rūnaka. Kā Rūnaka have already been invited to participate in regional spatial planning discussions, and we will continue to seek their input on governance, representation and partnership arrangements as detailed design work progresses.

Any local government reorganisation must respect existing Treaty settlement arrangements and the commitments that have already been made. All arrangements established under the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998 would continue to apply following reorganisation. This includes statutory acknowledgements, nohoanga entitlements, protocols, place name provisions and all other rights and obligations established through the settlement process.

Reorganisation should not create uncertainty or disrupt arrangements that are already in place.

Other Supporting Information

Independent analysis undertaken by Morrison Low identified strong communities of interest across the inland subregion and therefore the proposed model can achieve meaningful efficiencies while maintaining a closer connection to local communities than a single Otago-wide authority. This model has been informed by that analysis, alongside community survey results, Regional Deal discussions, planning reform and feedback received through the Head Start process.

The interim governance arrangements for regional spatial planning are considered the appropriate response regardless of how the Head Start and Regional Deal processes are ultimately resolved. They provide continuity, maintain momentum, and ensure the region is prepared for implementation of the new planning system.

While views differ across communities regarding the future structure of local government, there is already substantial collaboration occurring across the proposed unitary area. Central Otago, Clutha and Queenstown Lakes work together through Regional Deal negotiations, emergency management, transport planning, climate adaptation initiatives and a range of officer and governance forums. This proposal builds on relationships and communities of interest that already exist rather than creating entirely new arrangements.

The geography emerging through the new planning system, Regional Deal discussions, climate adaptation programmes, and feedback from Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu is broadly consistent with the geography proposed through this provincial model. Catchments, growth corridors, infrastructure networks and communities of interest increasingly operate across existing council boundaries and point toward a more integrated inland approach.

This model can deliver meaningful efficiencies while retaining a stronger connection to local communities compared to a single Otago-wide authority. The model also reflects feedback received through the Otago Mayoral Forum local government reform survey, which highlighted affordability, infrastructure delivery, local decision-making and preservation of local identity as key community priorities.

The Queenstown Business Chamber of Commerce has expressed support for an inland model, noting the shared growth pressures, labour markets, housing challenges and economic connections across Queenstown Lakes and Central Otago. This proposal extends that logic to include Clutha, recognising the important role the district plays within the wider Mata-Au/Clutha catchment and inland economy, especially when it comes to diversification offered by the primary industry sector.

Conclusion

Overall, this proposal is considered realistic, achievable and capable of implementation within the Government's proposed timeframe. It builds on existing partnerships, aligns with current regional planning initiatives, and provides a practical pathway to reform while maintaining continuity of service delivery and democratic representation.

This proposal does not seek to preserve existing structures. It accepts the need for reform and the Government's objective of fewer councils, clearer accountability and better value for ratepayers. The question is not whether change is needed, but how that change can best reflect communities of interest, preserve local democracy and deliver services efficiently.

This proposal provides a practical starting point. It brings together communities with strong existing connections, protects local decision-making through empowered community councils, and creates a pathway to more efficient and sustainable local government.

We welcome the opportunity to continue working with Government, mana whenua, neighbouring councils and our communities to develop this proposal and ensure any future arrangements are built on local voice, shared interests and a strong foundation.

Ki uta ki tai. From the mountains to the sea.



Mayor Jock Martin
Clutha District Council




Mayor Tamah Alley
Central Otago District Council





Otago Local Government Reform Survey Report

INTRODUCTION

Significant change is coming for local government across New Zealand. On 5 May 2026, the Government announced its intended policy for local government reform, setting out two pathways. The Head Start pathway allows councils to develop their own proposals, with outline submissions due by 9 August 2026. The alternative is the Backstop pathway, under which the Government will legislate a solution in 2027.

Otago's councils commissioned this survey to hear directly from communities at an early stage in the reform process. The aim was to understand what matters most to people when it comes to the future of local government in our region. The survey was not about specific options or amalgamation models, it was an early opportunity for communities across Otago to have their say.

The survey ran for 19 days in May and June 2026 and received 1,820 responses from across the region. This report sets out what people told us.

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

The survey was conducted over a short timeframe and was not designed to achieve a fully representative sample. The demographic data provided by submitters shows that younger people under 30 are underrepresented, as are Otago residents of Asian origin. Given that it was an open survey, there could also be multiple entries from some submitters.

THE QUESTIONS

The survey asked the following questions:

- Q1 Where do you live?
[select district and ward]
- Q2 How do you feel about how local government reform might affect you and your community?
[free-text box, max 500 characters]
- Q3 What is most important to you for local government?
[up to 5 choices from list]
- Q4 Is there any other feedback you want to give about local government reform?
[open, free-text box, max 500 characters]
- Q5 How old are you? (optional)
[select age group]
- Q6 What is your ethnicity? (optional)
[multiple selection from list]
- Q7 Interested in the results?
[optional email address collection for follow up]

Q1: WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

The survey received a total of 1,820 responses from across the Otago region, representing approximately 0.7% of the regional population. Central Otago and Waitaki districts returned the highest response rates relative to their populations (1.9% and 1.4% respectively), while Dunedin contributed the largest share of responses by number (34%). A small number of responses (35) came from outside the defined district areas.

	Responses	Share of responses	Population	Response rate (% of population)
Central Otago	492	27%	25,800	1.9%
Clutha	146	8%	18,800	0.8%
Dunedin	623	34%	132,800	0.5%
Queenstown Lakes	187	10%	53,800	0.3%
Waitaki	337	19%	24,600	1.4%
Other	35	2%		-
TOTAL OTAGO	1,820	100%	255,800	0.7%

Q2: HOW DO YOU FEEL REFORM MIGHT AFFECT YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY?

ABOUT THIS QUESTION

Respondents were asked how they felt local government reform might affect them or their community. Responses were provided in free text and have been analysed for the main themes across the region.

The appendices on pages 9 to 19 provide a district-by-district breakdown of responses to this question, setting out the main themes for Central Otago, Clutha, Dunedin, Queenstown Lakes, and Waitaki.

WHAT PEOPLE TOLD US

Responses to Q2 revealed a mixed picture, with genuine concerns about the implications of reform sitting alongside significant support for change in some parts of the region.

The table over the page shows the number and proportion of respondents who raised each theme. The regional results are shown in the first column. For the remainder of the table, purple text indicates where a response was significantly more likely for that district's respondents; orange text indicates where a response was significantly less likely. Raw response numbers are shown in italics.

	TOTAL OTAGO	Central Otago	Clutha	Dunedin	Q'town Lakes	Waitaki
Loss of identity	41% 729	49%↑ 243	50%↑ 73	38%↓ 231	46% 82	30%↓ 100
Pro-reform sentiment	37% 650	23%↓ 114	28%↓ 41	41%↑ 252	42% 74	50%↑ 169
Financial concerns	30% 532	43%↑ 211	34% 50	26%↓ 156	15%↓ 26	26% 89
Wider impacts	17% 296	19% 92	10%↓ 15	24%↑ 145	15% 27	5%↓ 17
Conditional/anti-reform sentiment	13% 226	32%↑ 159	16% 24	1%↓ 8	8%↓ 14	6%↓ 21
Process concerns	10% 182	6%↓ 29	4% 7	11% 69	10% 17	18%↑ 60
District-specific concerns	4% 71	0% -	3% 5	1%↓ 7	28%↑ 50	3% 9
Total responses	1,762	492	146	610	177	337

MOST RAISED: LOSS OF IDENTITY, PRO-REFORM SENTIMENT, AND FINANCIAL CONCERNS

Loss of identity was a key issue and was raised most strongly by respondents in Central Otago and Clutha districts. Primary concerns in this space relate to the loss of meaningful representation in a larger entity. Respondents want those making the decisions to have a clear connection to the area their decisions will affect.

37% of respondents expressed **pro-reform sentiment**, with Waitaki District and Dunedin City respondents significantly more likely to hold these views. Interestingly, the motivations for reform varied across local authorities. For example, support in Waitaki was driven by dissatisfaction with the current Council, while Queenstown Lakes District and Dunedin City respondents were more likely to seek efficiencies. Importantly, pro-reform sentiment was typically provisional on good implementation and the preservation of local voices.

Despite this support, respondents also raised **financial concerns** associated with reform, and these were highest among those in Central Otago. The primary worry within this theme relates to rate rises that may occur from restructuring. Other comments raised potential costs from incurring debt and infrastructure needs from other councils via amalgamation.

ALSO RAISED: WIDER IMPACTS AND CONDITIONAL/ANTI-REFORM SENTIMENT

At a slightly lower level, 17% of respondents noted concerns about the **wider impacts** of reform, and these were mostly observed in Dunedin. Specific mentions related to the risk of reduced environmental stewardship should ORC be removed. Mentions of job losses across the region and Māori representation were also common within this theme, predominantly within Dunedin.

A further 13% of respondents provided **conditional or anti-reform sentiment**, with respondents unsure which entities would merge and using Auckland City as an example of where amalgamation has underdelivered the promised services and outcomes. This theme was strongest among Central Otago respondents, reflecting concerns about amalgamation with neighbouring councils with significantly higher debt levels.

LESS COMMONLY RAISED: PROCESS AND DISTRICT-SPECIFIC CONCERNS

At a lower level, 10% of respondents expressed **process concerns**, specifically that the reform is rushed and there was insufficient time to unpack the implications. This theme was particularly strong among respondents in Waitaki, and lower among Clutha and Central Otago respondents.

There were also a number of **district-specific concerns** that respondents raised. While a number of these concerns related to environmental issues, e.g., flooding or catchment issues, Queenstown Lakes respondents specifically mentioned pressures stemming from significant population and tourism growth, and the resulting impact on local infrastructure. Key concerns were that these issues, which are already causing tension locally, will become obscured in a larger regional or rurally focused entity.

Q3: WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

ABOUT THIS QUESTION

Respondents were asked to select their top priorities from a list of options. Each respondent could select up to five responses. Percentages reflect the proportion of respondents who selected each option and do not sum to 100%.

WHAT PEOPLE TOLD US

The table over the page shows the proportion of respondents in each district who selected each option. Results are ordered by the Otago-wide percentage, with **affordable rates** ranking highest (64%) and **economic growth** lowest (25%). A heat map highlights relative intensity across districts, with deeper blue shading indicating a higher number of responses.

Priority (select from list)	TOTAL OTAGO	Central Otago	Clutha	Dunedin	Q'town Lakes	Waitaki
Affordable rates	64%	70%	75%	58%	57%	64%
Quality services and infrastructure	58%	47%	54%	63%	67%	59%
Keep decisions local	54%	68%	63%	50%	48%	40%
More efficiency, less duplication	51%	52%	53%	49%	48%	53%
Rural areas and small towns are valued	40%	56%	66%	26%	31%	39%
Healthy environment	37%	28%	29%	43%	46%	35%
Urban growth is properly planned	34%	34%	18%	36%	66%	21%
Services are easy to access	30%	25%	35%	33%	18%	37%
Local character is protected	30%	37%	18%	27%	44%	22%
More transparency	28%	24%	25%	30%	27%	33%
Economic growth	25%	25%	21%	29%	11%	28%
Other	5%	4%	5%	6%	3%	5%

WHAT IS IN COMMON?

Affordable rates is the clear regional priority, chosen by nearly two thirds of respondents (64%). Below this, **quality services and infrastructure** (58%), **keep decisions local** (54%), and **more efficiency/less duplication** (51%) form a consistent second tier across the region. Beyond these four, support drops off notably - no other issue was selected by more than 40% of respondents.

WHAT IS DIFFERENT?

Variation across districts reflects local character and circumstance. **Affordable rates** is the top option in Clutha (75%) and Central Otago (70%), where it sits well above the regional average, while in Dunedin and Queenstown Lakes it ranks below **quality services and infrastructure**.

Keep decisions local is strongly valued in Central Otago (68%) and Clutha (63%) but is a lower priority in Waitaki (40%), Queenstown Lakes (48%) and Dunedin (50%). **Rural areas and small towns are valued** shows the sharpest geographic divide – selected by 56% in Central Otago and 66% in Clutha, compared to 26% in Dunedin.

Queenstown Lakes stands apart on **urban growth is properly planned** (66%), reflecting the district's distinctive development pressures. The district also had a high number of respondents asking that **local character is protected** (44%).

Healthy environment and **economic growth** show less variation across the region, though Queenstown Lakes records the lowest selection rate for economic growth (11%) while Dunedin records the highest (29%).

Q4: ANY OTHER FEEDBACK ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM?

ABOUT THIS QUESTION

Respondents were provided with an option to include any additional feedback about local government reform. The responses were captured in open text format and then categorised into themes.

A significant proportion of the feedback repeated or reinforced concepts that were established in Q2 of the survey. The table below focuses on the new themes that emerged from Q4.

WHAT PEOPLE TOLD US

Six new themes emerged from Q4 responses. The table below shows the number and proportion of respondents who raised each theme. The regional results are shown in the first column. For the remainder of the table, purple text indicates where a response was significantly more likely for that district's respondents; orange indicates where a response was significantly less likely. Raw response numbers are shown in italics.

	TOTAL OTAGO	Central Otago	Clutha	Dunedin	Q'town Lakes	Waitaki
Transparency/accountability	14% <i>153</i>	9%↓ <i>24</i>	9% <i>7</i>	19%↑ <i>62</i>	9% <i>10</i>	15% <i>50</i>
Environmental priorities and iwi involvement	9% <i>105</i>	11% <i>29</i>	4% <i>3</i>	14%↑ <i>45</i>	14% <i>16</i>	4%↓ <i>12</i>
Need consultation/vote	8% <i>90</i>	8% <i>20</i>	7% <i>5</i>	8% <i>27</i>	5% <i>6</i>	10% <i>32</i>
Core services only, not frills	8% <i>88</i>	9% <i>23</i>	12% <i>9</i>	11% <i>35</i>	5% <i>6</i>	5%↓ <i>15</i>
Alternative boundaries/models	11% <i>124</i>	10% <i>26</i>	9% <i>7</i>	12% <i>39</i>	11% <i>12</i>	12% <i>40</i>
Keep regional functions	3% <i>37</i>	3% <i>8</i>	1% <i>1</i>	5%↑ <i>17</i>	4% <i>4</i>	2% <i>7</i>

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Respondents raised concerns about the need for transparency and accountability in the reform process, particularly with regard to contracts and outcomes. This was largely driven by frustration with perceptions of poor transparency in current local government settings, and was particularly strong among Dunedin City respondents.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES AND IWI INVOLVEMENT

Respondents called for the prioritisation of environmental and iwi needs in any reform, alongside genuinely capturing the voice and desires of communities. This was particularly strong among Dunedin City respondents, who specifically called for treaty obligations to be upheld.

NEED FOR CONSULTATION AND/OR REFERENDUM

Some respondents felt that communities should have a direct say in reform through formal consultation or a public vote before any changes are made.

CORE SERVICES ONLY

There was a strong sense among some respondents that reform should concentrate on the basics – roads, water, waste, and infrastructure – through tight and focused spending, rather than expanding council functions.

ALTERNATIVE BOUNDARIES AND MODELS

Some respondents referred to alternative structural arrangements, including boundaries that follow catchments rather than existing council lines, and other models that do not simply replicate current structures at a larger scale.

RETAIN REGIONAL FUNCTIONS

A smaller number of respondents emphasised the importance of retaining dedicated regional functions, particularly environmental oversight, within any reformed structure.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Age data was collected through an optional question, completed by 84% of respondents. The results show the survey skewed towards older residents — young people under 30 made up just 5% of submitters but 38% of the Otago population.

	TOTAL OTAGO	OTAGO (Census 2023)	Central Otago	Clutha	Dunedin	Q'town Lakes	Waitaki
0-14 years	0%	16%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
15-29 years	5%	22%	3%	3%	6%	1%	8%
30-64 years	64%	44%	64%	63%	70%	61%	55%
65 years plus	32%	18%	33%	34%	24%	38%	38%

Ethnicity data was also collected through an optional question, with the same 84% completion rate. Pākehā / NZ Europeans were slightly over-represented, while residents who identify with minority ethnicities were generally under-represented. This was especially true for Asian ethnicities, who made up just 2% of submitters against 9% of the Otago population.

	TOTAL OTAGO	OTAGO (Census 2023)	Central Otago	Clutha	Dunedin	Q'town Lakes	Waitaki
European	89%	85%	92%	85%	91%	93%	79%
Māori	8%	10%	7%	10%	9%	3%	6%
Asian	2%	9%	1%	2%	2%	2%	4%
Pacific Peoples	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%	1%	7%
MELAA	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%
Other ethnicity	7%	1%	7%	10%	8%	3%	7%

DISTRICT APPENDICES

The following appendices provide additional district-level detail on responses to **Q2 How do you feel about how local government reform might affect you and your community?** The appendices set out the key themes and illustrative quotes for each district, complementing the regional comparison table in the main body of the report.

District-level data for Q3 and Q4 is contained in the main body of the report.

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CENTRAL OTAGO DISTRICT

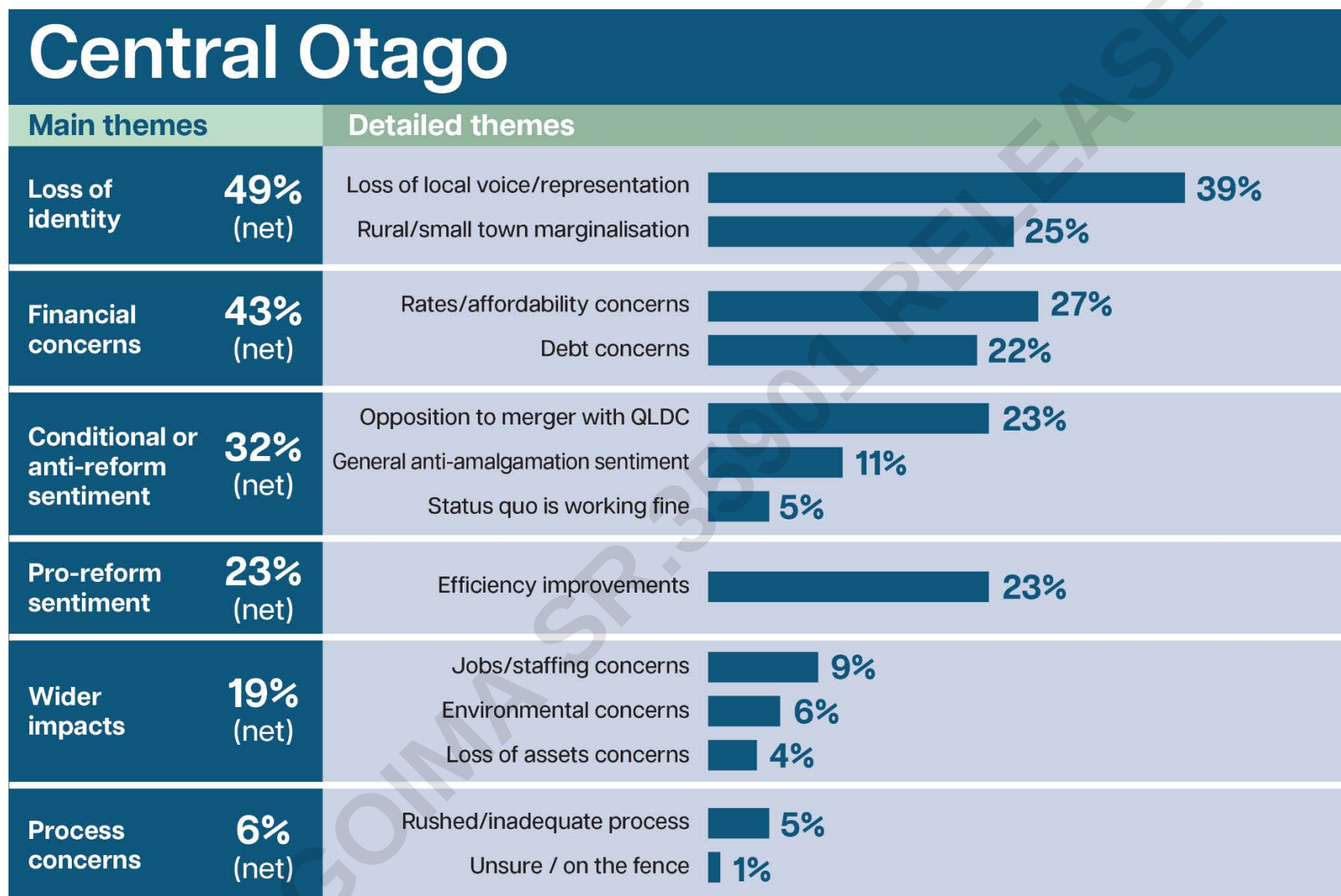
A total of 492 respondents from Central Otago provided a response to the question about how local government reform might affect them or their community. These responses were coded into themes and have been shown below.

The primary concern among Central Otago respondents related to a **loss of identity**, either through local representation or the marginalisation of small and rural towns. Some expressed that under a larger entity, local decisions will be made by people distant from the community, local knowledge will be lost, and larger centres will overshadow Central Otago's specific needs.

Financial concerns were also mentioned, with concerns around rate increases, affordability, and the challenge of absorbing debt from neighbouring councils. While these comments were framed around QLDC, DCC was also mentioned by some. CODC's comparatively strong financial position is seen as something to protect. The concern is not only about current rates but about future liability.

Building on the above point were the concerns around **amalgamation with QLDC** specifically, largely driven by concerns about debt, infrastructure failures (particularly wastewater), and poor governance. Some expanded this concern to the wider amalgamation environment, reinforcing the loss of local identity, reduced representation, and scepticism about proposed efficiencies that do not eventuate.

Despite the above concerns, some respondents also held a positive view and spoke of **potential efficiency gains** that could be made through amalgamation. Respondents mentioned benefits such as reduced duplication, shared expertise, and better coordination. It should be noted that these comments were often conditional on the ability to keep a local voice within decisions.



Note: 'net' results ensure that each respondent is only counted once. Some may have provided more than one response within a theme.

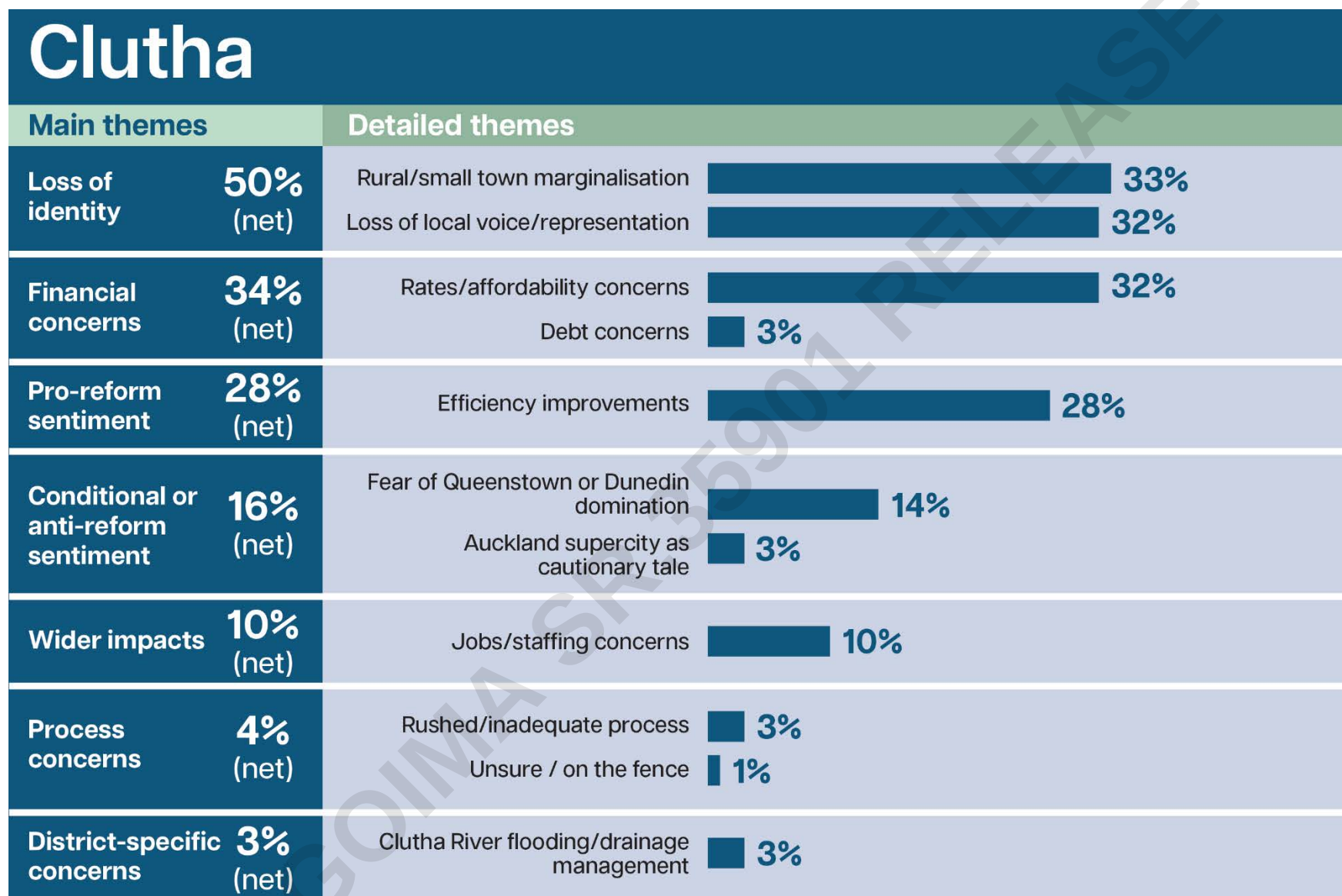
CLUTHA DISTRICT

A total of 146 respondents from Clutha provided a response to the question about how local government reform might affect them or their community. These responses were coded into themes and have been shown below.

A significant theme among these respondents was the **loss of identity**, with a net 50% of respondents mentioning this element. There was particular concern about the impact on small and rural communities, with mentions of Lawrence, Tapanui, Kaitangata, Clinton, and Milton noted by respondents. Some respondents reflected on the previous amalgamations and noted that the local knowledge and rural understanding were lost through this process; there are concerns that this would be further diluted should a wider amalgamation occur.

Another notable mention within the responses from Clutha residents was **financial concerns**. Respondents noted current rate levels, and there is an apprehension that reform will add costs rather than reduce them. Affordability was particularly noted as relevant for some of the very small rural towns where increasing rates were a threat to property ownership and small-town viability.

Smaller mentions were also made of concerns of domination of other councils, job losses, and a rushed process. However, 28% of Clutha respondents appeared **supportive of the reform** process, with respondents citing that the current Clutha District Council staff numbers have increased considerably over time. As with other districts, the positive views of reform are conditional on how the reform is implemented and the retention of a local connection.



Note: 'net' results ensure that each respondent is only counted once. Some may have provided more than one response within a theme.

DUNEDIN CITY

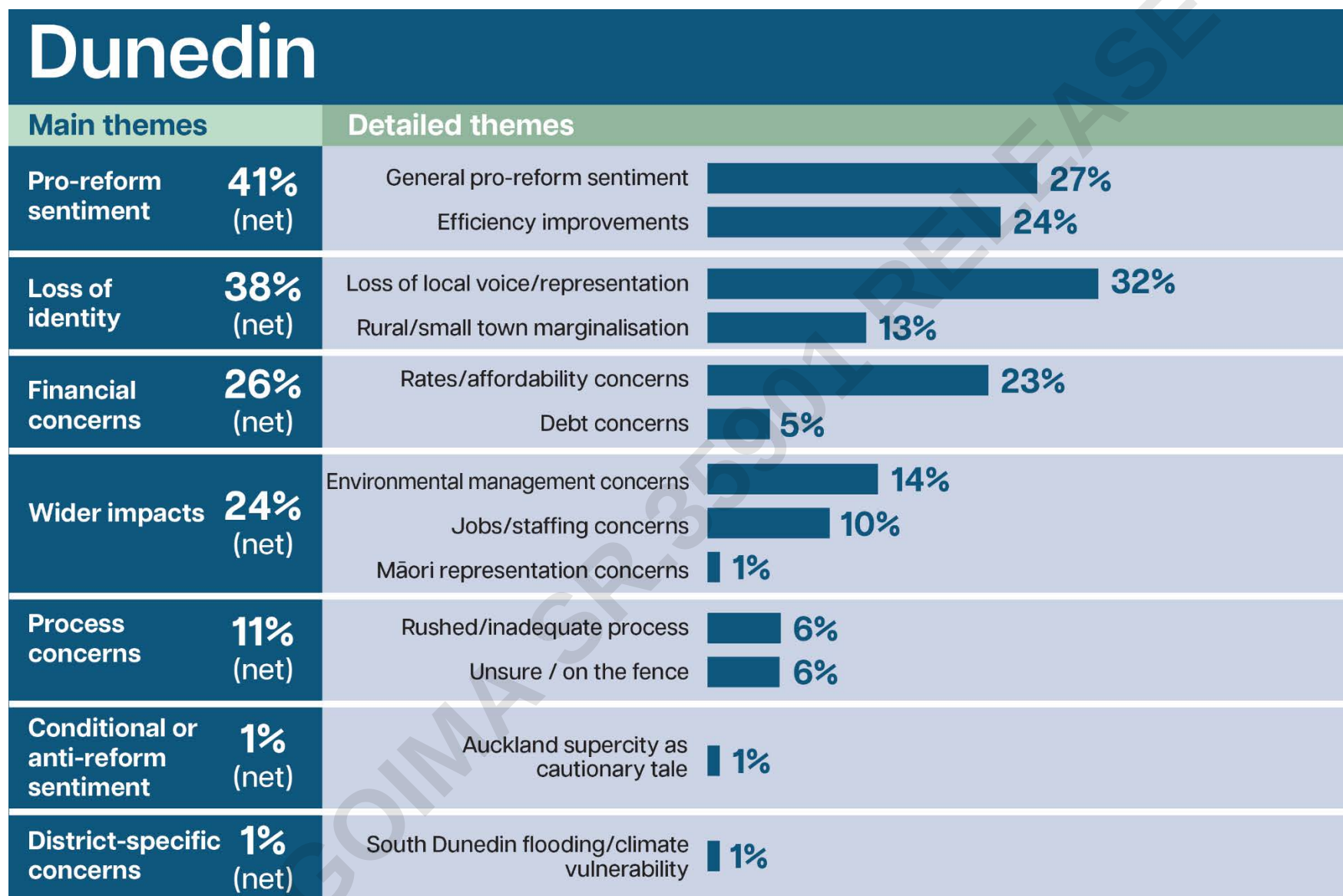
A total of 610 respondents from Dunedin City provided a response to the question about how local government reform might affect them or their community. These responses were coded into themes and have been shown below.

Pro-reform sentiment was a strong theme for Dunedin, with a net 41% of respondents making a comment aligned with this theme. These views were driven by concerns that the current DCC and ORC structure is too large, wasteful, and out of touch.

However, there was also concern among Dunedin respondents that there would be a **loss of identity**, local voice and representation, particularly for smaller communities. Respondents raised concerns about the special character of the city, and worried that the needs of its residents may be forgotten within a larger regional entities.

Financial concerns were also apparent, especially relating to rate rises. Some suggested that reform would fail to reduce rates or would actively increase them as the Dunedin area absorbs other councils' infrastructure backlogs, particularly from Waitaki and Queenstown Lakes.

Dunedin respondents also noted **wider concerns** about the potential loss of environmental protection, job losses, and poorer representation of Māori. This element is specifically linked to the removal of environmental oversight through abolishing ORC. While some see a merged council as an opportunity for better catchment-scale management, more see it as a threat to specialised environmental functions.



Note: 'net' results ensure that each respondent is only counted once. Some may have provided more than one response within a theme.

QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT

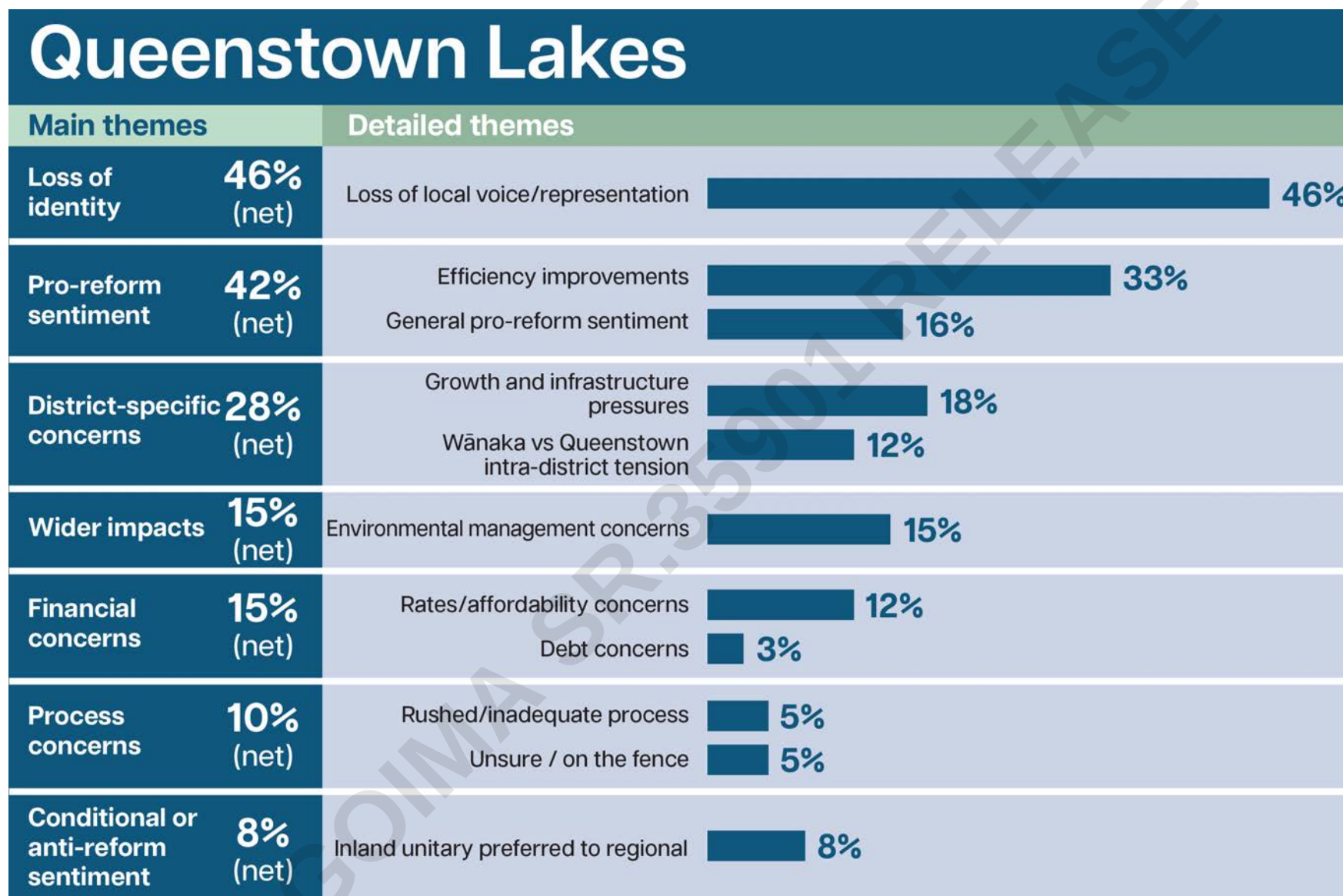
A total of 177 respondents from Queenstown Lakes provided a response to the question about how local government reform might affect them or their community. These responses were coded into themes and have been shown below.

One of the strongest themes from Queenstown Lakes respondents was around the **loss of identity** and local voice within a larger entity. This concern was framed as particularly important given the speed and scale of growth the district is currently facing. Specifically, respondents noted that long-term decisions about land, housing, and local infrastructure will require input from the communities that are most closely affected.

Another significant theme was **pro-reform sentiment**. In part, this openness was driven by a feeling that reform would bring efficiency to the local government sector. However, others were motivated to support reform due to holding poor views of the current local council.

Queenstown Lakes respondents were also more likely than other districts to raise **district-specific issues**. Key among these were the unique pressures that the district faces through population and tourism growth. Respondents want to see these specific pressures reflected and considered in the reform, not simply 'averaged out' among the larger rural areas within the region.

Respondents also raised concerns about the representation and delivery of the needs of specific communities within the district. Wanaka and Upper Clutha respondents report already feeling marginalised within the QLDC structure, and reform is seen as likely to augment this issue further.



Note: 'net' results ensure that each respondent is only counted once. Some may have provided more than one response within a theme.

WAITAKI DISTRICT

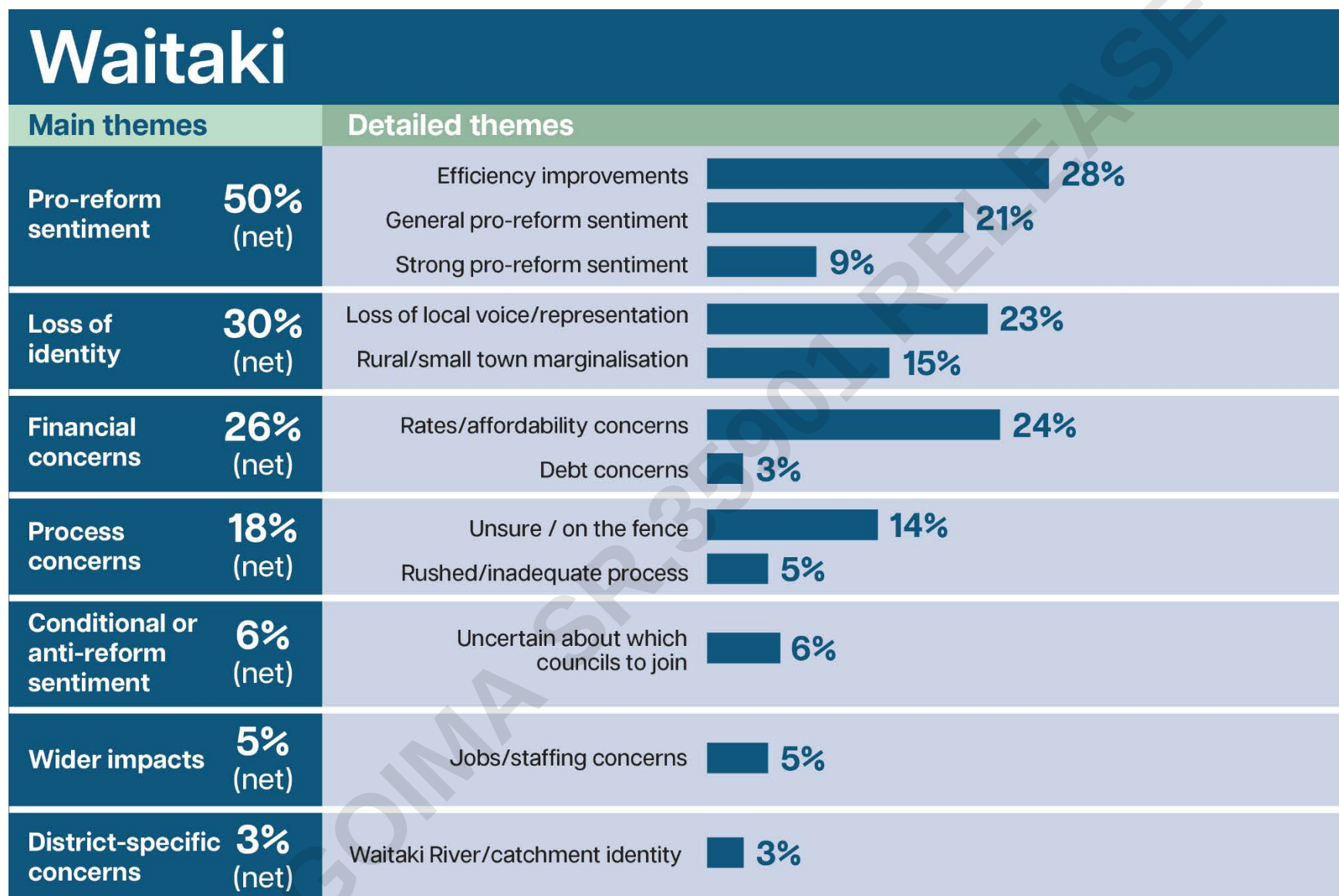
A total of 337 respondents from Waitaki provided a response to the question about how local government reform might affect them or their community. These responses were coded into groups after the data collection period and have been shown below.

Waitaki respondents appeared to be the most **pro-reform**, with a net 50% viewing reform in a positive light. This thinking was underpinned by a desire for greater efficiency and low levels of confidence in the current council.

However, despite the desire for a change, several comments noted concerns about a **loss of identity**, particularly for some of the very small communities which already struggle to gain traction in the current environment, e.g., Waihemo, Palmerston, Kakanui, or Otematata.

Another significant concern for these respondents was the **financial concerns** that could arise through reform. Current rates increases were frequently noted, with deep concerns that further rate increases through reform would make this untenable for people in the district, with specific mentions of the effects for those on fixed incomes.

Several respondents noted that they were unsure of what reform would bring and felt the process was rushed. A comment that was unique to Waitaki was **uncertainty about which councils to join**, i.e., Otago, South Canterbury or Dunedin. Strong views existed in favour of different options, with some seeing stronger links with Dunedin (particularly those with close geographical proximity), others seeing Timaru, Mackenzie, or Waimate as culturally and geographically more compatible.



Note: 'net' results ensure that each respondent is only counted once. Some may have provided more than one response within a theme.



Head Start Options Councils of Otago Region

Mayoral Forum, 3 July 2026

UPDATED TO INCLUDE GORE FINANCIALS, 15 July 2026



Prepared for:

Job #	Version	Written	Reviewed	Approved	Report Date
3143	3	A. Grace	S. Cross	S. Cross	15 July 2026

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Content



1. Introduction

2. Planning assessment

3. Communities of interest

4. Representation & structures

5. Financial benchmarks

6. Assessment against government criteria

Objective:

To support LG amalgamation decisions in Otago, whether or not a Head Start proposal is submitted

Workstreams:

Workstream	Outcomes
Community outcomes, what matters	Understanding what matters most to the community.
Community voice, early engagement	What should be protected? What do we want the district to become?
Process	An engagement approach focused on understanding priorities and readiness for change.
	Test community appetite to help inform the Head Start pathway.
	Focus on how elected members would navigate and manage the 95-day process.
	Clear governance, decision making pathways, and programme structure.
Head and heart	Understand communities of interest and key partnerships.
	Consider factors such as debt levels, relationships with mana whenua, growth pressures, regional alignment.
	Council building profile and becoming self-aware of where council sits within wider landscape.

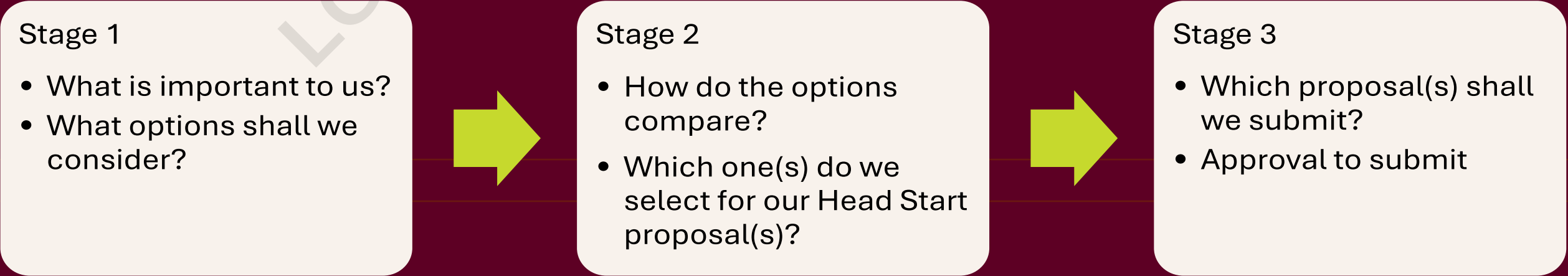
Scope:

Head and heart workstream (Morrison Low Advisory):

Body of evidence to support decision making:

- Communities of interest
- Council organisation and services
- Financial modelling and benchmarking
- Representation options
- Planning system alignment
- Commentary on alignment with government criteria

Process:



Options

Option 1: One region-wide Otago unitary councils

Option 2: Two unitary councils, inland & coastal

- QLDC + CODC
- DCC, CDC, WDC

Option 3: Three unitary councils, urban & rural

- QLDC
- DCC
- CODC + CDC + WDC

Sub-options:

- Waitaki (in part or full) joins Canterbury
- Extending Option 3 to consider Gore & wider Southland
- Extending Option 3 to consider Waimate & Mackenzie



Support for the new planning system

- Catchments
- Environmental limits
- Growth and infrastructure

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Planning system alignment

Catchment management:

Does the option split catchments making it harder to manage water quality, freshwater allocation, flooding, and environmental limits?

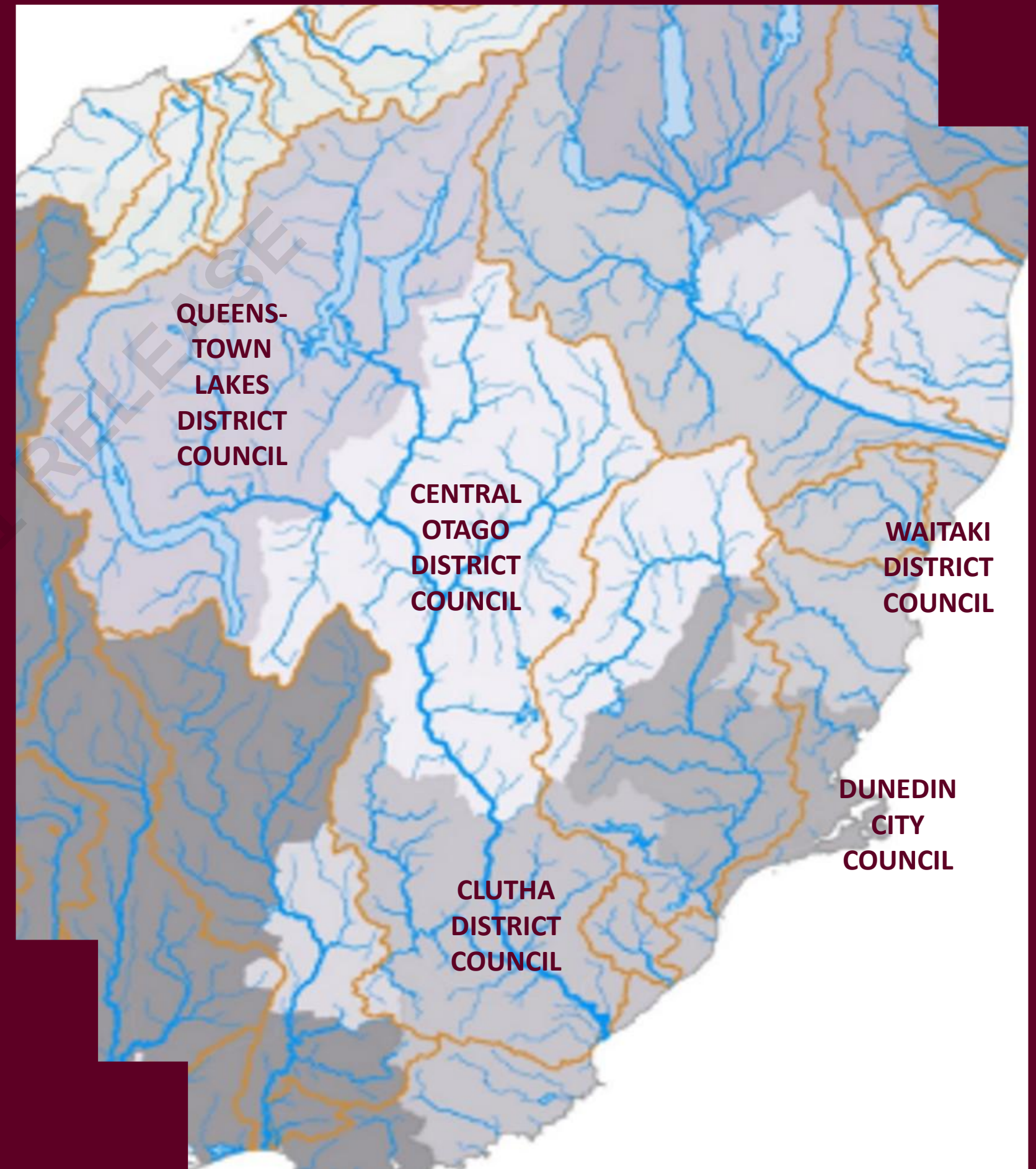
Management of environmental limits:

Does the option support management of land use and environmental limits?

Settlement and infrastructure:

Does the option support more effective and/or efficient planning of transport corridors, infrastructure servicing linked to growth and demand?

Catchment alignment
with district
boundaries:
The ability to set
environmental limits
and make catchment
level decisions

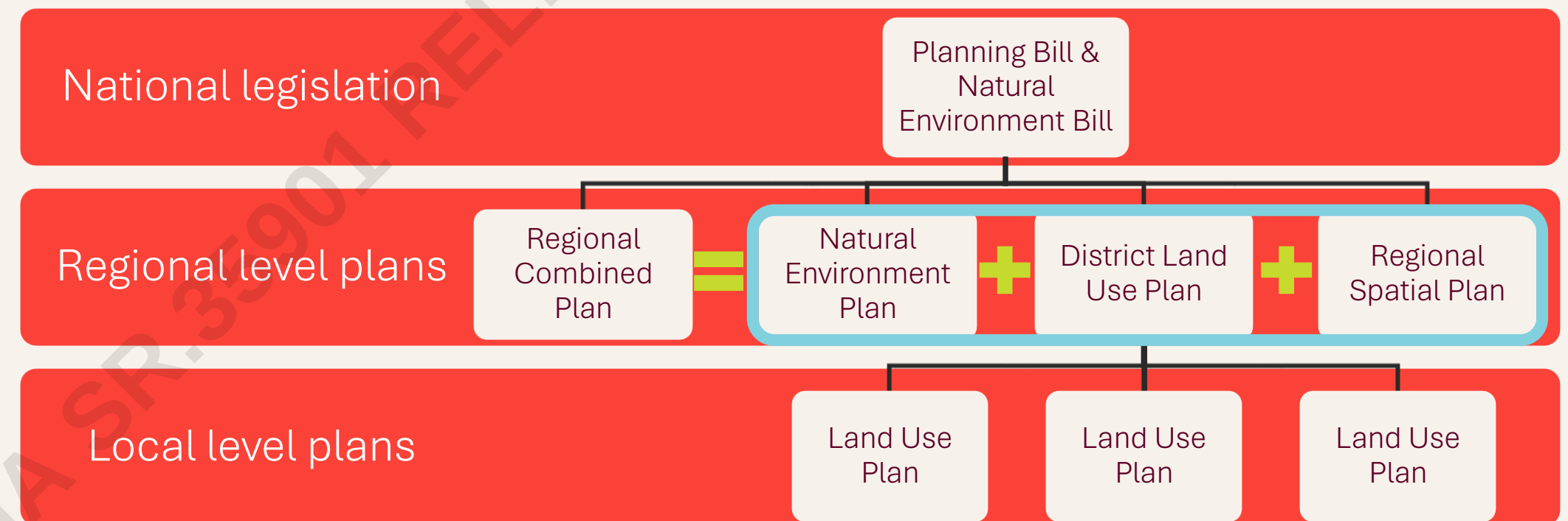


New planning framework – Plans hierarchy

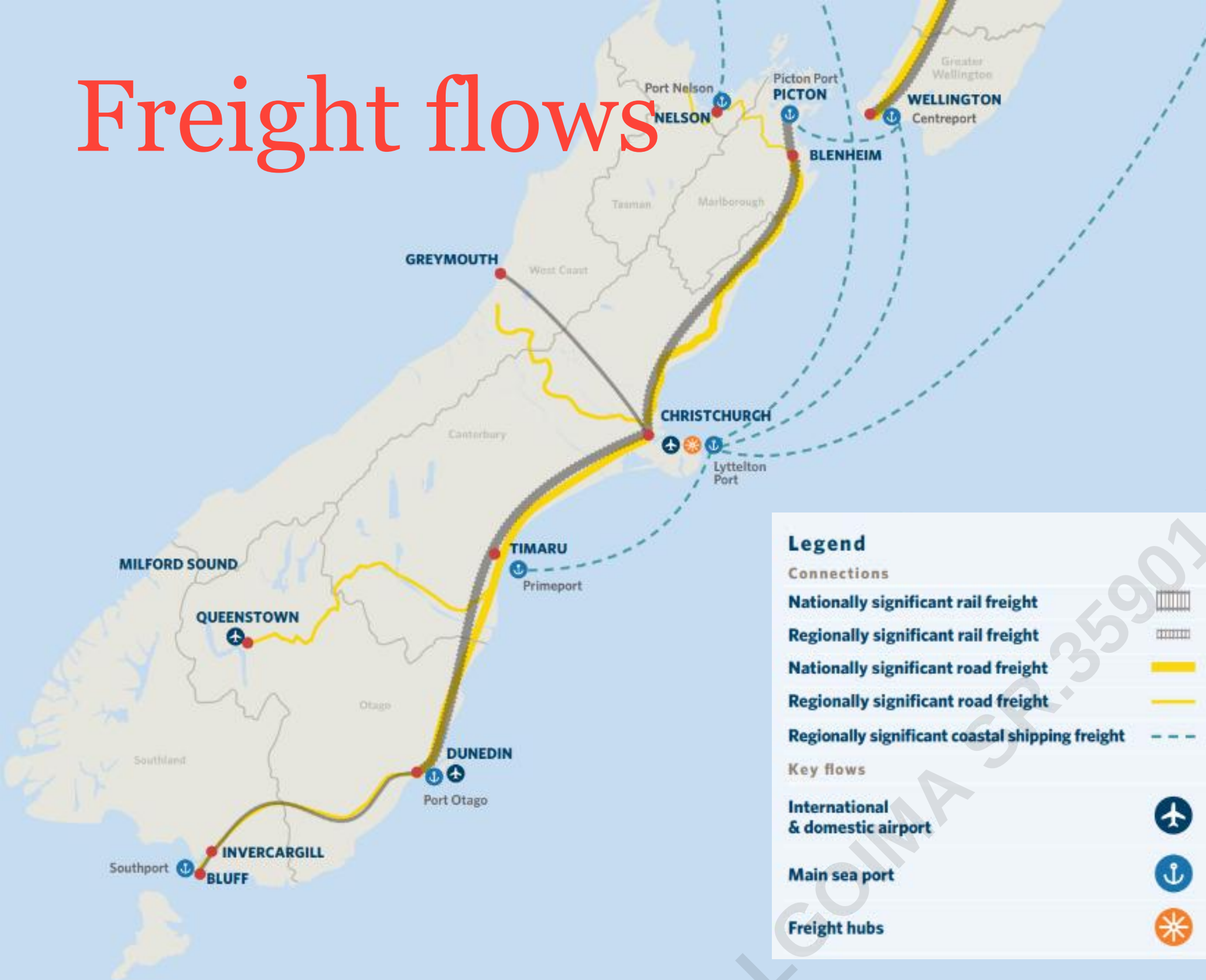
The new planning system has both regional and local plans depending on the local government structure.

The plan hierarchy alongside represents a region with a single Regional Authority and Local Authorities (status quo).

Under a Unitary Authority there would be no local Land Use Plans, only a District Land Use Plan.



Freight flows



Example of regional infrastructure co-ordination that crosses district boundaries

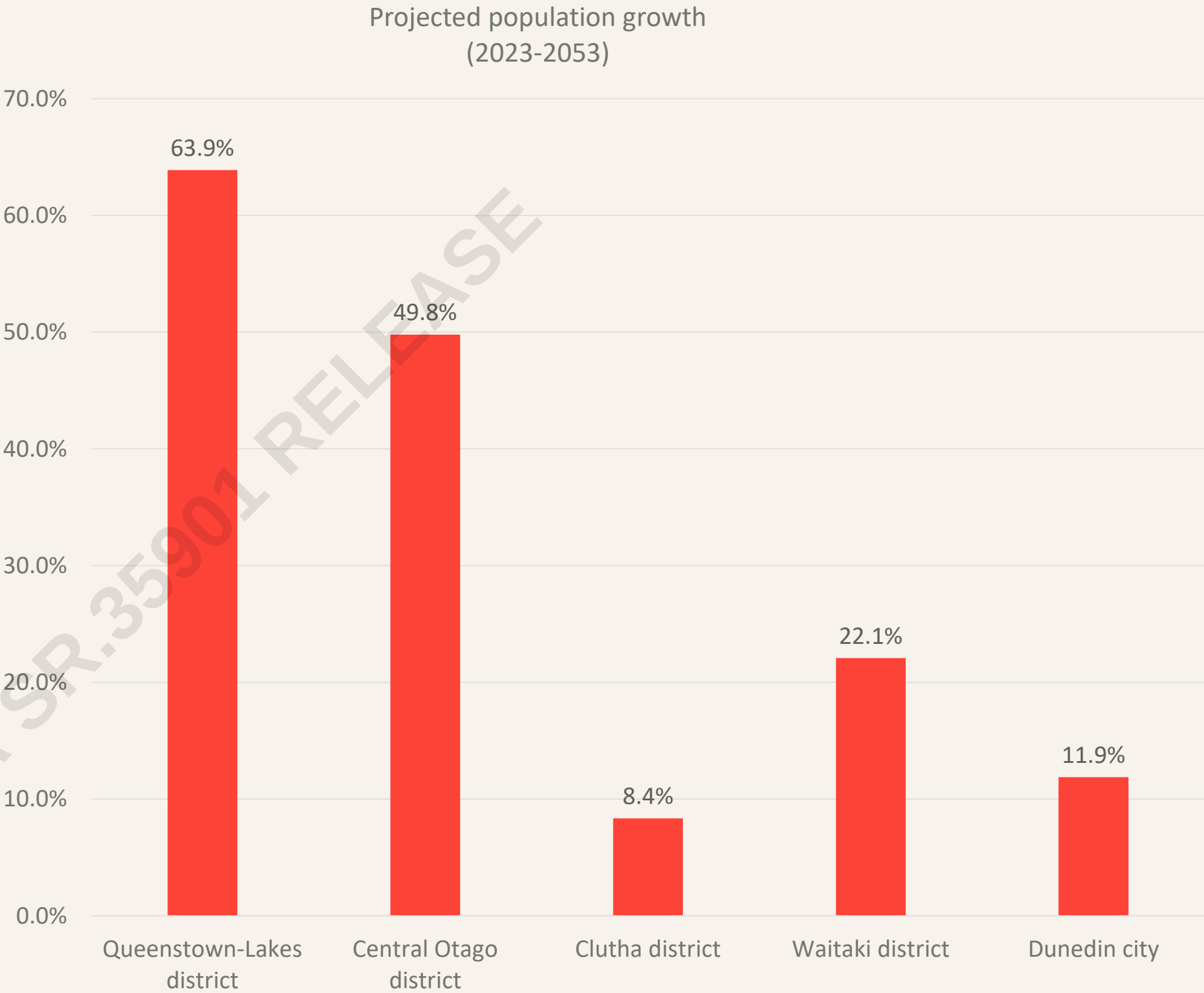
Growth pressures

Growth in one district can spill over into neighbouring districts. Land use planning and infrastructure provision needs to cross boundaries too

e.g. Queenstown and Central Otago

Note, updated growth projection inserted 15 July 2026.

30-year population growth uses the Statistics NZ 'High' projections for all councils, as this is preferable when making growth projections for Queenstown Lakes, without materially changing the projection for other councils.



Planning assessment

Option	Option 1: One region-wide Otago unitary	Option 2: Two unitary councils, inland & coastal	Option 3: Three unitary councils, urban & rural
Advantages	• Most complete catchment management. • Coordinated spatial planning. • Consistent environmental limits across region. • Reduces duplication and inconsistency. • Strong management of cumulative effects across catchments and communities. • Less plans overall.	• Strong alignment inland catchments. • Coherent growth and infrastructure planning for inland growth corridor. • Coordinated planning for Dunedin and coastal settlements, e.g. transport • Simpler integration existing planning frameworks. • Improved consistency across participating districts relative to status quo	• Simplest integration existing planning frameworks. • Well suited to metropolitan planning, meeting different needs of Dunedin and Queenstown. • Focused governance for fast-growing, tourism-focused Queenstown. • Rural authority has strong focus rural land use, primary production and natural resources. • Rural authority covers significant portions of major catchments.
Disadvantages	• Large geographic area • Complex integration existing planning frameworks. • May initially slow implementation of planning reforms.	• Splits catchment systems into upper and lower. • Requires significant coordination between authorities e.g. freshwater management. • Infrastructure planning disconnect between inland and coastal areas, e.g. transport. • May transfer rather than eliminate planning boundary issues. • Less effective in managing cumulative effects across catchments and communities.	• Weakest alignment catchment-based planning. • Narrow geographic scope for urban unitaries • Disconnect urban and rural unitaries limits strategic planning for growth and infrastructure. • Requires extensive coordination between authorities e.g. freshwater management. • Fragmented spatial and environmental planning. • May struggle to align rural management with urban growth pressures and downstream effects.
Overall	Strongest catchment and region-wide planning with least duplication, but its large scale creates competing priorities.	Enables focus on specific inland and coastal needs, but splits catchments and relies on strong coordination between the two councils.	Enables focus on specific urban and rural needs, but weakest catchment alignment and most fragmented, coordination-heavy planning.

Communities of interest

- Community expectations and connections

Communities of interest

Alignment of needs and expectations of council

Does the option group together communities with aligned needs and expectations of council?

Can people agree on what council should do?

Community connections

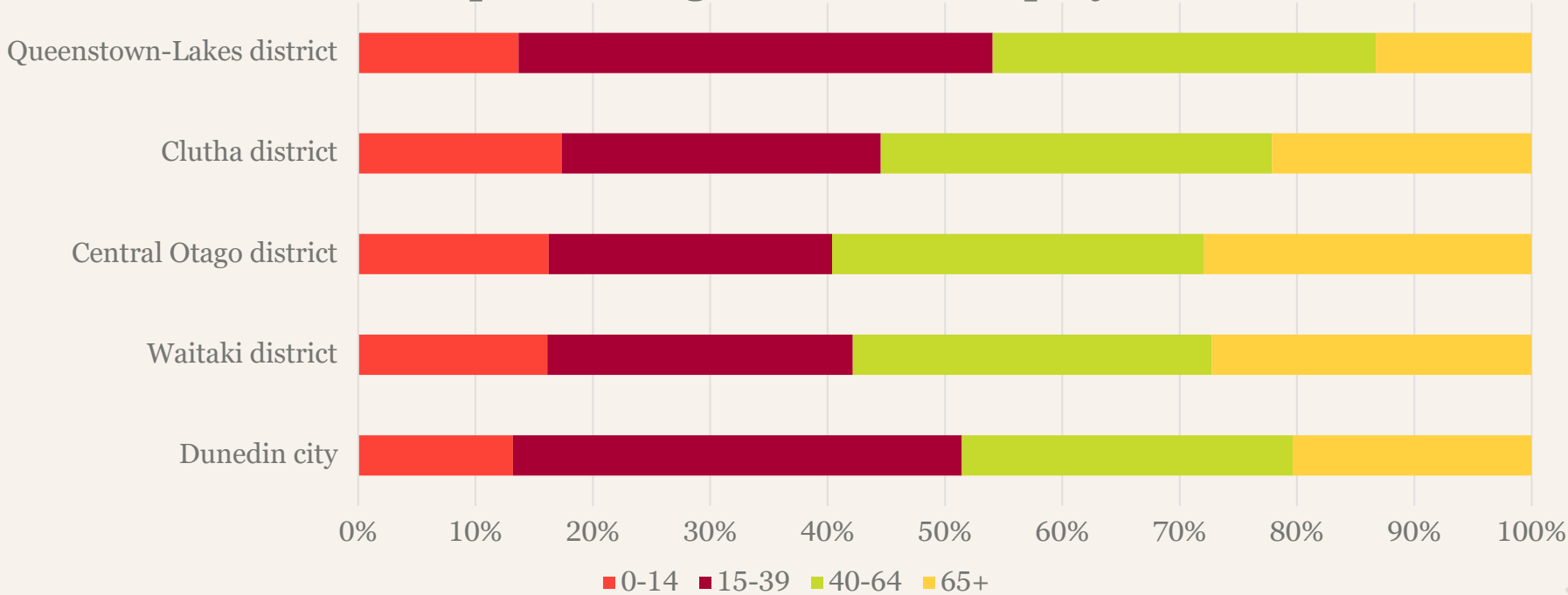
Will this council make sense economically and functionally?

Do these areas complement each other?

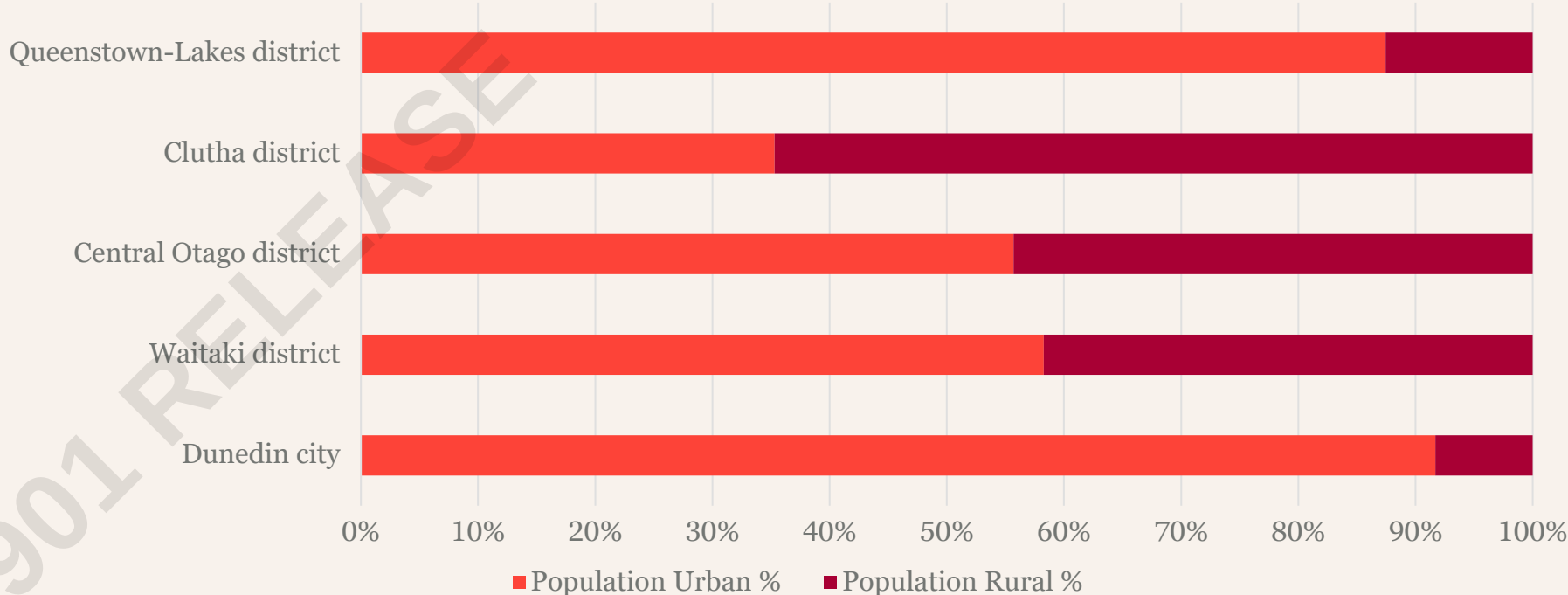
Are we connecting where people live and work? Significant industries with their supply and delivery chains? Housing markets with employment opportunities?

Population profile

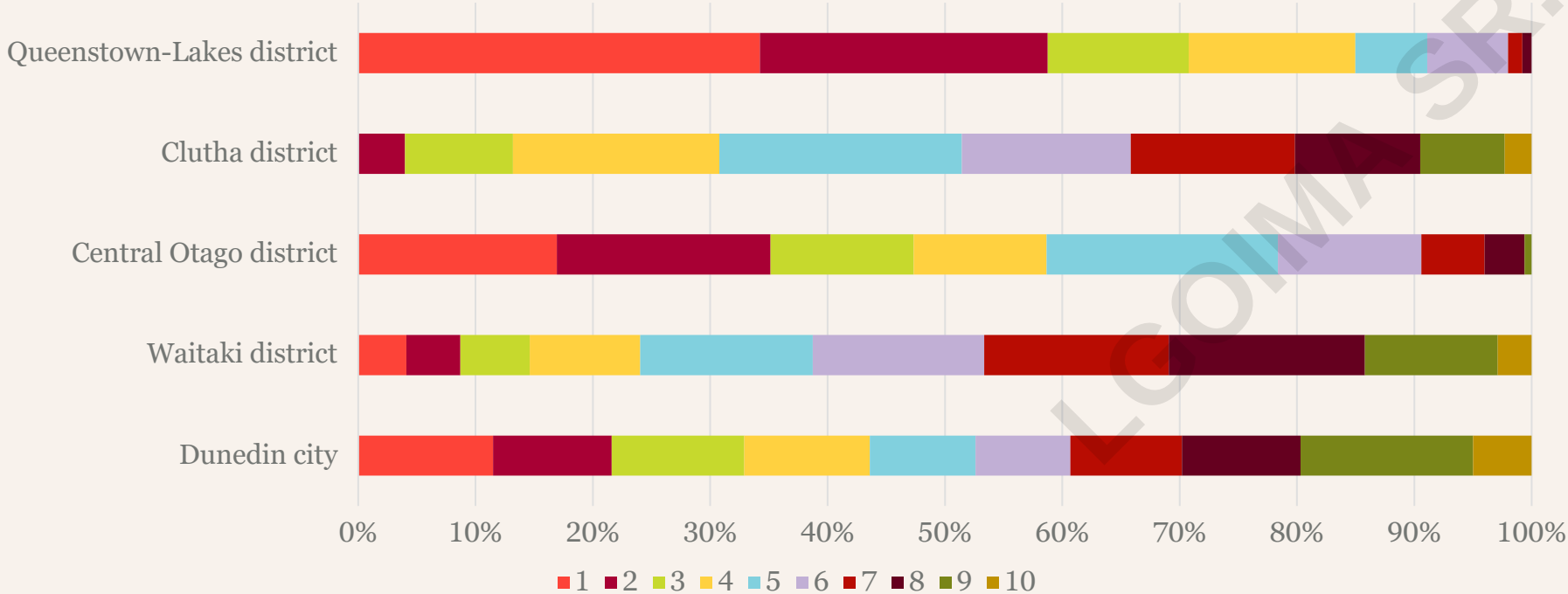
Population Age Profile (2028 projection)



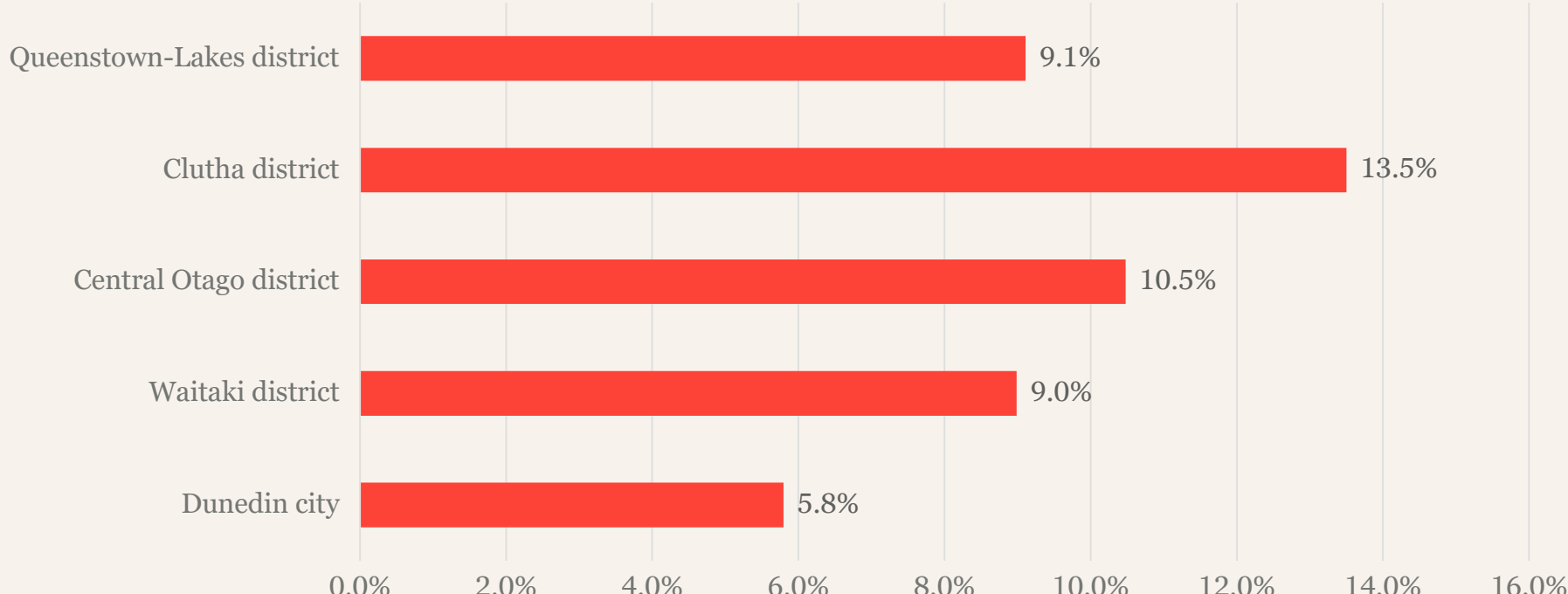
Urban/rural split (by population)



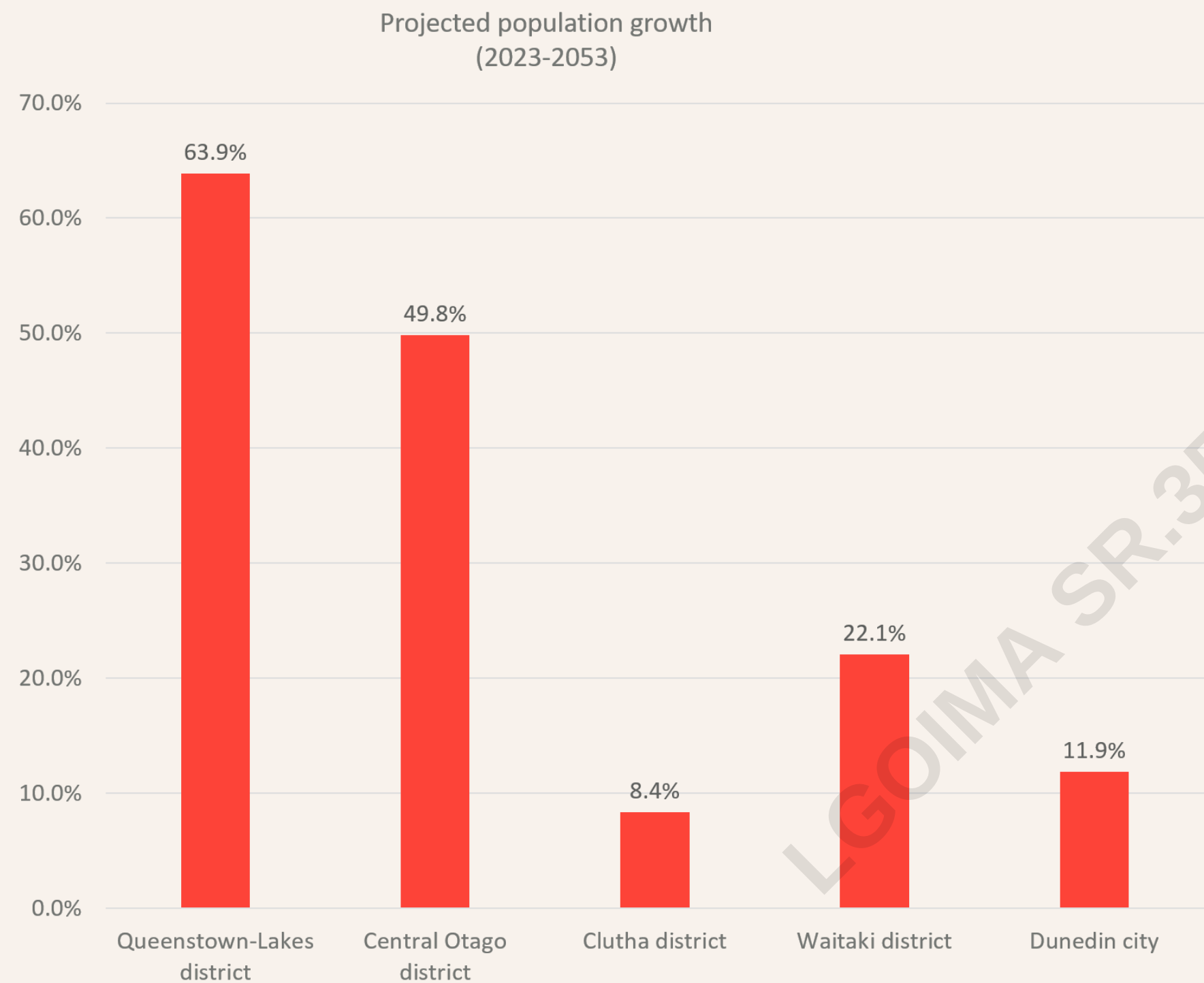
Socioeconomic and Deprivation Profile



Māori population (%)

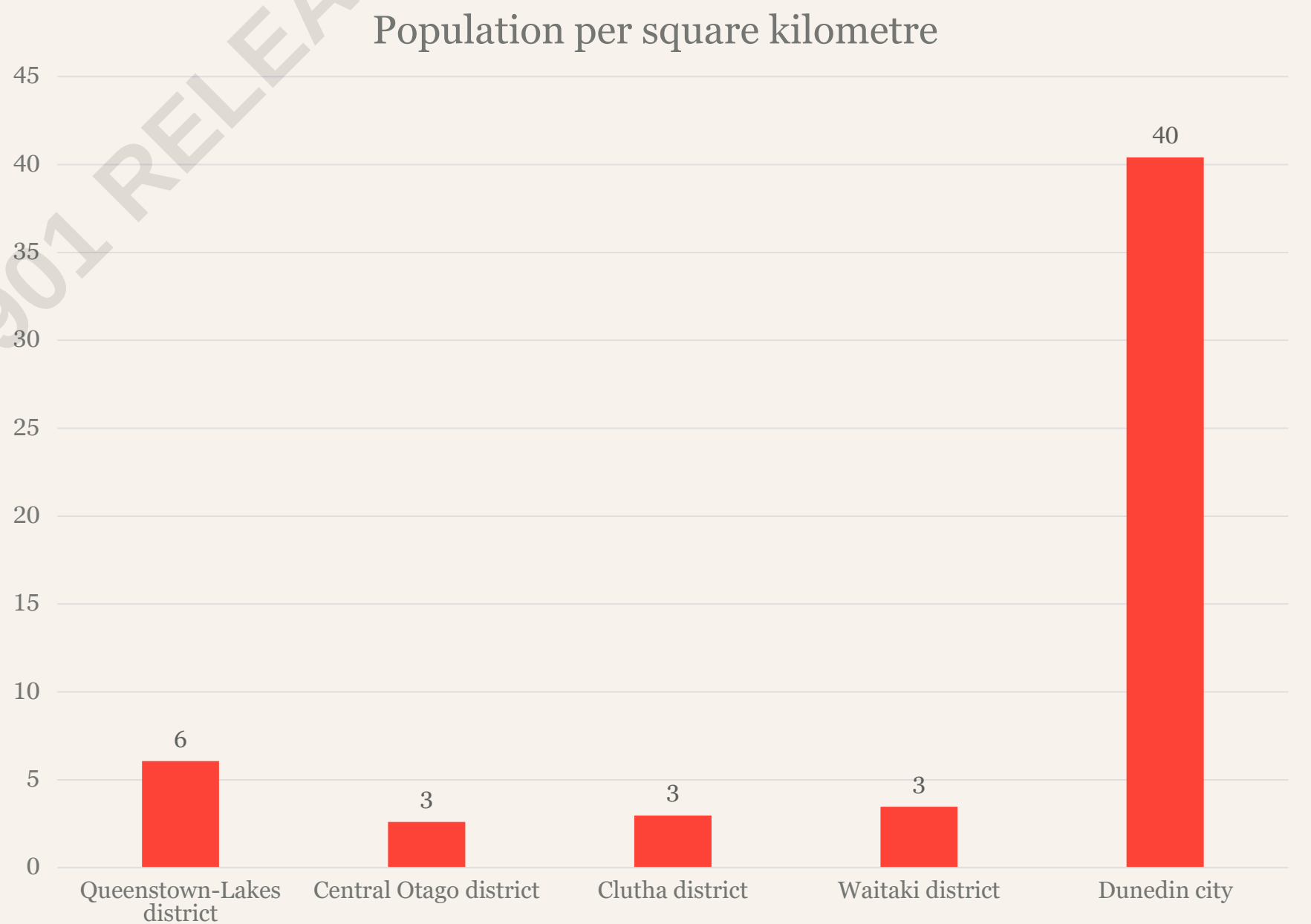


Population and growth



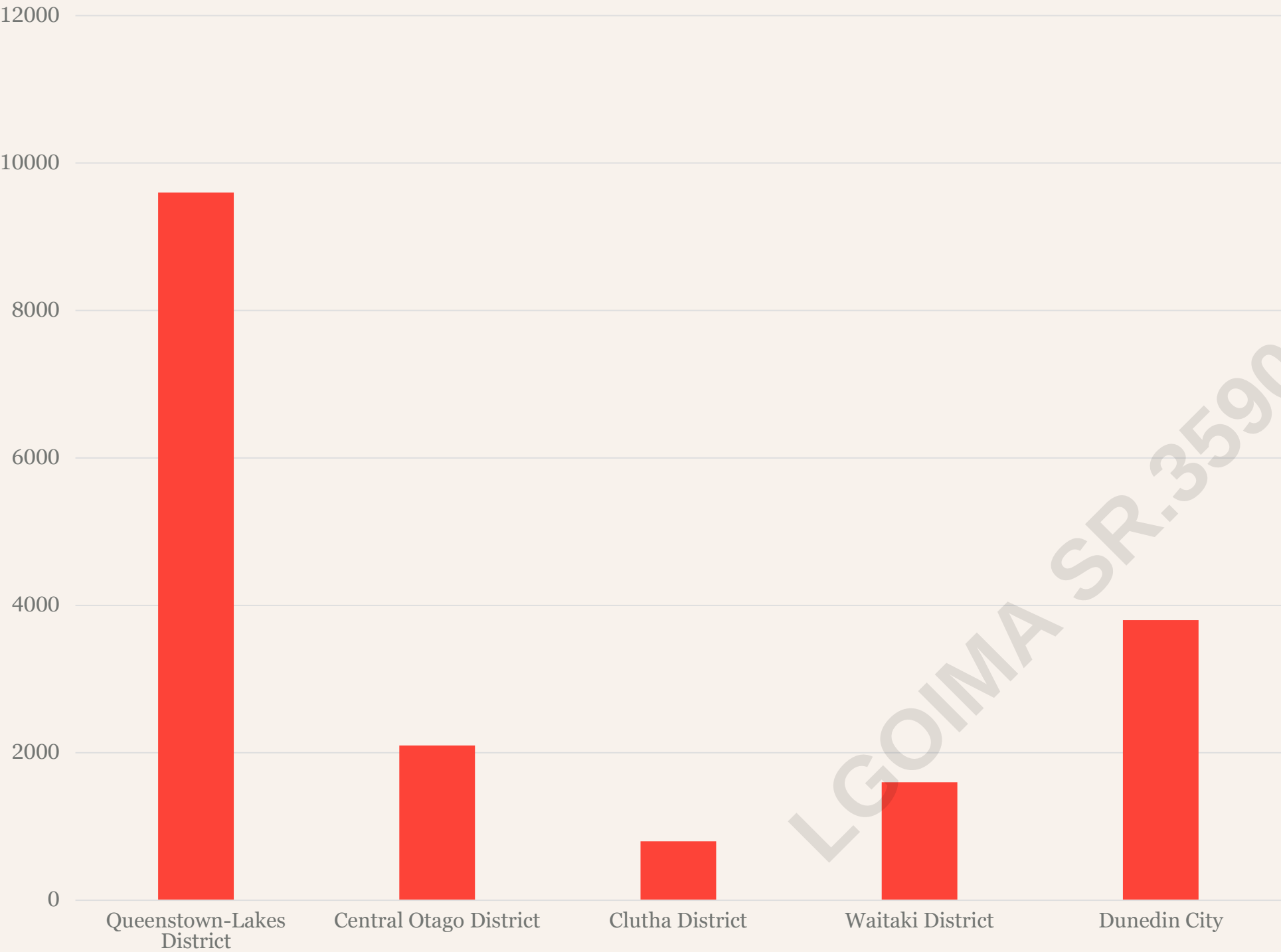
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Council	Land Area (sq. km)	Population	Urban Pop.	Rural Pop.
Queenstown-Lakes District	8,700	52,800	48,600	4,200
Central Otago District	9,900	25,800	14,500	11,300
Clutha District	6,300	18,800	6,600	12,200
Waitaki District	7,100	24,600	14,300	10,300
Dunedin City	3,300	132,800	122,200	10,600



Businesses and Visitor nights

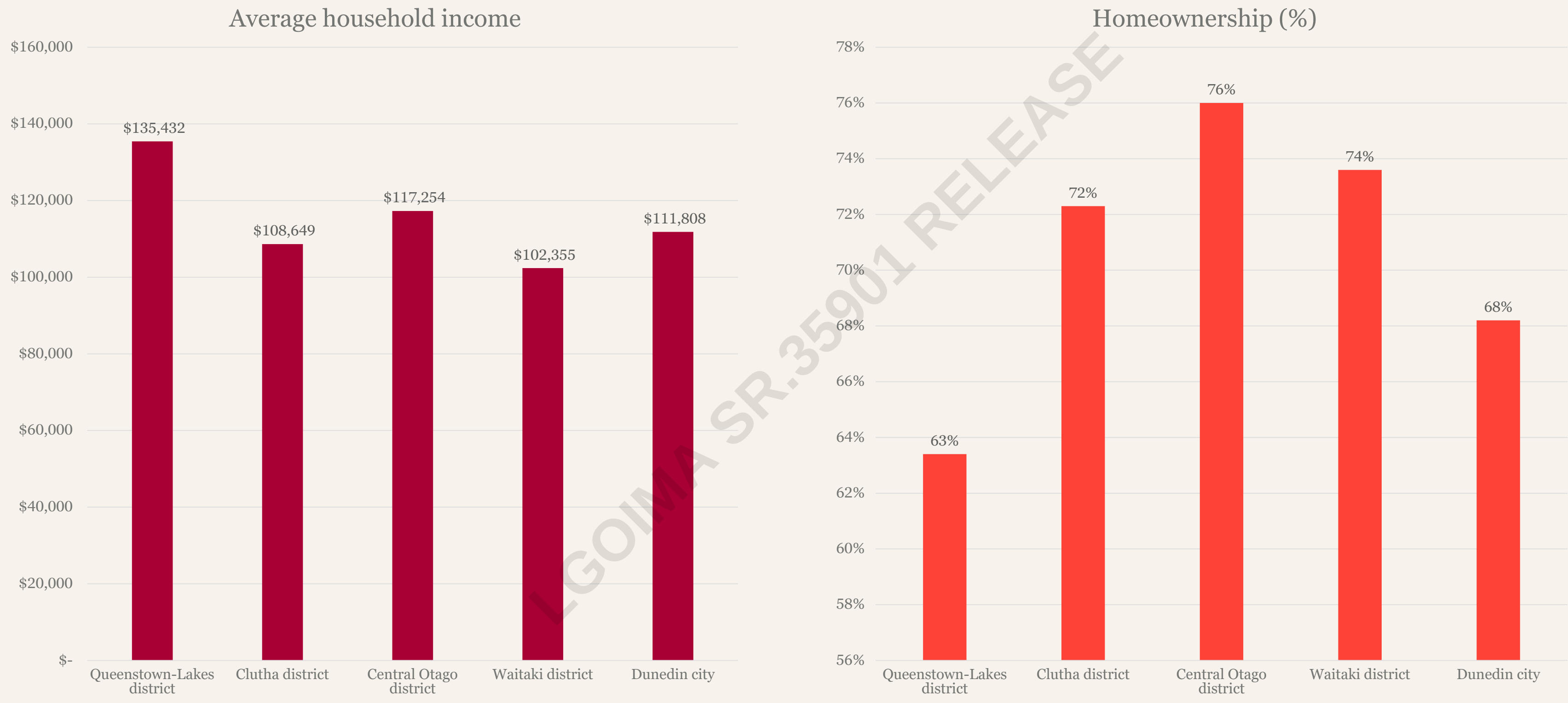
Visitor nights (000s)



Number of businesses

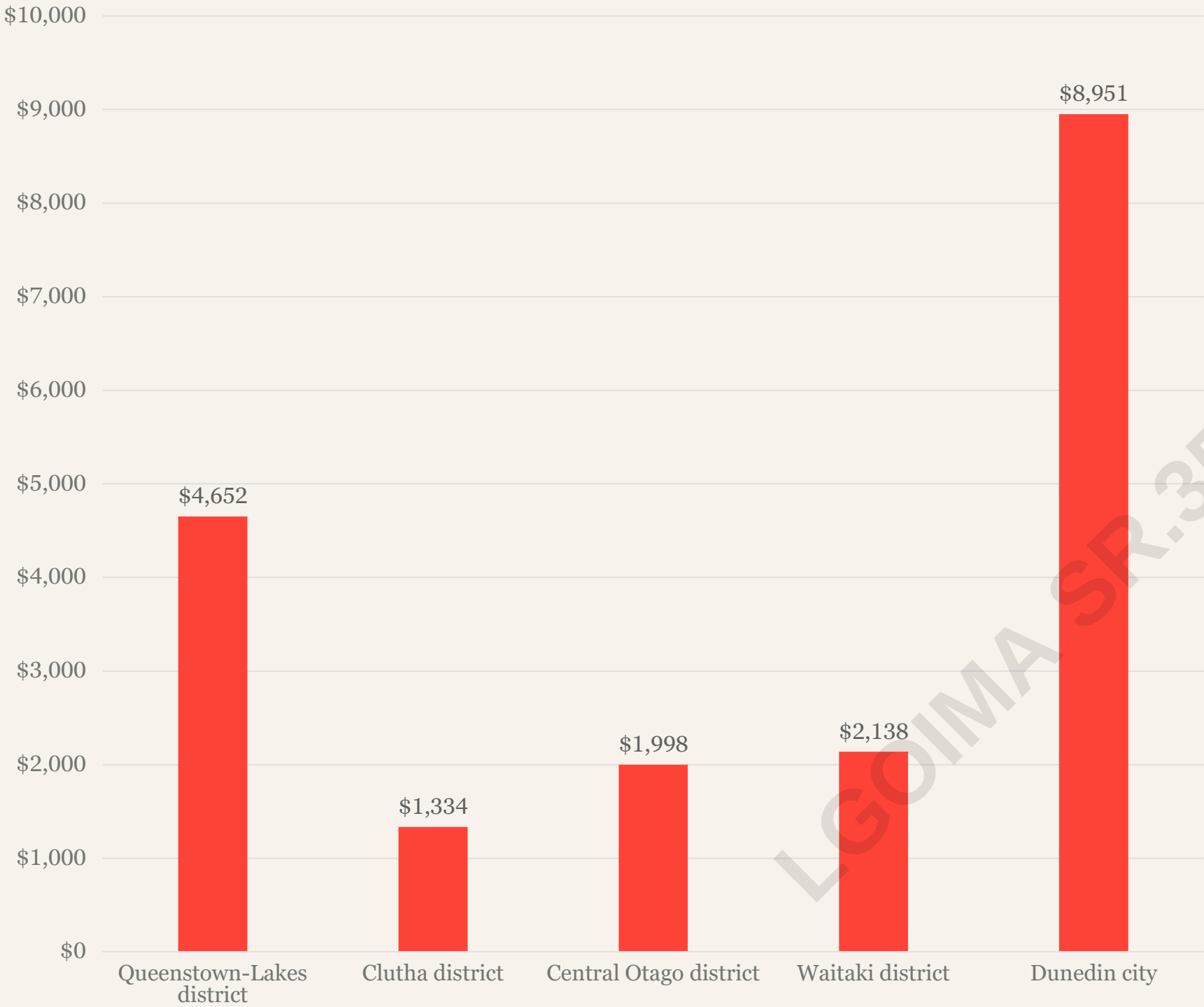


Household income and home ownership

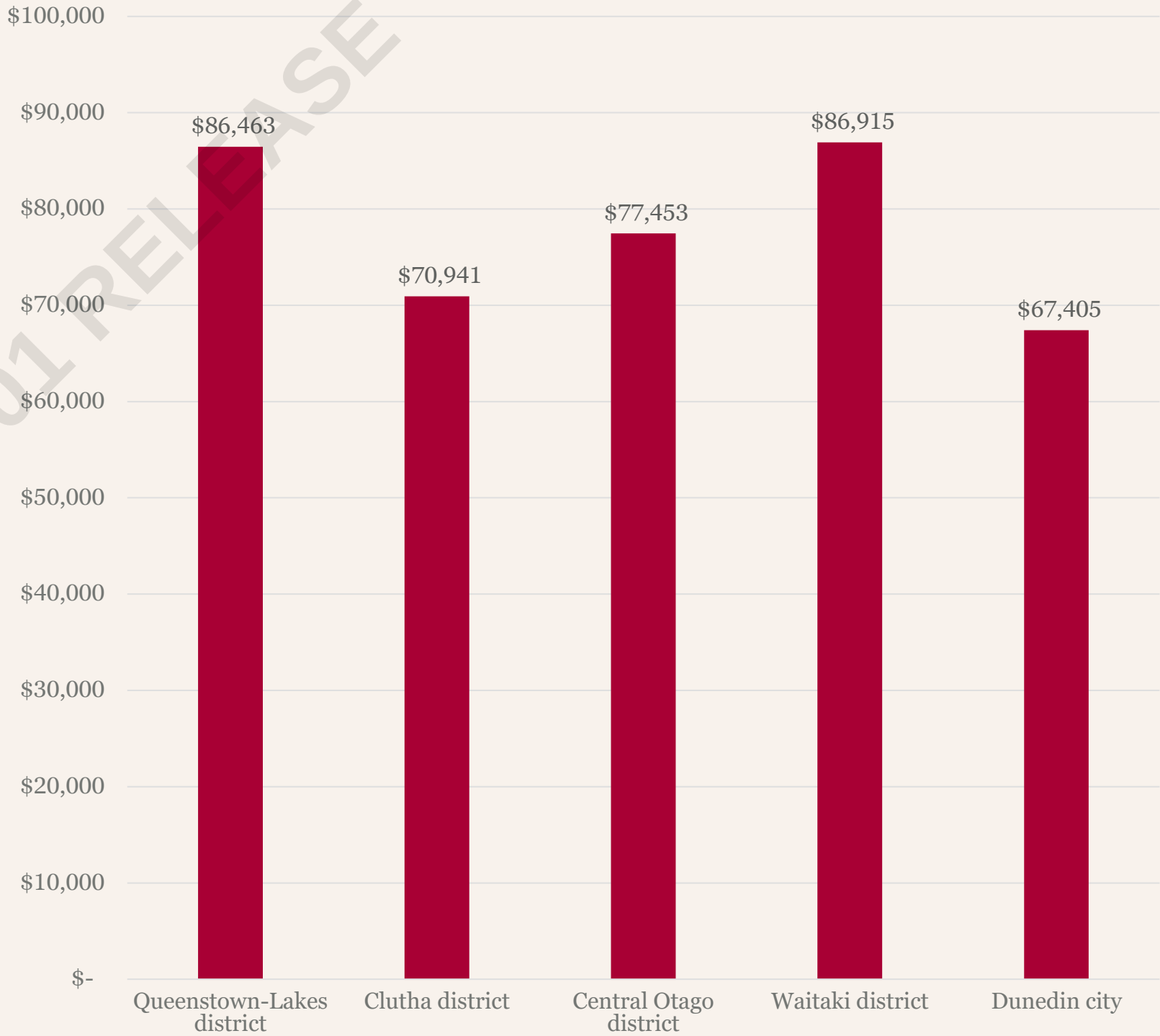


GDP

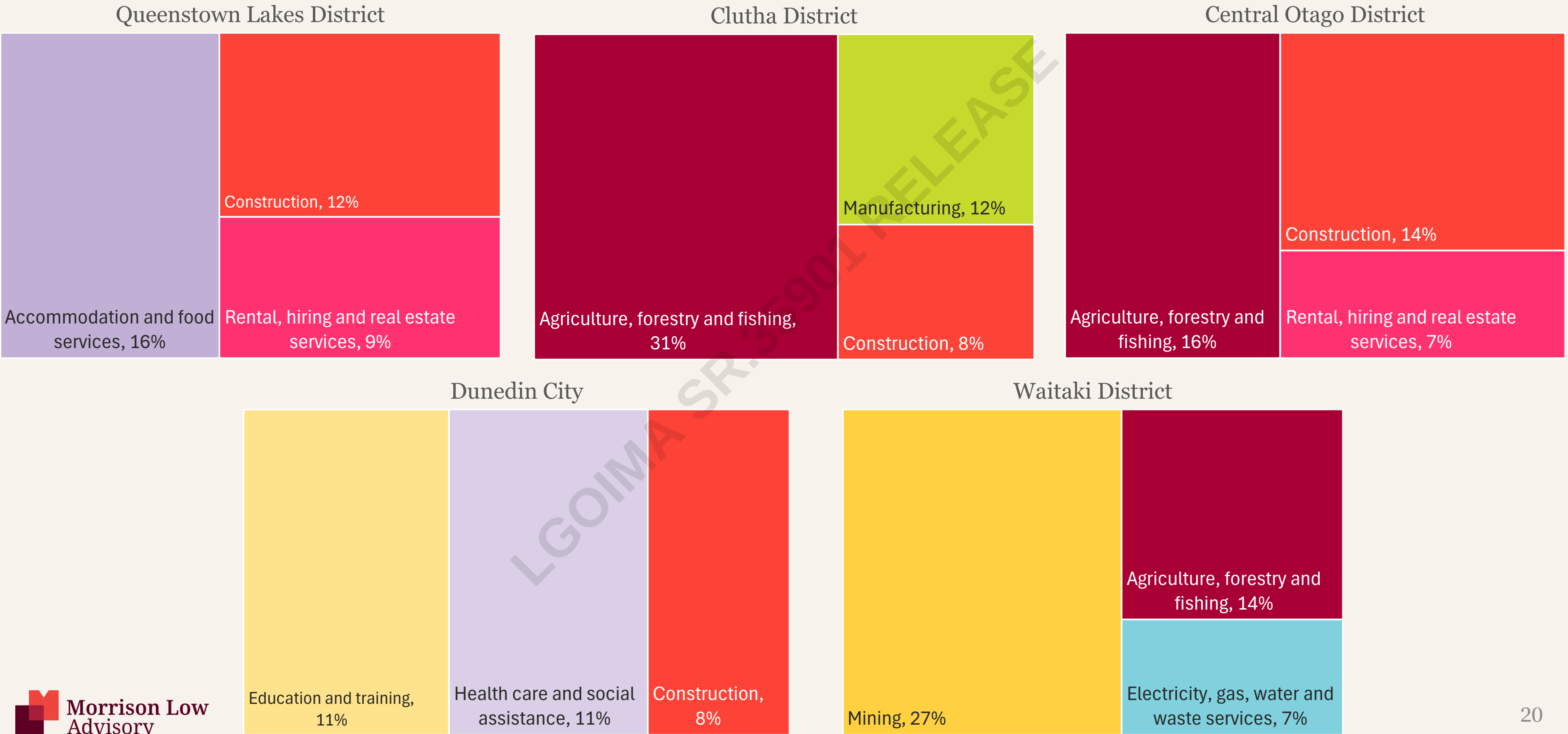
Total GDP (\$M)



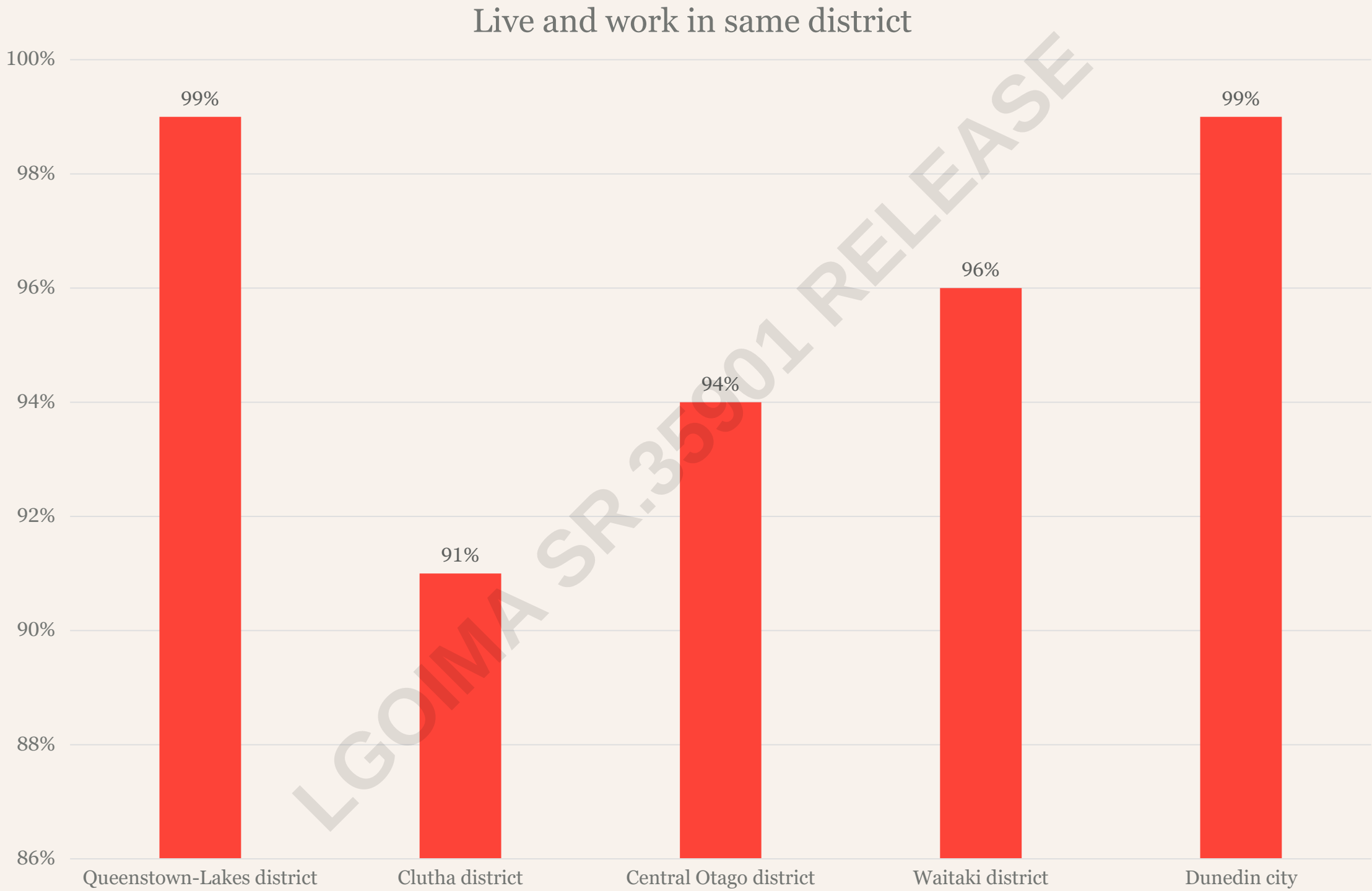
GDP per capita



Top three industries by GDP

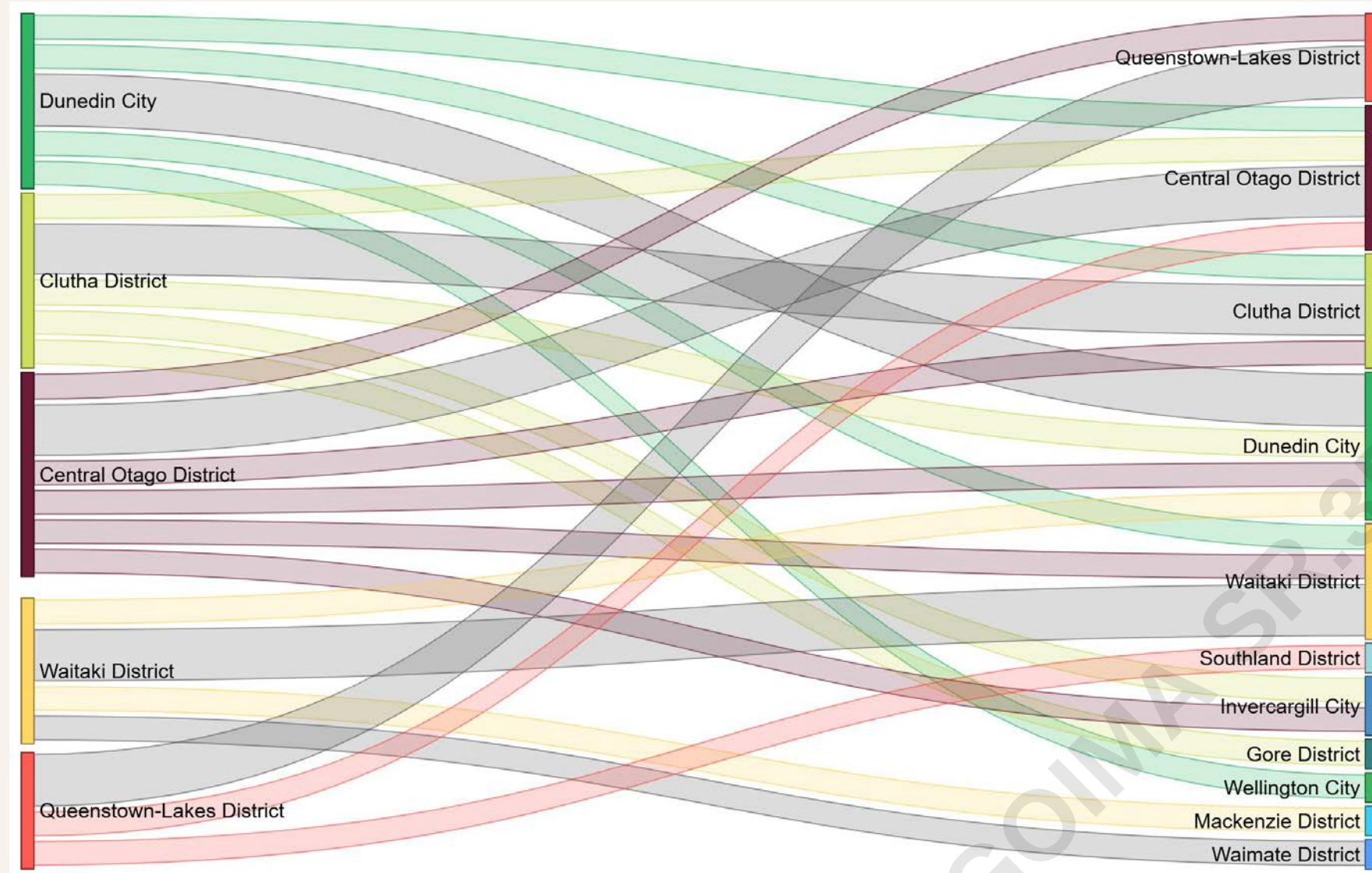


Commuter movements

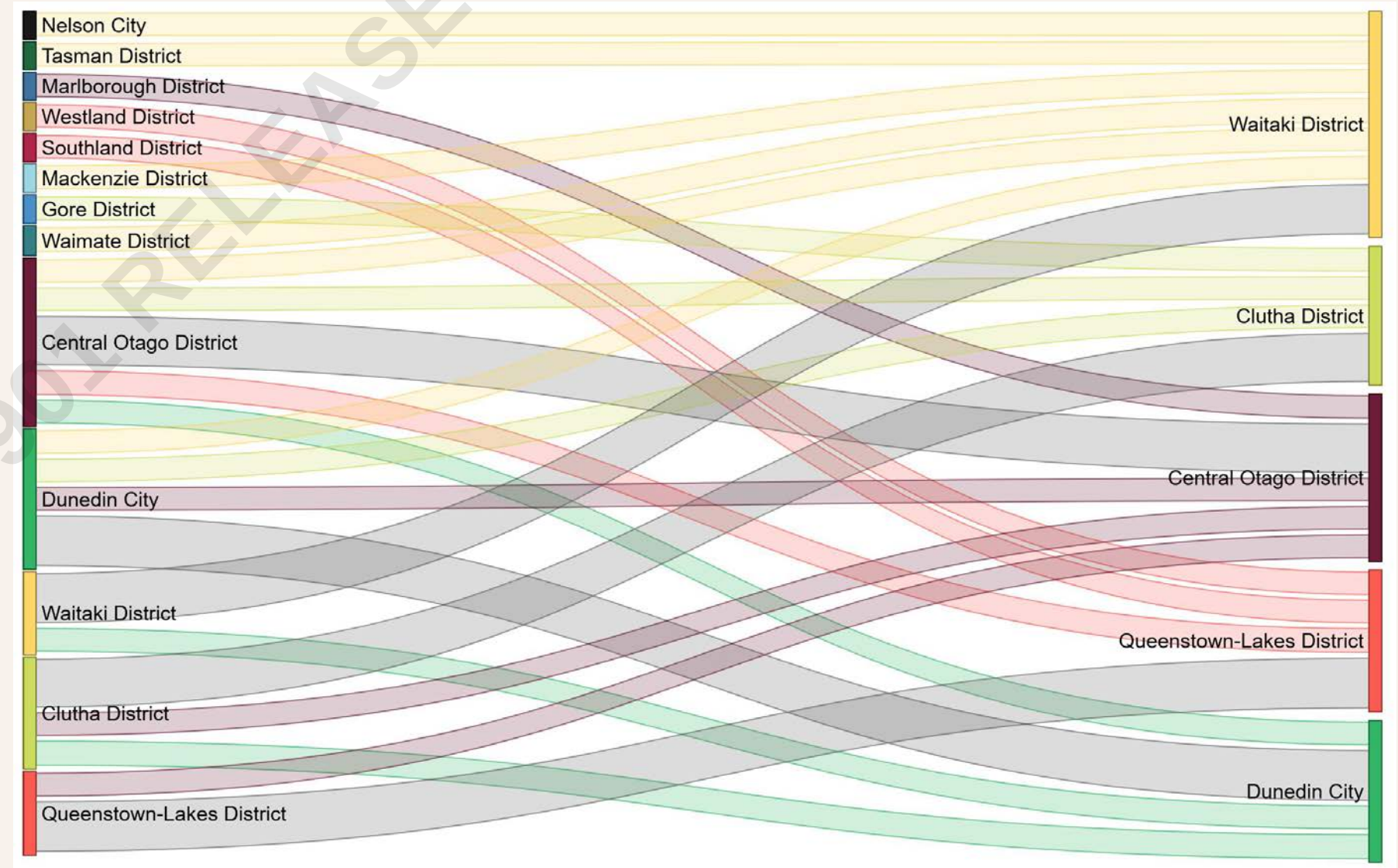


Labour movements

Labour movements out



Labour movements in



Communities of interest

Option	Option 1: One region-wide Otago unitary	Option 2: Two unitary councils, inland & coastal	Option 3: Three unitary councils, urban & rural
Advantages	Connected communities remain together	- Keeps connection between Queenstown and the parts of Central Otago that are similar to it - Separates Queenstown from Dunedin, two distinctly different towns	- Rural communities that are similar remain together e.g. size of their economies are similar - Queenstown and Dunedin, while both urban, are different and remain separated
Disadvantages	- Two urban centres, Dunedin and Queenstown, under one authority, but they are distinctly different - Interests of smaller, different communities (e.g. urban, rural) struggle to be heard in region-wide decisions	Splits inland rural communities from coastal ones, diluting the rural voice	- Splits Central Otago from its connection to Queenstown - Rural communities that are part of Dunedin or Queenstown are disconnected from similar rural communities in Clutha, Waitaki and Central Otago.
Overall	Reduces influence of different communities when combined unitary tries to meet all needs.	Recognises differences between the two urban centres and their surrounds, but rural voice is diluted.	A stronger rural voice and a recognition of differences Dunedin and Queenstown, but a loss of connection between rural communities and urban centres they use.

Representation, governance and delivery

- Will representation feel fair?
- How similar are current approaches?
- Alignment with current arrangements

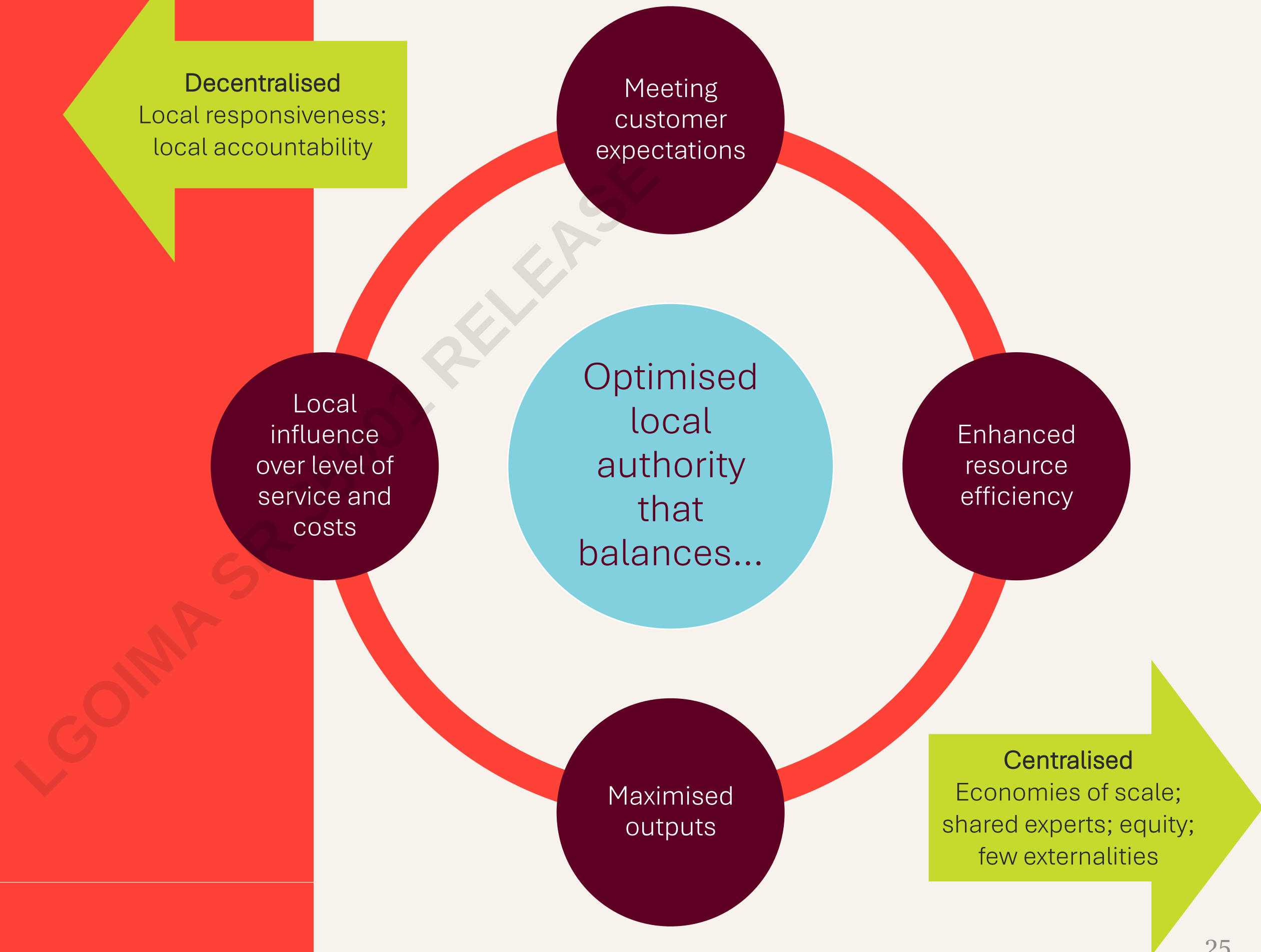
Optimisation challenge

Centralisation supports:

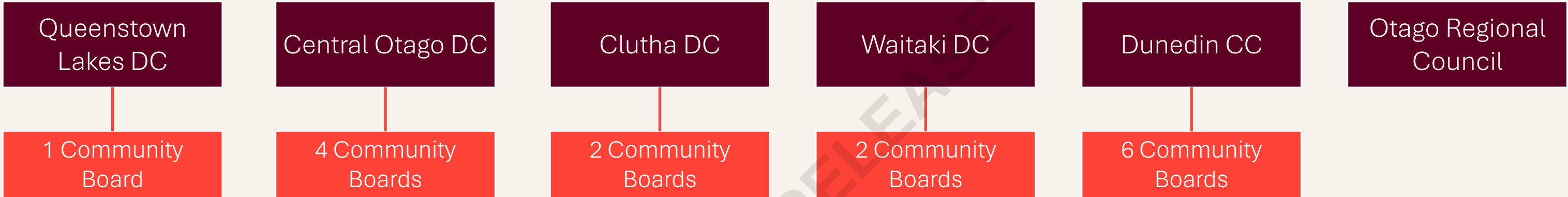
- Resource efficiency and maximised outputs

Decentralisation supports:

- Meeting customer needs and enabling local influence over levels of service and costs



Current representation



	QLDC	CODC	CDC	WDC	DCC	ORC
General Wards	Yes (3)	Yes (4)	Yes (8)	Yes (4)	No (at large)	Yes (4)
Māori Wards	No	No	No	No	No	No
Community Boards	Yes (1)	Yes (4)	Yes (2)	Yes (2)	Yes (6)	No
Committees	9	5	3	4	2	0
No. of Councillors	11	10	9	10	14	12
Population / Councillor	4,900	2,600	2,100	2,500	9,500	21,300

- Compared to other parts of the country, similar governance arrangements across the region

Comparison of representation

Option	Option 1: region-wide	Option 2: inland	Option 2: coastal	Option 3: QLDC	Option 3: DCC	Option 3: rural	Existing unitary authorities	Existing TAs pop >100,000	Auckland Council
Population	256,000	79,000	176,000	53,800	132,800	69,200	50,000-60,000	110,000-420,000	1,800,000
Current wards	19	7	12	4	At large	16	1-5	2-16	12
Current councillors	54	21	33	11	14	29	12-14	9-16	20
Current population per councillor (av.)	4,700	3,800	5,300	4,900	9,500	2,400	3,600-4,400	9,000-26,000	140,000
Current community boards	15	5	10	1	6	8	0-2	0-6	21 (local boards)
Changes as a result of amalgamation	Likely to see a reduction in wards, councillors and community boards, based on similar sized authorities	Less reduction in wards, councillors and community boards than Option 1. Coastal likely to have more consolidation than inland, based on similar sized authorities		QLDC and DCC remain unchanged. Rural authority likely to see a reduction in wards, councillors and community boards (based on similar sized authorities)					

- A reduction in wards and councillors could be offset by having a more empowered second tier of governance like Auckland Council's local boards or something new.

Community boards vs Local boards

- Both are governance only, neither set rates and neither have dedicated delivery organisations
- Community boards = Authority delegated by council of the day (variable)
- Local boards = Authority defined in legislation, not by council (fixed)

Dimension	Community Boards	Local Boards (Auckland Model)
Legal basis	Local Government Act 2002, Part 4, Subpart 2	Local Government Act 2002 (Part 4, Subpart 1A) + Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009
Status in governance	Subordinate to council	Part of formal governance structure (shared governance)
Core purpose	Representation, advocacy, local input	Enable democratic decision-making at local level
Strategic role	Limited, advisory	Recognised role in shaping local priorities and outcomes
Decision-making powers	Only what is delegated by council	Statutory decision-making responsibilities + delegated powers
Durability of powers	Delegations can be changed or removed at any time	More stable — embedded in governance model
Budget control	May be given a delegated budget (revocable)	Allocated local board budgets as part of council planning framework
Ability to influence LTP / plans	Provides submissions and advice only	Has formal input rights into regional strategies and plans
Service delivery responsibility	None	Decide on local services, delivery by council staff / CCOs
Revenue raising	None	Not directly, but can influence targeted rates and budgets
Asset ownership / control	None	Not directly, but can influence local asset use
Staff / contracting authority	None	None directly (via council systems)

Local representation is not limited to formal boards

Alternatives:

1. Targeted engagement with affected groups

- Iwi and hapū engagement
- Industry, sector, and community group input
- Advisory committees and working groups

Provides issue-specific expertise and representation

2. Statutory consultation processes

- Long-Term Plan, Annual Plan, bylaw consultations
- Resource management and plan processes

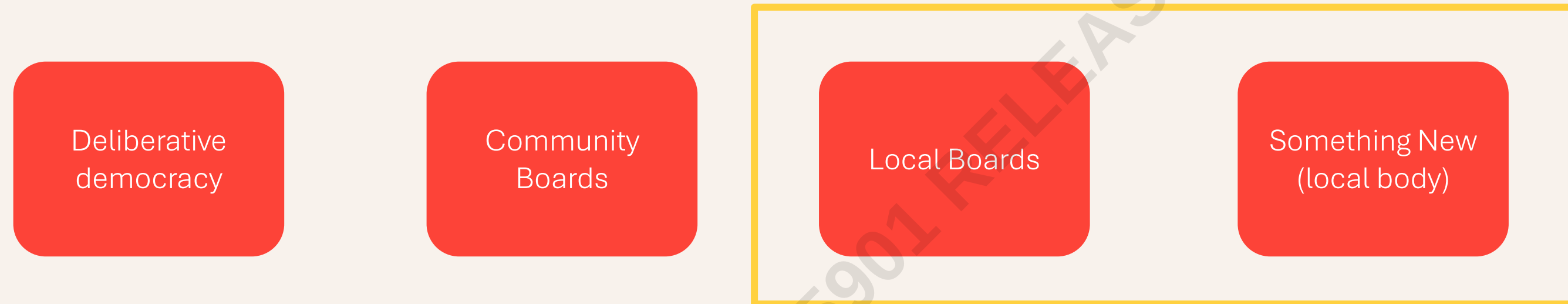
Provides formal, open public input at key decision points

3. Deliberative democracy approaches (emerging)

- Citizens' panels, juries, and assemblies
- Representative residents engaged in informed, structured deliberation

Provides deep but narrow insight into community values and trade-offs

Local representation options



- *Could be a hybrid between community board and local board*
- *Could have more responsibility than local boards*
- **Could* have delivery responsibility*

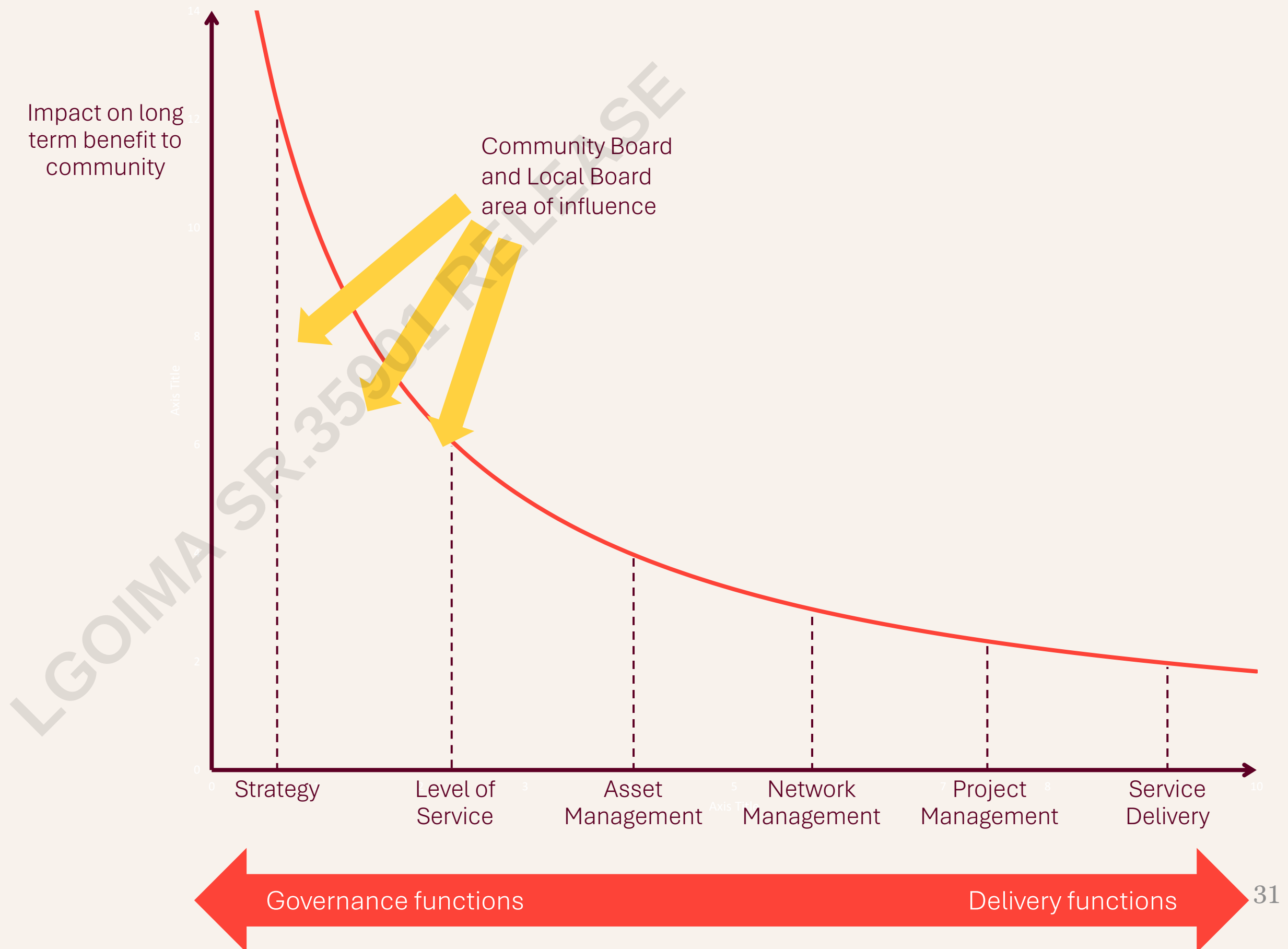
Local body delegation should be effective

The decisions on the LHS of the graph have a much larger impact on the community.

- They set direction
- They decide what shapes the community
- They are the 'What' questions

Decisions on the RHS of the graph

- Deliver the outcomes
- They are the 'How' questions



Delegation to local bodies

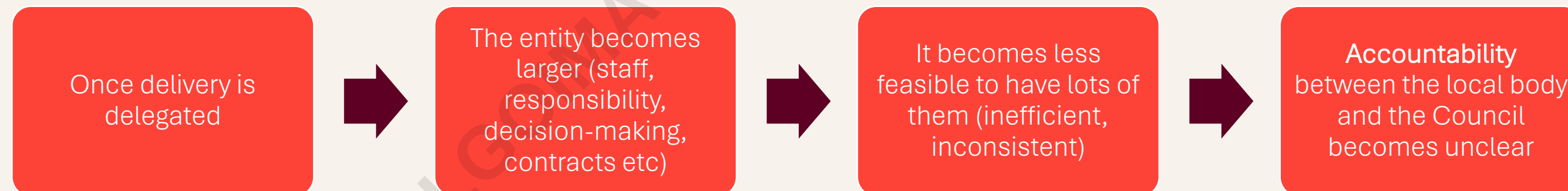
Governance only

Current community boards and local boards sit here

- Governance only, no delivery
- Feasible to have a higher number of local bodies
- Each represents a smaller area
- Input and responsibility is highly targeted

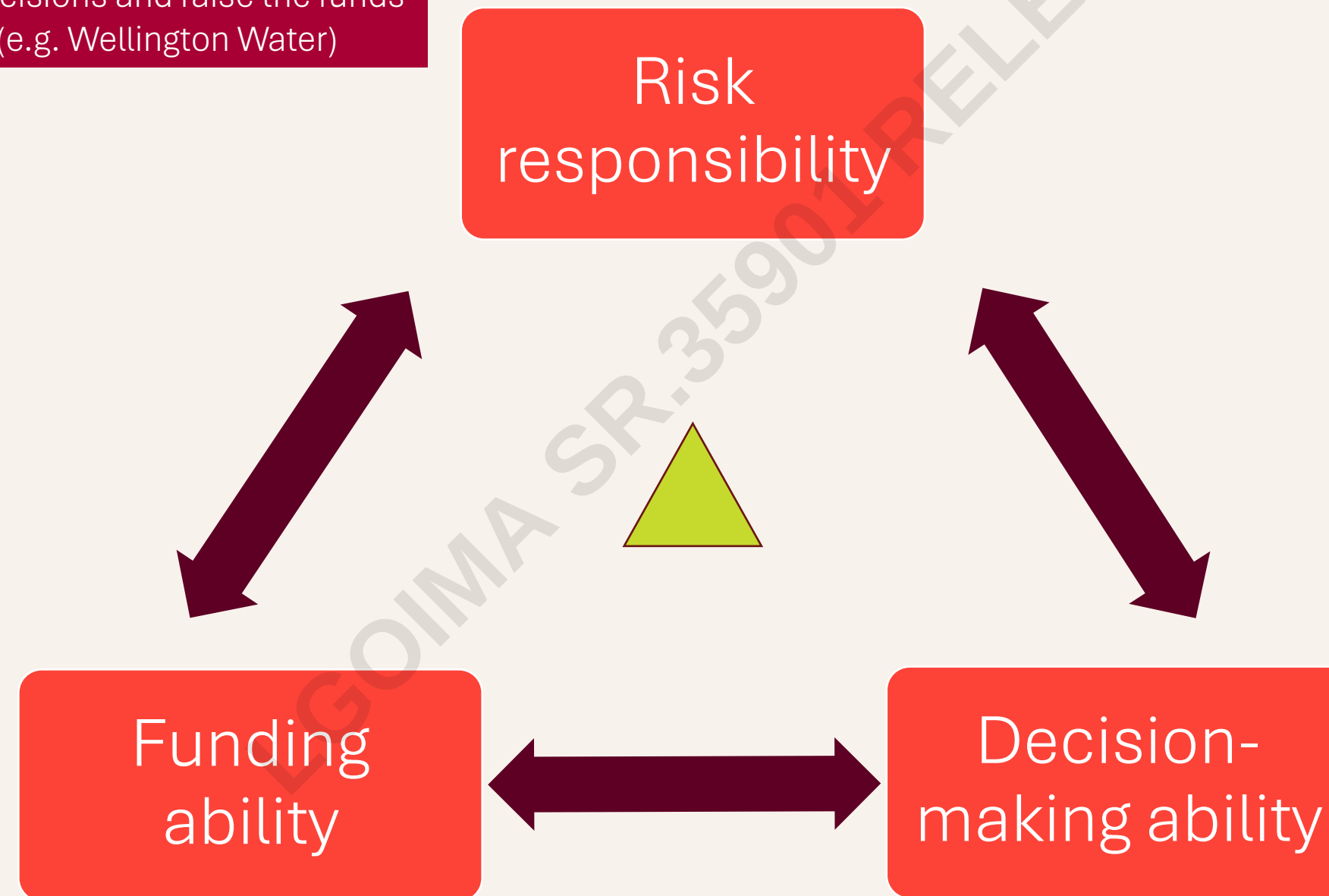
Governance + Service Delivery Responsibility

- Less local bodies
- Each represents a larger area (e.g. existing district)
- Role is similar to existing district council, less anything determined to be regionalised



Creating clear accountability

You cannot manage risk without having the ability to make decisions and raise the funds to address it (e.g. Wellington Water)



When these three things do not sit in one organisation, you create unclear accountability.

Relevant when considering:

- What is delegated to local body level
- The arrangement between a unitary council and any external entity
- How the regional functions are delivered

A funding entity without responsibility has no incentive to fund risk reduction

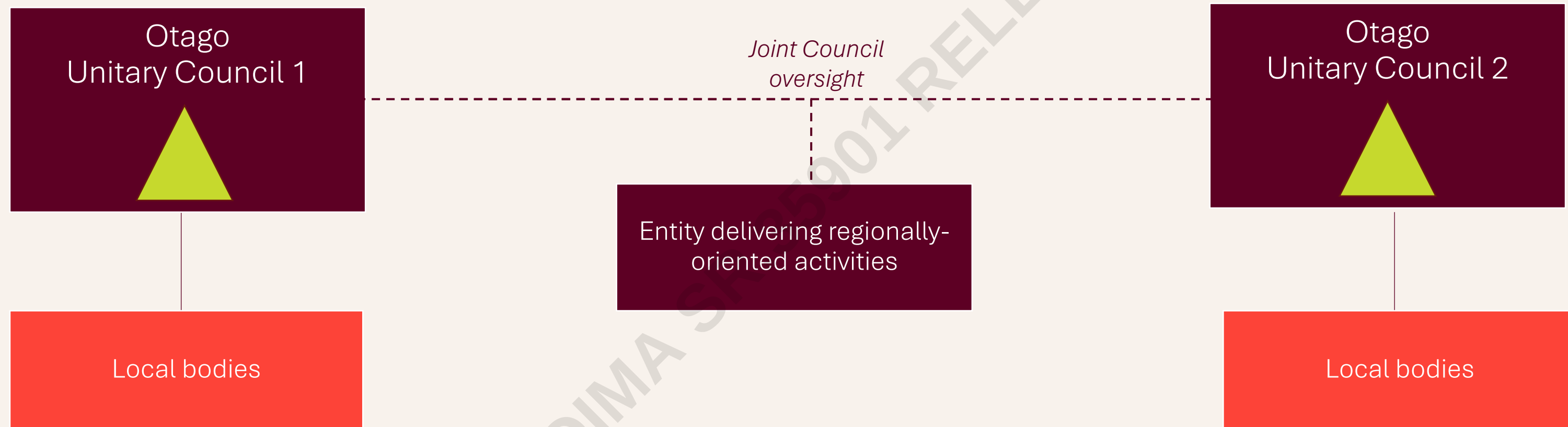
A decision-making entity without responsibility may prioritise spending according to 'want' not 'need'

One unitary council with local bodies involved in governance only (Option 1)



- Local bodies could be community boards, local boards or something new

Two or three Unitaries (Option 2, Option 3)

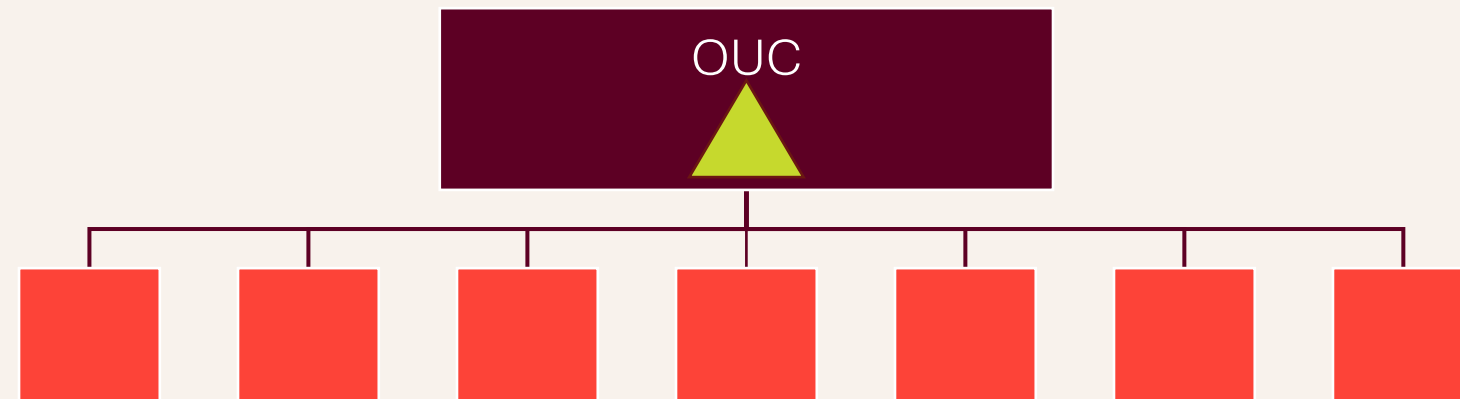


An entity delivering regionally-oriented activities is recommended when there are two or more unitary authorities to:

- *Avoid duplication of effort and resourcing capability gaps*
- *Enable efficient spatial planning and cohesive catchment management*

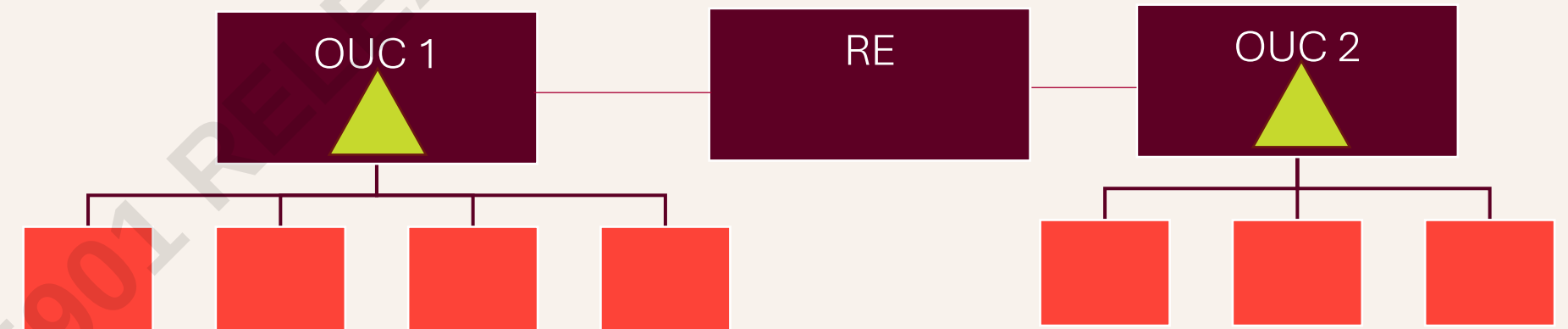
Representation

Single Unitary



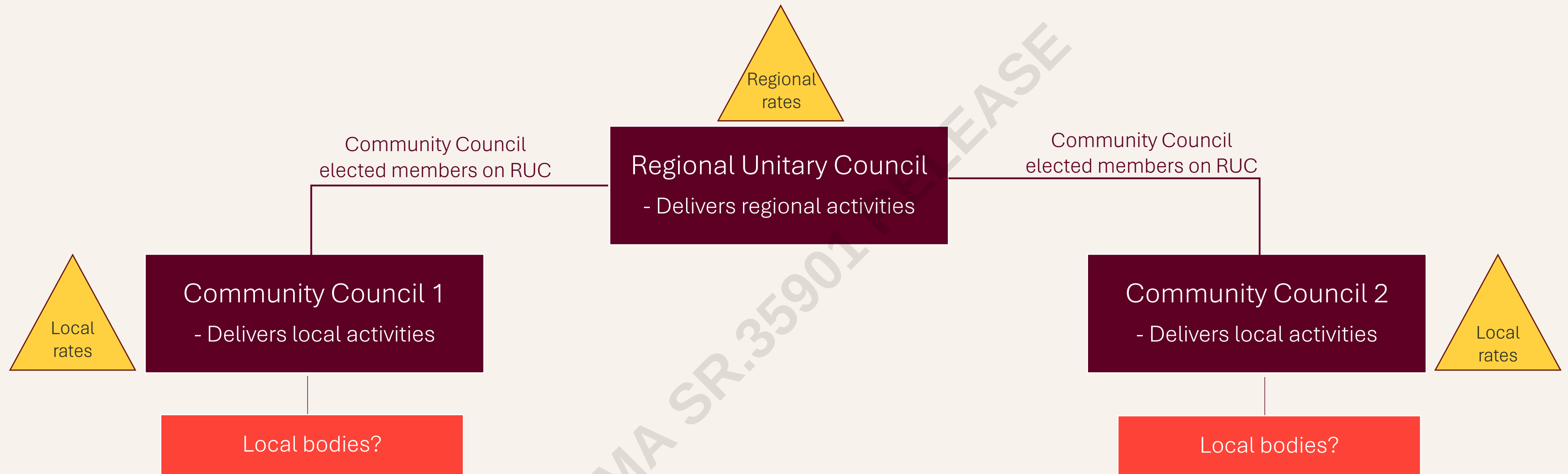
- Simpler governance structure, but less flexibility in local design
- Determined **once** at the unitary council level:
 - Whether local bodies exist or not
 - The population each local body represents
 - Level and scope of delegation
 - Function defined in legislation or determined by unitary council
 - Governance only or governance plus service delivery
- Potentially, room to explore setting at the local body level:
 - Iwi involvement and/or representation on local bodies

Two or Three Unitaries



- Local bodies have targeted influence over regional entity and their respective unity councils
- Determined **by each** unitary council:
 - Whether local bodies exist or not
 - The population each local body represents
 - Iwi involvement and/or representation on local bodies
 - Level and scope of delegation
 - Function defined in legislation or determined by respective OUC
 - Governance only or governance plus service delivery

Hybrid model



- Orange triangle instead of green to demonstrate accountability potentially unclear
- RUC may have separately elected Mayor/Chair, other RUC members selected from elected members of CCs
- RUC also has a delivery organisation for regional functions
- Each CC can decide whether to have further local governance layer

Regional council functions

Example (from ORC):

- Flood protection is a chain of interdependent functions:
 - monitoring tells you what the river is doing now;
 - science tells you what it will do next;
 - engineering translates that understanding into physical infrastructure;
 - maintenance keeps the system working over decades.
- If that sequence is disrupted across multiple administrations, the links stop informing each other.
- Decisions about stopbank height and pump station capacity
 - Depend on understanding how water moves through the whole catchment; and
 - That knowledge cannot be disaggregated to a district level without losing the coherence that makes it useful.

Activity Areas	Scope of work
Governance & Community Engagement	Council meetings, organisational strategy, iwi partnership, public communications, financial planning, legal services, and risk management. (no specific explainer on this as it is similar to TLA functions)
Regional Planning	Regional Policy Statement, regional plans for air, coast, and water, spatial planning support for territorial authorities, and RMA implementation.
Regulatory / Environmental Regulation	Resource consenting, compliance monitoring, enforcement, 24/7 pollution response, harbourmaster services, and public education on environmental rules.
Environmental Monitoring and Science	Environmental monitoring (350+ sites), freshwater, groundwater, soil, air and marine science, air quality monitoring, catchment management, community engagement and education, and supporting territorial authorities with environmental data and information.
Biodiversity & Biosecurity	Pest management (51 pest species), biodiversity monitoring, community conservation funding, and marine biosecurity programmes.
Natural Hazards & Climate Adaptation	Hazard mapping, flood forecasting and warnings, LiDAR surveys, climate adaptation planning, and technical support to territorial authorities.
Flood Protection, Drainage & River Management	Operation and maintenance of flood schemes (218km flood banks, 14 pump stations, 535km drains), river management, and post-flood repairs.
Emergency Management	Leading the Otago CDEM Group, coordinating emergency response across territorial authorities, 24/7 emergency capability, and community preparedness.
Transport	Orbus bus and ferry services (5.3 million trips per year), regional transport planning, fleet management, and Total Mobility scheme.

Existing Council Controlled Organisations

Otago Regional Council

Port Otago Limited

Queenstown Lakes DC

Queenstown Airport Corporation Ltd
(75% share)

Queenstown Events Centre Trust
(dormant)

Dunedin City Holdings Ltd

City Forests

City Treasury

Aurora Energy

Delta Utilities

Dunedin Ventures Management

Dunedin Stadium Property

Dunedin Railways

Dunedin International Airport Ltd
(50% share)

Waitaki DC

Tourism Waitaki

Waitaki District Council Services Ltd

Whitestone Contracting

Waitaki Whitestone Geopark Trust

Omarama Airfield (50% share)

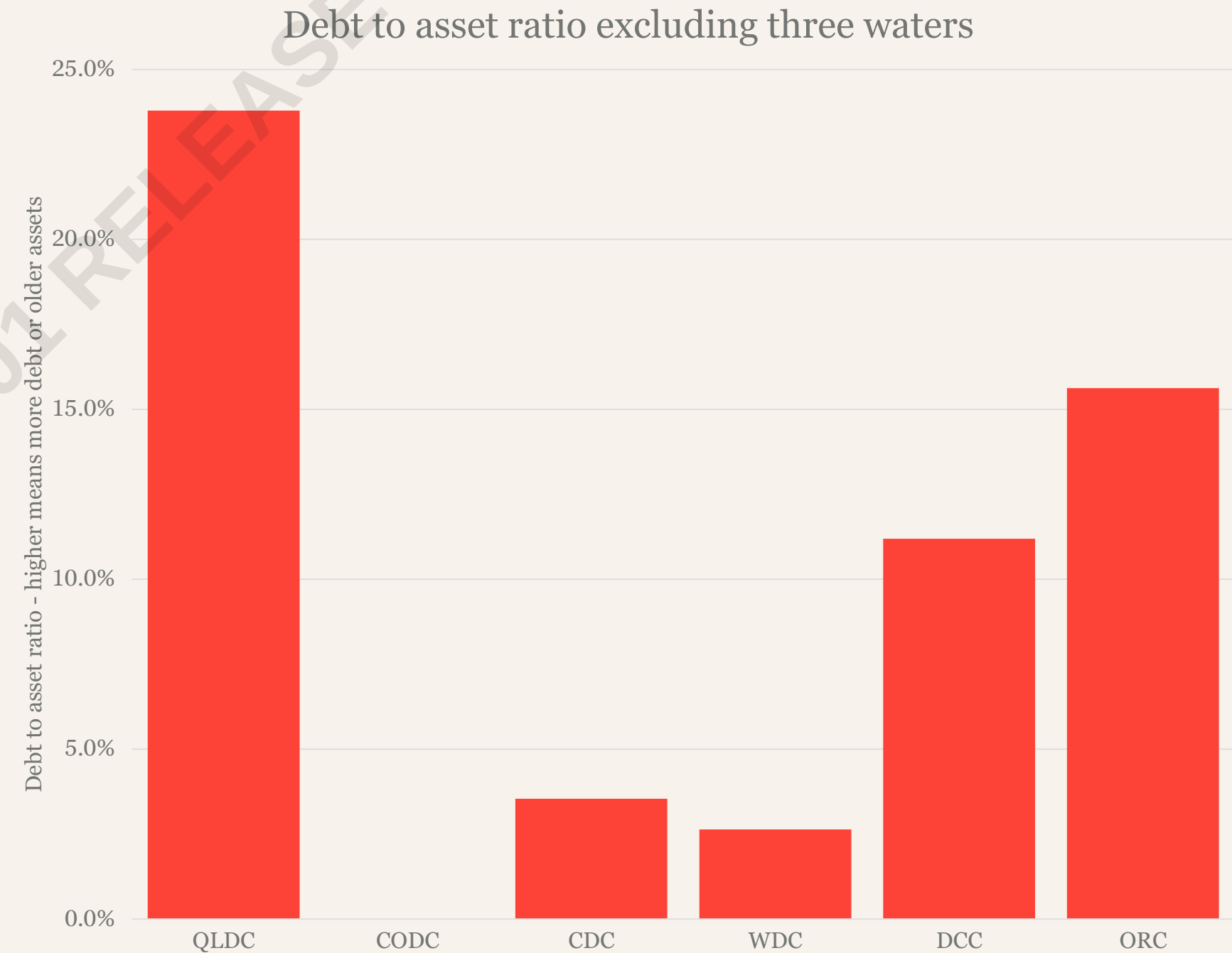
- Options for how these are combined under unitary models can be decided during transition*
- The benefits of some CCOs can be ringfenced to particular communities*

Financial benchmarking

LGOIMA SR.35901 RELEASE

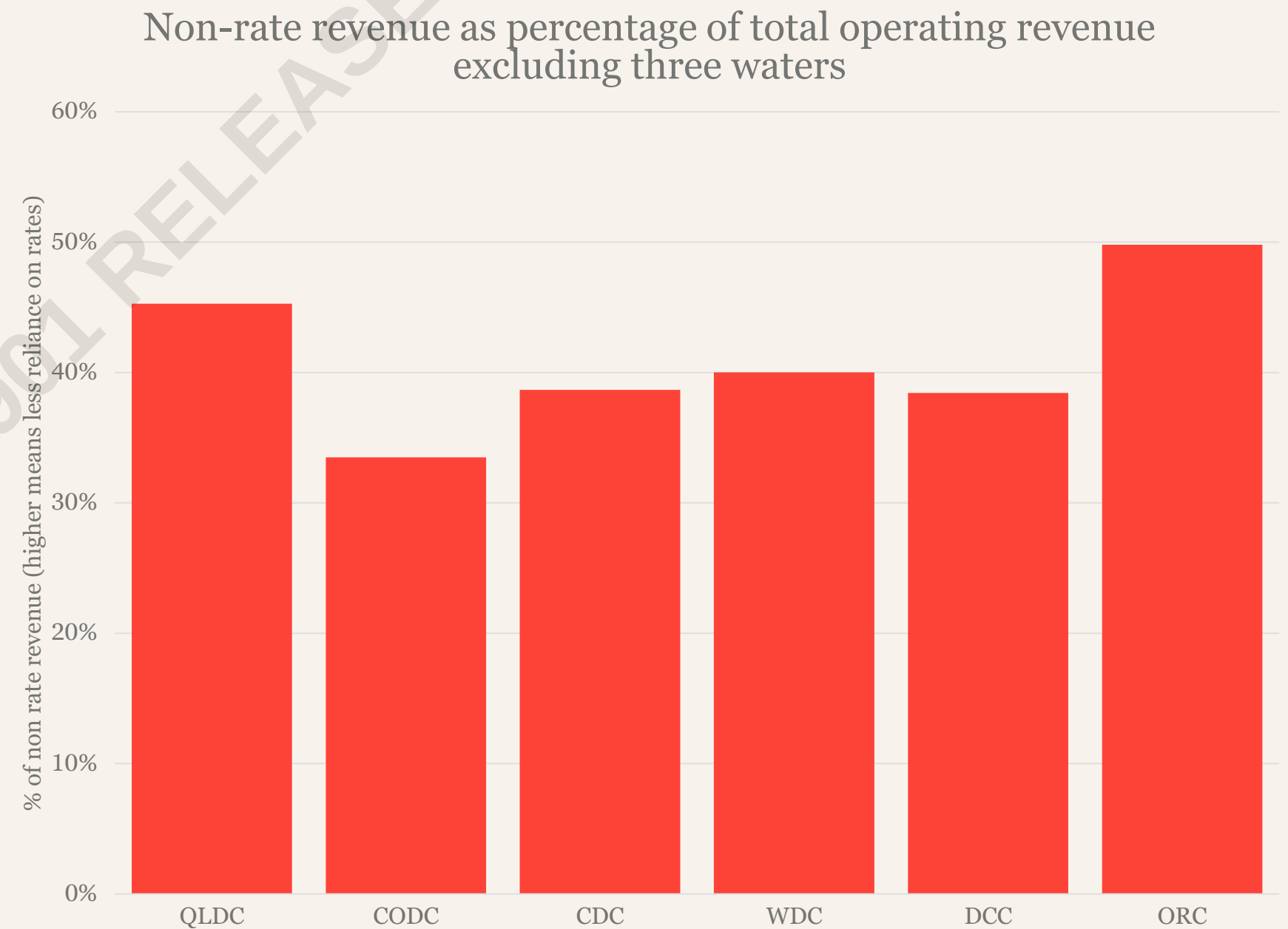
Current state comparisons - debt

- Compares net debt to book value of non-current assets.
- A higher debt to asset ratio could mean:
 - The council has relied more heavily on debt to fund asset investment than other councils (for example this may be due to not funding depreciation in the past)
 - The council has older or fewer assets than the other councils
 - The council has used debt to fund costs that are not related to asset investment
- Structurally, will not change following amalgamation. However debt servicing costs can be ringfenced through targeted rates if future council agrees to do so.



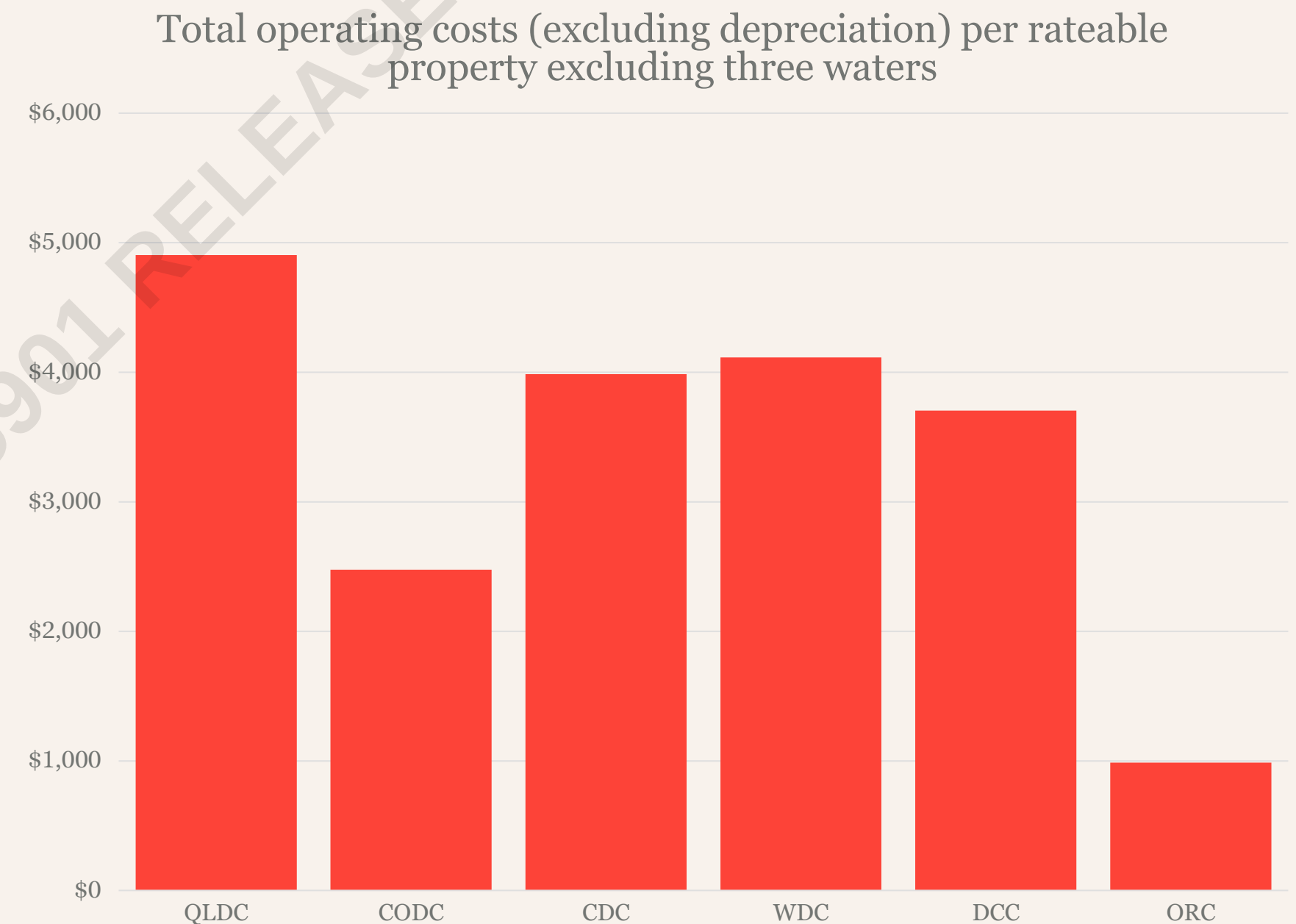
Current state comparisons – non rates revenue

- Compares the extent to which each council relies on rates as a source of revenue
- A higher ratio means that the council relies less on rates revenue to cover its costs. This could relate to income from investments such as Ports of Otago or Queenstown Airport.
- Could change post amalgamation as revenue and financing policies are reviewed.
- Investment income would be expected to stay “where it lies”
- Port ownership is a matter that would need to be resolved.



Current state comparisons – operating costs

- Shows differences in existing cost of services across councils
- Highlights that there are existing differences among the councils which may impact on the future share of costs under amalgamation options.
- QLDC has the highest operating cost per rateable property (reflective of high growth and visitor nights), while CODC has the lowest.
- There should be no expectation that these costs would be spread evenly under an amalgamation proposal. We would expect liberal use of targeted rates in the early years.



Approach to estimating economies of scale

Based on national benchmarking, and actual costs from each of the councils. Actual costs at a subregional level are based on high level allocations provided by ORC

Considers what a reasonable cost base would be for a council with equivalent attributes as the new unitary authority

Determined at a functional level based on statistically significant relationships using regression analysis

Assumes “baseline” operating costs are the equivalent of the largest territorial authority in the group and then adjusts for additional scale

Interpreting the data

- The costs and potential efficiencies presented here are at an organisational total or average level
- Actual distribution of these costs or benefits may differ between regions
- This will be determined by future elected members
- We would expect liberal use of targeted rates, aligned to differences in levels of service for at least the first few years
- All costs exclude public transport

Considering model fit

- Compares costs produced from benchmarking exercise with actual costs for each council to test fit of the model.
- QLDC, DCC and WDC had actual costs exceeding the top of our estimated band, all other councils were within the cost band.
- At a combined level (not shown due to impacts on chart scale) combined costs were 3% lower than the top of our price band.
- This may indicate that either:
 - Service delivery in QLDC, DCC and WDC is inherently more expensive than elsewhere in the country and any future model including these councils will likely cost closer to the top end of our bands.
 - There is additional scope for efficiencies within those councils.
- Based on review of literature and for conservatism our view is that the former is more likely to be correct.

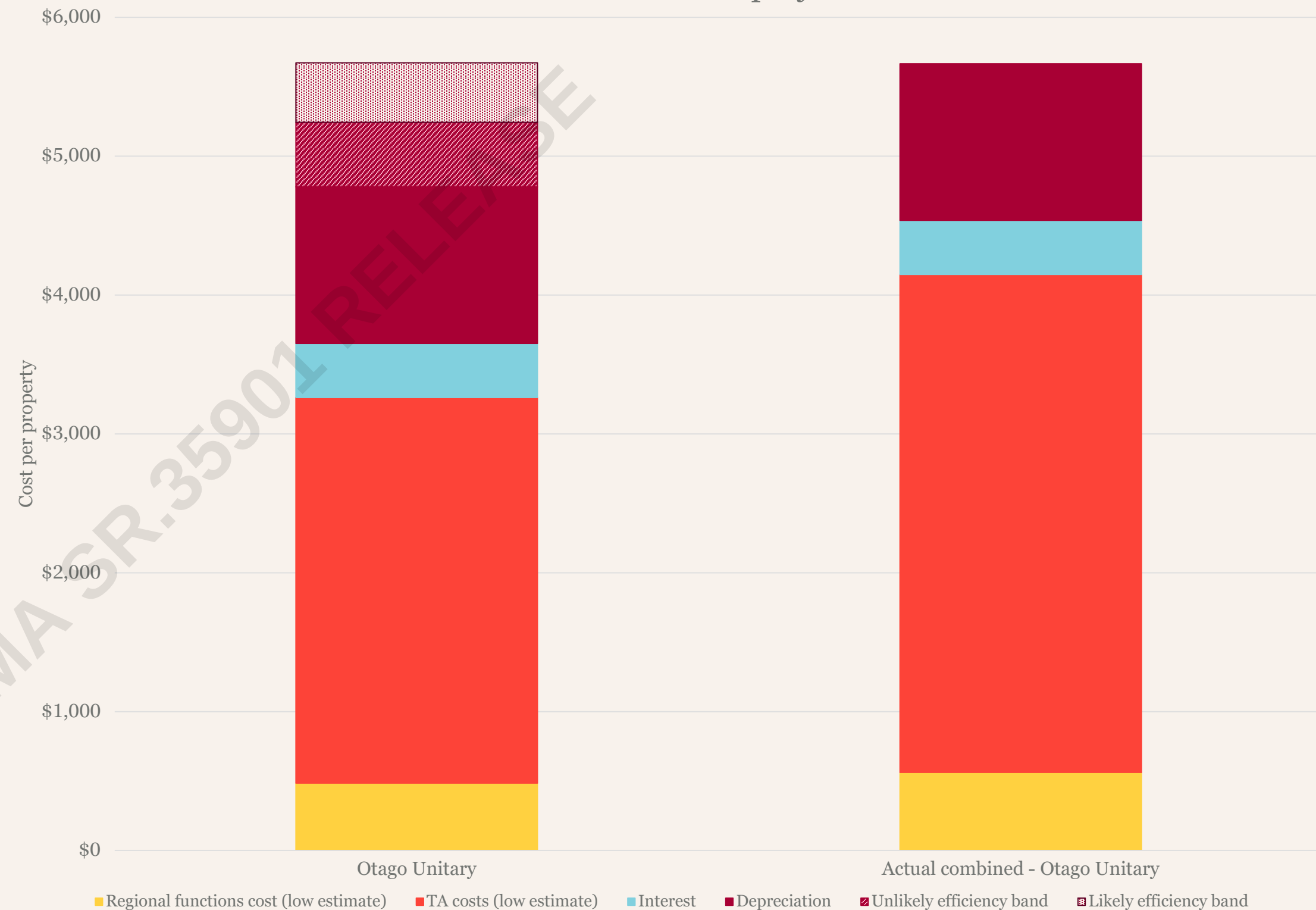
Testing fit – benchmarked costs versus actual costs for included councils



Option 1

- Efficiencies between 0% – 7% compared to actual combined costs
- Assumes no efficiencies on DCC's existing costs, and costs increased only for additional scale
- The lowest cost range
- Costs would not be likely to be spread evenly
- Benchmarked costs are between 0 – 16% lower than actual costs, but efficiencies beyond 7% are considered unlikely

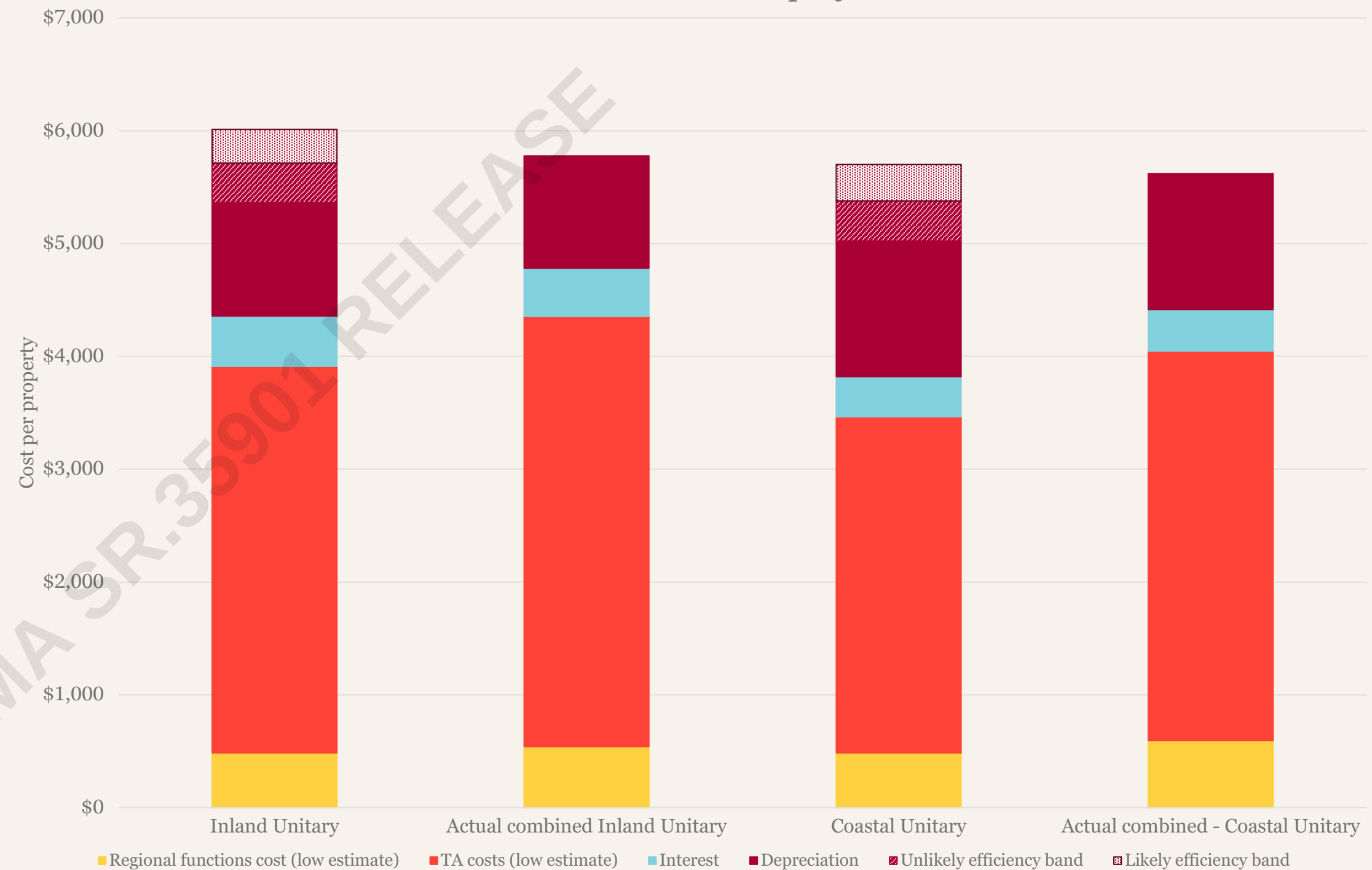
Option 1 comparison of existing cost per rateable property versus benchmarked projection



Option 2

- Between 4% more expensive and 1% more efficient compared to actual combined costs for Inland unitary
- Between 1% more expensive and 4% more efficient compared to actual combined costs for Coastal unitary
- Assumes no efficiencies on DCC's or QLDC's existing costs, and costs increased only for additional scale
- Assumes a shared regional entity for delivery
- Benchmarked costs are between 4% higher and 7% lower for an Inland Unitary, and 1% higher to 11% lower for a Coastal Unitary

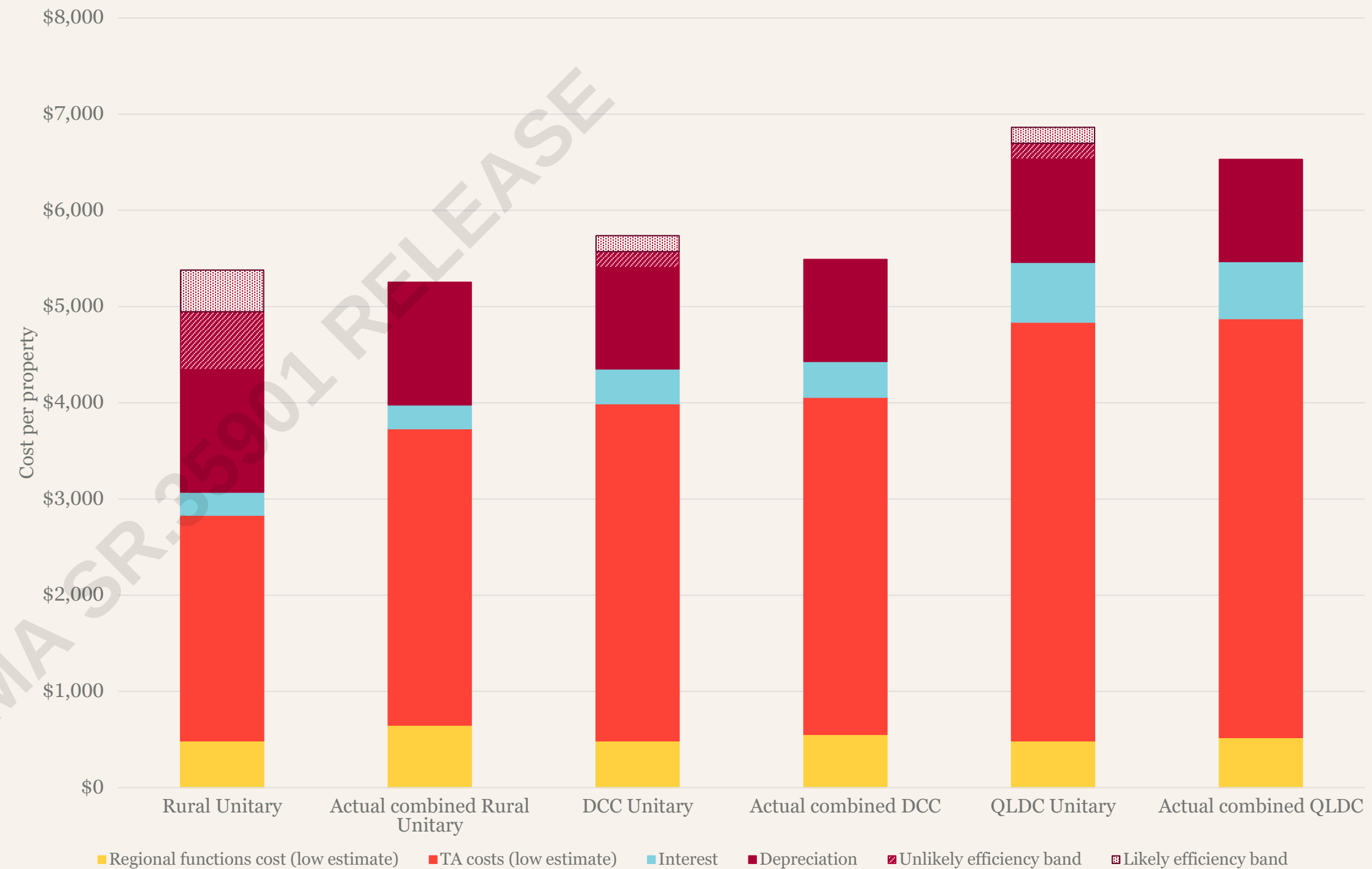
Option 2 comparison of existing cost per rateable property versus benchmarked projection



Option 3

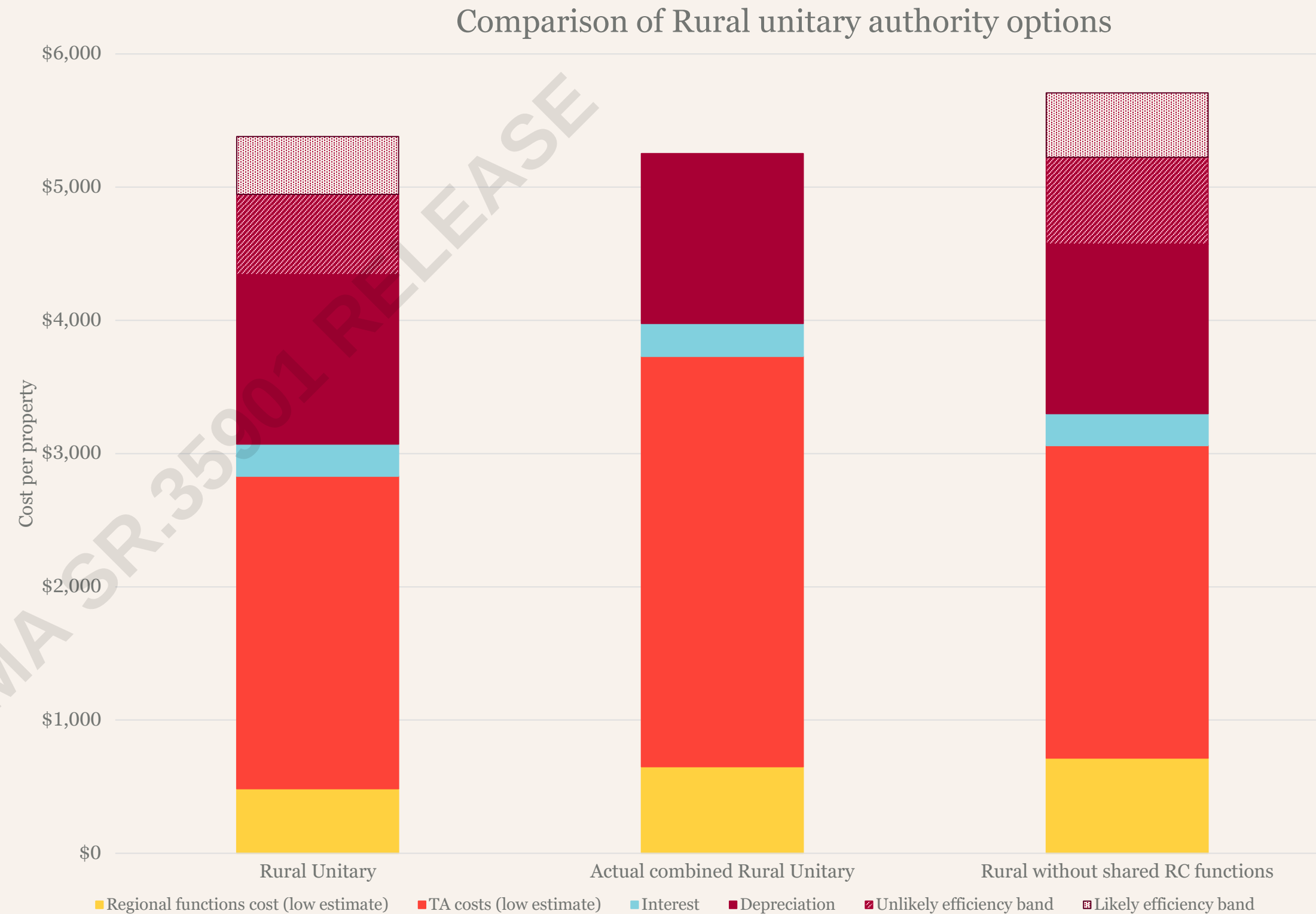
- Costs for a Rural Unitary are between 2% higher and 6% lower than the actual combined costs.
- Costs for DCC and QLDC Unitary authorities are essentially the same as the status quo, with some uncertainty regarding the regional council functions
- Assumes no efficiencies on WDC's, DCC's or QLDC's existing costs, and costs increased only for additional scale
- Assumes a shared regional entity for delivery
- Benchmarked costs for a rural unitary are between 2% higher and 17% lower than actual costs, but efficiencies beyond 6% are considered unlikely

Option 3 comparison of existing cost per rateable property versus benchmarked projection



Rural unitary without shared regional functions

- Without shared regional functions, costs for a rural unitary authority could be between 9% greater or 1% lower than actual current costs per rateable property
- Costs would be 5% -6% higher than with a regional shared entity.
- Difference may also reflect differences in cost of delivering local services – even with a regional entity, a rural unitary may pick up a greater share of the costs.

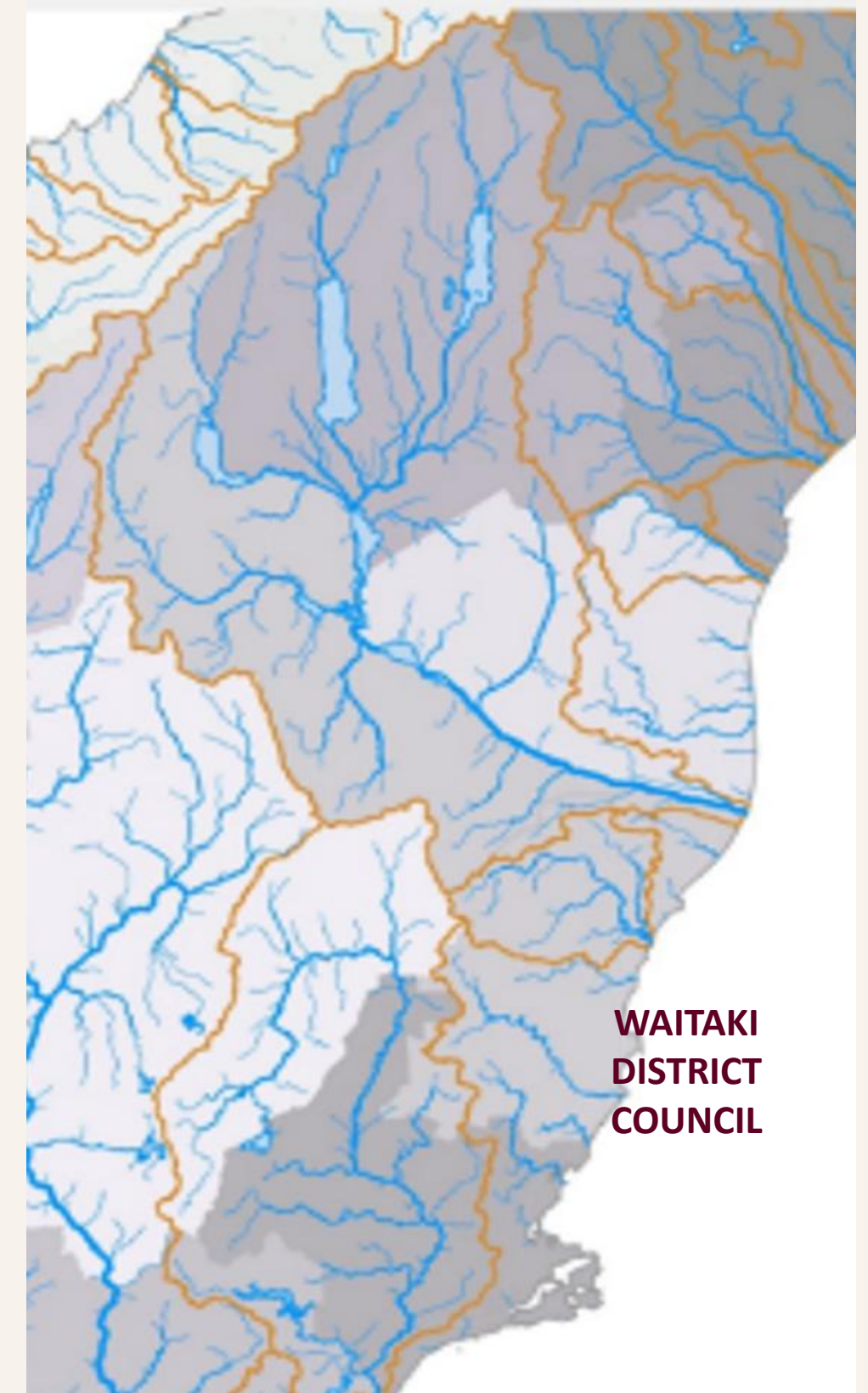


All options compared

	Mid point efficiency	Range
Otago Unitary	7.4% reduction	0% - (16%)
Coastal Unitary	4.3% reduction	1% - (11%)
Inland Unitary	1.1% reduction	4% - (7%)
Rural Unitary	5.8% reduction	2% - (17%)
DCC Unitary	No material change	No material change
QLDC Unitary	No material change	No material change

Waitaki considerations

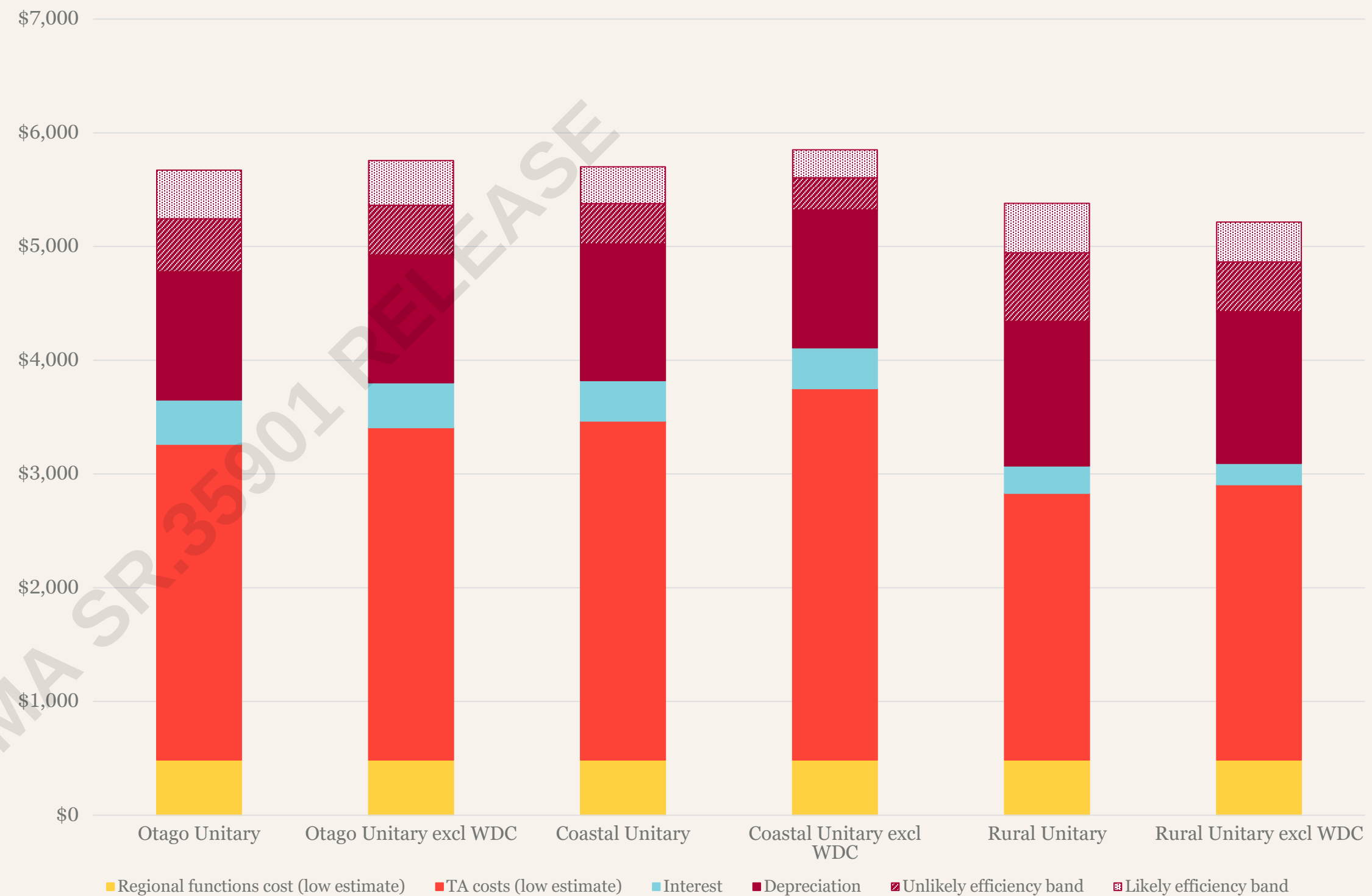
- Waitaki River catchment straddles Waitaki, Waimate and Mackenzie districts
- Env. Canterbury delivers catchment management functions for the river
- The Waitaki catchment portion of the district is a separate ward
- Southern parts of Waitaki affiliate with North Otago



Options excluding Waitaki

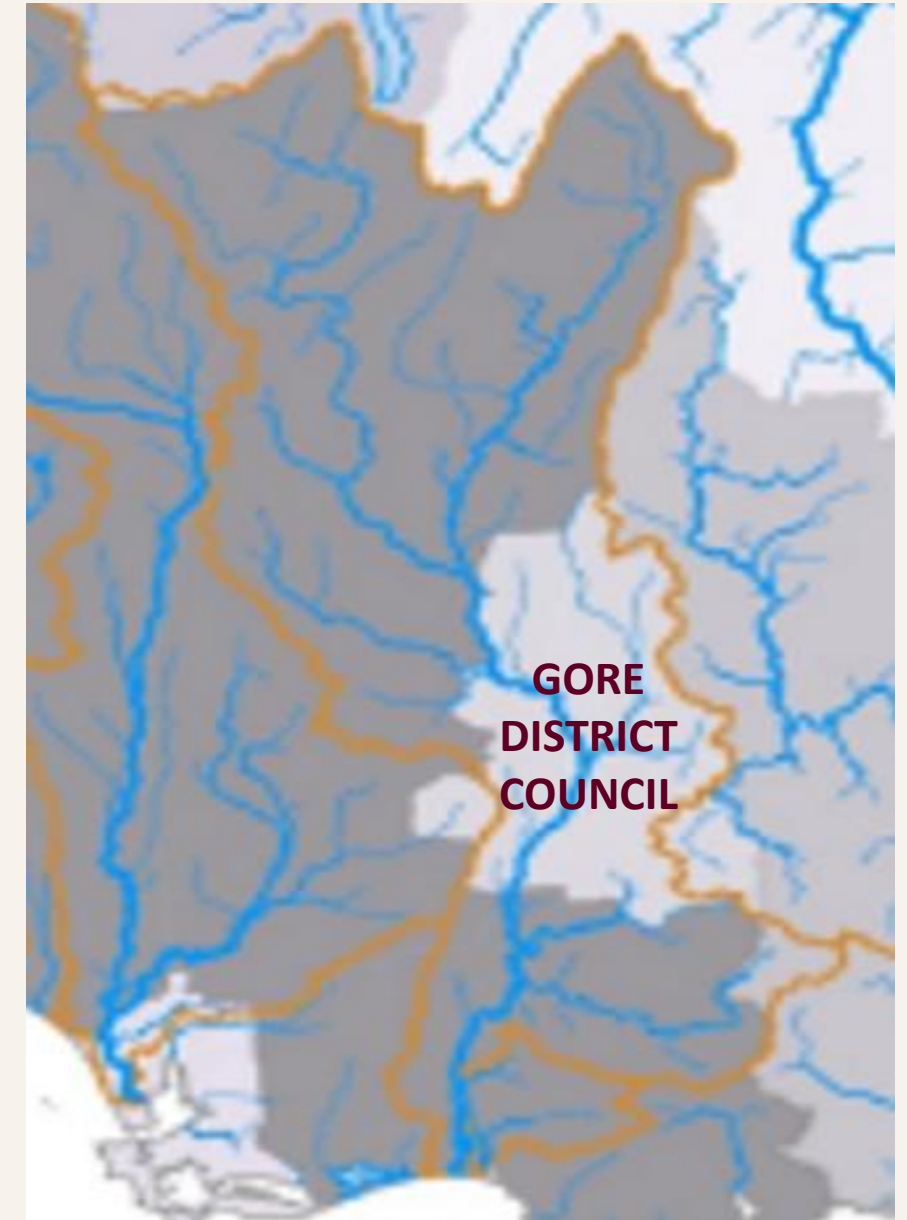
- Exclusion of Waitaki results in costs per rateable property that are:
 - between 1% - 3% higher than an Otago unitary that includes Waitaki.
 - between 3% - 6% higher than a Coastal unitary that includes Waitaki.
 - between 2% higher - 3% lower than a Rural unitary that includes Waitaki.
- The difference in costs between options may not be evenly distributed.
- Assumes a shared regional entity for delivery

Options excluding Waitaki



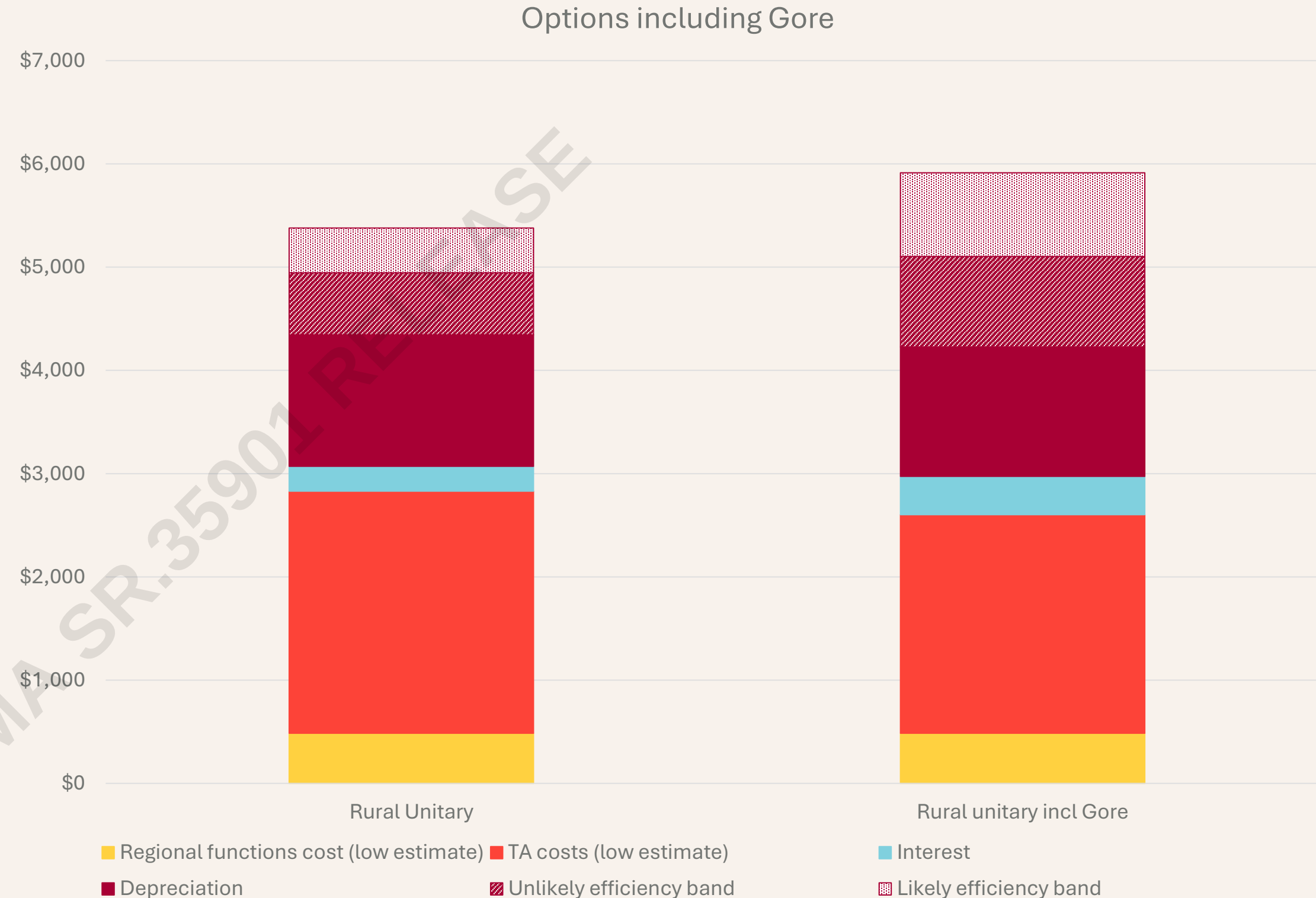
Gore considerations

- Gore is part of Southern Waters
 - Along with Clutha, Central Otago and Waitaki
- Regional functions for Gore are delivered by Environment Southland not ORC
- Mataura River flows through Gore
 - Most of this river's catchment is within Southland District
- Could be resolved with regional functions delivered to Gore by Southland
 - Similar to current Env. Canterbury arrangement for Waitaki
- An alternative to Option 3 could be established
 - Gore and Southland combined with the rural unitary authority
 - Invercargill remains a separate unitary authority
 - The Regional Entity crosses the two regions



Option 3 including Gore

- Inclusion of Gore results in costs per rateable property that are between 3% - 10% higher than a Rural unitary that excludes Gore.
- The difference in costs between options may not be evenly distributed.
- Cannot compare to actual costs because we do not have the Environment Southland share.
- Assumes a shared regional entity for delivery.
- The lower end of the benchmarking range suggests the inclusion of Gore could result in costs that are up to 3% lower than a rural unitary without Gore, however we consider this is unlikely.



Assessment against government criteria

- These are not Morrison Low Advisory criteria nor those of the Otago mayors or councils.
- Rather, this assessment seeks to demonstrate how aligned the options are with what the government has said they see as important.
- Aligning with the government's criteria does not necessarily mean the option is recommended.

Government Criteria	Option 1: one region-wide Otago unitary	Option 2: two unitary authorities, inland and coastal	Option 3: three unitary authorities, urban and rural
Supports the new planning system	• One regional combined plan. • Fewer plans overall. • One council making planning decisions. • Catchment management mostly contained within the region's boundary. • Waitaki catchment in Canterbury region would require special catchment management arrangements (like occurs now) or a boundary change.	• One regional combined plan, but covering two councils. • Increased number of steps to make regional planning decisions amongst two councils. • More plans overall. • This options connects Queenstown Lakes with supporting growth areas in Central Otago. • Catchment management crosses council boundaries, requiring decisions amongst two councils. • While catchment centred around upper Clutha possible with some boundary changes, downstream effects would require decisions amongst two councils. • Waitaki catchment boundary issue remains.	• Same as option two but further complexity with coordination between three councils instead of two. • Cuts off Queenstown from supporting growth areas in Central Otago. • While the upper Clutha catchment aligns reasonably well with the Queenstown boundary, defining a boundary for the Dunedin council that aligns with catchment boundaries is difficult. • Waitaki catchment boundary issue remains.

Government Criteria	Option 1: one region-wide Otago unitary	Option 2: two unitary authorities, inland and coastal	Option 3: three unitary authorities, urban and rural
Simpler local governance	• Simpler overall with fewer councils. • Less duplication and clearer accountability. • Simpler for customers with one organisation to transact with and receive communications from.	• Two councils instead of one, requires coordination between them. • Introduces regional entity to deliver regional functions, that requires joint governance by two councils, reducing simplicity. • Duplication of effort by each unitary, but focused on the issues in that area. • Only one organisation to transact with for most customers, but some commercial customers (e.g. developers working across the two areas) will transact with two councils.	• Same as option 2 but with three councils instead of two the complexity is at least doubled.

Government Criteria	Option 1: one region-wide Otago unitary	Option 2: two unitary authorities, inland and coastal	Option 3: three unitary authorities, urban and rural
Economies of scale	• Greatest opportunity for efficiency and effectiveness with scale. • More likely to have sufficient resources to cover both day to day operations and strategic functions and cover when there are resourcing gaps / vacancies. • Strategic decisions affecting wide areas more likely to be progressed e.g. freight corridors. • Includes two large population centres, which likely require equal servicing, reducing scale efficiencies e.g. two distinct public transport networks, two airports, two event centres. • Level of service generally increases to the urban level, reducing cost-efficiencies from scale.	• Scale efficiencies possible but the extent of efficiencies differs between the two unitary authorities. • Each unitary has a large population centre to service the unitary. • Again, likely to have sufficient resources to cover both day to day operations and strategic functions, although not quite at the same level as one unitary. • Strategic decisions likely to be progressed and no tension between Queenstown-centred decisions and Dunedin-centred decisions. • Like one unitary, level of service generally increases to the urban level.	• Queenstown and Dunedin remain relatively unchanged. • Rural councils benefit from aggregation, but not to the same extent as one unitary. • Requires a joint entity to deliver regional functions to achieve efficiencies • Capability resilience decreases with more councils, existing capability challenges continue in Queenstown and Dunedin.

Government Criteria	Option 1: one region-wide Otago unitary	Option 2: two unitary authorities, inland and coastal	Option 3: three unitary authorities, urban and rural
Maintains a strong local voice	• Disparate communities forced to come together and be represented collectively. • Possible to address some of the variation in communities of interest through representation at governing body (wards) and lower tier (local or community boards) but the model is set up to fairly represent the whole region as opposed to tailored arrangements at a sub-regional level in the multi-unitary models.	• Addresses the large differences between Queenstown (tourism and growth focus) and Dunedin (and the coastal communities connected to Dunedin) • Rural voice and differences in rural voice in different parts of the region are still not well represented. • The two unitary authorities can establish representation arrangements and delegations to second tier governance tailored to their needs.	• Addresses the large differences between Queenstown and Dunedin, whilst also establishing a unitary that has a strong rural voice. • The three unitary authorities have even greater control in establishing representation arrangements and delegations to second tier governance tailored to their needs.

Government Criteria	Option 1: one region-wide Otago unitary	Option 2: two unitary authorities, inland and coastal	Option 3: three unitary authorities, urban and rural
Deliverability	- Not as complex as other options to establish but still requires significant change (six councils into one). - Not aligned with community sentiment (from the community surveys), risking the arrangement being challenged during establishment.	- Requires establishment of separate regional entity in addition to transitioning six councils into two. - Aligns more closely with community sentiment (from the community surveys), reducing the risk the arrangement will be challenged during establishment. - Aligns with inland Regional Deal	- Similar complexity to establish as option 2. - Most aligned to community sentiment, least risk establishment will be challenged.

Assessment against government criteria

Government Criteria	Option 1: one region-wide Otago unitary	Option 2: two unitary authorities, inland and coastal	Option 3: three unitary authorities, urban and rural
Supports the new planning system	Simpler planning system, cohesive catchment management.	Increased complexity in planning decision, disjointed catchment management.	Further complexity in planning and disjointed catchments.
Simpler local governance	Less duplication and clearer accountability.	Introduces regional entity to deliver regional functions, less clear accountability and some duplication introduced.	Same as option 2 but with three councils instead of two the complexity is at least doubled.
Economies of scale	Higher capability in resourcing improves decision making, but increased level of service reduces cost efficiencies.	- Scale efficiencies possible, but not as pronounced as single unitary. - Different efficiency outcomes for Inland and Coastal.	- Queenstown and Dunedin remain relatively unchanged. - Rural councils benefit from aggregation.
Maintains a strong local voice	Disparate communities represented collectively and representation model requires equity across the region.	- Differences inland and coastal recognised but rural voice not as clear. - Each unitary establishes representation reflecting their community.	- Recognises different voices the most. - Each unitary establishes representation reflecting their community.
Deliverability	Simpler to establish, but not aligned with community sentiment, risking challenge during establishment.	Aligns more closely with community sentiment, but requires separate regional entity establishment.	Similar complexity to establish as option 2.

Thank you

If you have any enquiries or need more information about the services we provide, don't hesitate to contact us. We look forward to helping you succeed.



Head Start Option 4 Supplementary Councils of Otago Region

22 July 2026

LG01MA38-35901 RELEASE



Prepared for:

Job #	Version	Written	Reviewed	Approved	Report Date
314302	1	A. Grace	S. Cross	S. Cross	22 July 2026

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Purpose of this report

This report should be read alongside Morrison Low Advisory's earlier report dated 3 July 2026.

This report contains supplementary analysis regarding a fourth potential option for a unitary authority, being a combination of:

- Central Otago District Council
- Clutha District Council
- Queenstown Lakes District Council

For consistency, Option 4 also assumes a joint entity for the delivery of regional functions.

The full analysis presented in our earlier report is not repeated within this report, but remains relevant to the extent that it relates to the communities included within this grouping, or for comparative purposes.



Option 4

- Efficiencies of around 4% compared to actual combined costs
- Assumes no efficiencies on QLDC's existing costs, and costs increased only for additional scale
- Costs would not be likely to be spread evenly
- Benchmarked costs are between 2% higher and 11% lower than actual costs, but efficiencies beyond 4% are considered unlikely

Option 4 comparison of existing cost per rateable properties versus benchmarked projection



All options compared

	Mid point efficiency	Range
Option 4	4% reduction	2% - (11%)
Otago Unitary	7.4% reduction	0% - (16%)
Coastal Unitary	4.3% reduction	1% - (11%)
Inland Unitary	1.1% reduction	4% - (7%)
Rural Unitary	5.8% reduction	2% - (17%)
DCC Unitary	No material change	No material change
QLDC Unitary	No material change	No material change

Assessment against government criteria

- These are not Morrison Low Advisory criteria nor those of the Otago mayors or councils.
- Rather, this assessment seeks to demonstrate how aligned the options are with what the government has said they see as important.
- Aligning with the government's criteria does not necessarily mean the option is recommended.

Government Criteria	Option 4: two unitary authorities, QLDC+CODC+CDC, DCC
Supports the new planning system	• Simplifies catchment management for the large Clutha River, with other areas possibly being simplified through boundary adjustments. • One regional combined plan, but covering two councils. Dunedin and Queenstown require separate chapters regardless of model. • Increased number of steps to make regional planning decisions amongst two councils, and more plans overall. • This option connects Queenstown Lakes with supporting growth areas in Central Otago.
Simpler local governance	• Two councils instead of one, requires coordination between them. • Introduces regional entity (or in-house business unit) to deliver regional functions, that requires joint governance by two councils, reducing simplicity, but less coordination than in Option 2 or 3. • Duplication of some effort by each unitary, but less than Option 2 or 3. • Only one organisation to transact with for most customers.
Economies of scale	• Minor scale efficiencies possible for joint entity, while cost for DCC likely to be similar to status quo. • Regional functions require a joint entity or an in-house business unit servicing both unitary authorities. • Strategic decisions affecting broad Otago area likely to be progressed e.g. freight corridors, but less connected to Port in Dunedin. • Capability resilience improved over status quo, but not as strong as a single unitary. • Level of service specific to Wakatipu could be established separate from the remaining rural townships and rural areas.
Maintains a strong local voice	• A strong rural voice. • Address large differences between the city of Dunedin and the rural areas and towns across most of the second unitary authority. • Requires representation arrangements to address large differences specific to Wakatipu part of QLDC. • Disparate communities forced to come together and be represented collectively.
Deliverability	• Regional functions may require separate regional entity or DCC unitary could receive services from an in-house business unit of the other unitary. • Aligns more closely with community sentiment than a single unitary. • Aligns with the inland Regional Deal.

Assessment against government criteria

Government Criteria	Option 1: one region-wide Otago unitary	Option 2: two unitary authorities, inland and coastal	Option 3: three unitary authorities, urban and rural	Option 4: two unitary authorities, QLDC+CODC+CDC, DCC
Supports the new planning system	Simpler planning system, cohesive catchment management.	Increased complexity in planning decision, disjointed catchment management.	Further complexity in planning and disjointed catchments.	One authority to manage most catchments, less planning complexity than Option 2 or 3.
Simpler local governance	Less duplication and clearer accountability.	Introduces regional entity to deliver regional functions, less clear accountability and some duplication introduced.	Same as option 2 but with three councils instead of two the complexity is at least doubled.	Regional entity for regional functions, but could be less complex than Option 2 or 3.
Economies of scale	Higher capability in resourcing improves decision making, but increased level of service reduces cost efficiencies.	- Scale efficiencies possible, but not as pronounced as single unitary. - Different efficiency outcomes for Inland and Coastal.	- Queenstown and Dunedin remain relatively unchanged. - Rural councils benefit from aggregation.	- Scale efficiencies possible, but not as pronounced as single unitary. - Level of service differences for Queenstown to be managed.
Maintains a strong local voice	Disparate communities represented collectively and representation model requires equity across the region.	- Differences inland and coastal recognised but rural voice not as clear. - Each unitary establishes representation reflecting their community.	- Recognises different voices the most. - Each unitary establishes representation reflecting their community.	- Rural voice clearer. - Require representation to recognise Queenstown difference. - Dunedin representation unchanged from status quo.
Deliverability	Simpler to establish, but not aligned with community sentiment, risking challenge during establishment.	Aligns more closely with community sentiment, but requires separate regional entity establishment.	Similar complexity to establish as option 2.	Slightly less complex to establish than Option 2 or 3.

Thank you

If you have any enquiries or need more information about the services we provide, don't hesitate to contact us. We look forward to helping you succeed.

24 July 2026

Peter Kelly
Chief Executive
Central Otago District Council

By email: peter.kelly@codc.govt.nz

Cc: Her Worship Tamah Alley, Mayor of Central Otago (mayor@codc.govt.nz)

Tēnā koe Peter

Re: Treaty Partnership – Local Government

I am writing to follow up on the letter sent to your Mayor by Kaiwhakahaere Justin Tipa on 14 July 2026, which outlined Ngāi Tahu's initial perspectives on the Local Government Head Start process.

As noted in that letter, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (TRoNT) and Papatipu Rūnanga have given considerable thought to these reforms. In our view, the reforms present a once-in-a-generation opportunity to modernise our 1989 local government system and design governance and service delivery arrangements that are genuinely fit for the future of South Island communities. Ngāi Tahu strongly supports all regions within our takiwā submitting a compliant Head Start proposal by 9 August. We acknowledge the tight timeframe and appreciate the significant effort already undertaken to engage with communities and work collaboratively across the region.

The four principles that we believe should help guide the development of Head Start proposals:

1. Local government boundaries should align with the Ngāi Tahu takiwā boundary.
2. River catchments should be the primary determinant of unitary council boundaries within the Ngāi Tahu takiwā.
3. A joint Takiwā/ South Island "Centre of Expertise" entity should be established to provide shared back-office and specialist functions on behalf of new unitary councils.
4. Future arrangements should incorporate genuine cooperation between councils and Papatipu Rūnanga.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these principles further as your proposal develops, and to hear your Council's views on whether it supports them.

Please contact Emma Jacka (emma.jacka@ngaitahu.iwi.nz) or Sam Broughton (samuel.broughton@ngaitahu.iwi.nz) to arrange a time for discussion.

Ngā mihi,



Ben Bateman
Chief Executive
Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu

LGOIMA SR.35901 RELEASE

From: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Sent: Wednesday, 12 August 2026 7:20 p.m.
To: Marianna Brook; Mel Tavendale; Tamah Alley; Mayor; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin; John Glover; Alex Parmley; Peter Kelly; Steve Hill; Michelle Morss (Michelle.Morss@qldc.govt.nz); Richard Saunders; Amanda Vercoe; Warren Ulusele; sandy.graham@dcc.govt.nz (Guest)
Cc: Sophie Barker
Subject: Re: Otago Mayoral Forum - meeting on this evening

Sorry I am on leave.
 Hope you had a good time anyway....



Hilary Calvert
 Chairperson

| Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz

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From: Marianna Brook <Marianna.Brook@orc.govt.nz>
Sent: Wednesday, 12 August 2026 09:32:27
To: Mel Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>; Mayor <mayor@dcc.govt.nz>; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>; John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz>; Alex Parmley <aparmley@waitaki.govt.nz>; Sandy Graham <sandy.graham@dcc.govt.nz>; Peter Kelly <peter.kelly@codc.govt.nz>; Steve Hill <Steve.Hill@Cluthadc.govt.nz>; Michelle Morss (Michelle.Morss@qldc.govt.nz) <Michelle.Morss@qldc.govt.nz>; Richard Saunders <Richard.Saunders@orc.govt.nz>; Amanda Vercoe <Amanda.Vercoe@orc.govt.nz>; Marianna Brook <Marianna.Brook@orc.govt.nz>; Warren Ulusele <warren.ulusele@dia.govt.nz>
Cc: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Otago Mayoral Forum - meeting on this evening

Kia ora koutou,

I'm emailing to confirm that tonight's Otago Mayoral Forum check in will go ahead as scheduled.

The discussion will include considering whether to change or cancel the series from here.

Kā mihi,
 Marianna



Marianna Brook
 Principal Advisor

+64273323164 | Marianna.Brook@orc.govt.nz

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LGOIMA SR.35901 RELEASE

From: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC)
Sent: Thursday, 13 August 2026 9:41 a.m.
To: Sophie Barker; Marianna Brook; Mel Tavendale; Tamah Alley; Mayor; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin; John Glover; Alex Parmley; Peter Kelly; Steve Hill; Michelle Morss; Richard Saunders; Amanda Vercoe; Warren Ulusele; sandy.graham@dcc.govt.nz (Guest)
Subject: Re: Otago Mayoral Forum - meeting on this evening

Lovely break ta.
 Pleased you are getting what you need from us. Mostly Richard I have to say.....
 See you all soon.
 Hil



Hilary Calvert
Chairperson
 Elected Council Representatives

From: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>
Sent: Thursday, 13 August 2026 03:55:59
To: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz>; Marianna Brook <Marianna.Brook@orc.govt.nz>; Mel Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>; Mayor <mayor@dcc.govt.nz>; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>; John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>; Alex Parmley <aparmley@waitaki.govt.nz>; Peter Kelly <peter.kelly@codc.govt.nz>; Steve Hill <steve.hill@cluthadc.govt.nz>; Michelle Morss <Michelle.Morss@qldc.govt.nz>; Richard Saunders <Richard.Saunders@orc.govt.nz>; Amanda Vercoe <Amanda.Vercoe@orc.govt.nz>; Warren Ulusele <warren.ulusele@dia.govt.nz>; Sandy Graham <Sandy.Graham@dcc.govt.nz>
Subject: Re: Otago Mayoral Forum - meeting on this evening

[Caution: External Email] This email originated from outside ORC. Do not click links or open attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe. Use the Phish Alert Button to report this email if you think it is suspicious.

We sang your praises Hilary!!
 Your left ear would have been burning :-)
 We've been hearing that not all Regional Councils have been as incredibly supportive as you and Richard have. I am so grateful for the ORC's great relationships with us all, and for your steady and sensible leadership! Thank you!!! Tamah and I did tell LGNZ National Council on Monday how much we appreciated the ORC.
 Hope you're having a fantastic break!!

Kā mihi nui
 All the best

Sophie Barker
 Mayor of Dunedin

Te Koromatua o Ōtepoti

M 021 349 843 | E mayor@dcc.govt.nz

Kaunihera a-rohe o Ōtepoti | Dunedin City Council

50 The Octagon, Dunedin

PO Box 5045, Dunedin 9054

New Zealand

www.dunedin.govt.nz



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From: Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz>

Sent: Wednesday, 12 August 2026 19:20:14

To: Marianna Brook <marianna.brook@orc.govt.nz>; Mel Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>; Mayor <mayor@dcc.govt.nz>; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>; John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>; Alex Parmley <aparmley@waitaki.govt.nz>; Peter Kelly <peter.kelly@codc.govt.nz>; Steve Hill <steve.hill@cluthadc.govt.nz>; Michelle Morss <Michelle.Morss@qldc.govt.nz>; Richard Saunders <richard.saunders@orc.govt.nz>; Amanda Vercoe <Amanda.Vercoe@orc.govt.nz>; Warren Ulusele <warren.ulusele@dia.govt.nz>; Sandy Graham <Sandy.Graham@dcc.govt.nz>

Cc: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>

Subject: Re: Otago Mayoral Forum - meeting on this evening

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Hope you had a good time anyway....



Hilary Calvert
Chairperson



| Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz

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Sent: Wednesday, 12 August 2026 09:32:27

To: Mel Tavendale <mtavendale@waitaki.govt.nz>; Tamah Alley <mayor@codc.govt.nz>; Mayor <mayor@dcc.govt.nz>; Mayor Jason (Jock) Martin <jock.martin@cluthadc.govt.nz>; John Glover <john.glover@qldc.govt.nz>; Cr Hilary Calvert (ORC) <Hilary.Calvert@orc.govt.nz>; Alex Parmley <aparmley@waitaki.govt.nz>; Sandy Graham <sandy.graham@dcc.govt.nz>; Peter

Kelly <peter.kelly@codc.govt.nz>; Steve Hill <Steve.Hill@Cluthadc.govt.nz>; Michelle Morss (Michelle.Morss@qldc.govt.nz) <Michelle.Morss@qldc.govt.nz>; Richard Saunders <Richard.Saunders@orc.govt.nz>; Amanda Vercoe <Amanda.Vercoe@orc.govt.nz>; Marianna Brook <Marianna.Brook@orc.govt.nz>; Warren Ulusele <warren.ulusele@dia.govt.nz>

Cc: Sophie Barker <Sophie.Barker@dcc.govt.nz>

Subject: Otago Mayoral Forum - meeting on this evening

Kia ora koutou,

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The discussion will include considering whether to change or cancel the series from here.

Kā mihi,
Marianna



Marianna Brook
Principal Advisor

[+64273323164](tel:+64273323164) | Marianna.Brook@orc.govt.nz

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