

Wednesday, 4 October 2023

Committee Secretariat
Justice Committee
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON 6160

Tēnā koutou Justice Committee

Kāpiti Coast District Council: Submission on the Electoral (Lowering Voting Age for Local Elections and Polls) Legislation Bill

Kāpiti Coast District Council (Council) appreciates the opportunity to submit on the Electoral (Lowering Voting Age for Local Elections and Polls) Legislation Bill. The Council supports the change in legislation to allow for youth voting in local elections and polls in time for the next triennial local body elections in 2025.

In the 2022 Supreme Court judgement *Make It 16 Incorporated v Attorney-General*, the Court found voting to be a fundamental human right, with insufficient justification to prevent 16 and 17 year olds from having the right to vote. At 16 years of age you can drive a car, work full-time, are required to pay taxes, and this age group are also users of public transport, road, parks and libraries.

Council supports lowering the voting age to strengthen and encourage participation in our democratic processes by young people across our district. With the challenges facing our communities, it is crucial that the voices of our rangatahi are heard and people of all ages are represented. New Zealand is facing long-term political challenges with decisions that will have far reaching consequences. These decisions will affect those in the 16 to 17 years age group as much as, if not more, than others who presently have the right to vote.

Young people are already active participants in our local democracy and broader community, providing a meaningful contribution to Council projects of significance. Allowing 16 and 17 year olds the opportunity to vote will allow this group to engage earlier in the democratic process by allowing them to have a say in the election of our local representatives.

We thank the Justice Committee for considering our submission.

Nāku, nā

Janet Holborow
MAYOR, KĀPITI COAST DISTRICT