

## **ENVIRONMENT CANTERBURY REPRESENTATION REVIEW**

### **INITIAL PROPOSAL: ANALYSIS OF SUBMISSIONS**

#### **1. Executive Summary**

Environment Canterbury is undertaking a representation review – a statutory process under the Local Electoral Act 2001 which all councils must complete at least every six years.

The Council resolved its initial proposal for representation arrangements on 24 July 2024, and public consultation opened on that date for a period of one month, closing on 2 September 2024.

**A total of 217 submissions were received.** This compares with 64 submissions received for the 2018 representation review.

Overall, across the Canterbury region, 56.7% of submitters indicated they supported the proposal, and 43.3% of submitters (91) did not support the proposal. However, there are distinct differences in responses when these are analysed according to the areas affected.

Comments made in submissions identify a range of themes raised by submitters who oppose the proposal.

Frequently recurring themes include:

- **Size of the new constituency is too large**
- **Too few members to provide effective representation**
- **Population-based representation is inappropriate**
- **Representation should take account of environmental needs**
- **Proposal will impact on rural representation**
- **Provides poor representation for southern areas**
- **Does not provide for alignment of communities of interests**
- **Rural communities of interest are not recognised**
- **Shift in urban/rural balance**
- **Proposal goes counter to the position taken in 2018.**

Submissions were received from territorial authorities including Waimakariri, Selwyn and Ashburton districts, and a combined submission was received from the Timaru, Mackenzie, Waitaki and Waimate districts.

Selwyn District Council supports the overall proposal. Ashburton and the combined South Canterbury councils oppose the proposal.

The proposal also proposed two changes of constituency names. Again, support for these changes varies across parts of the region.

Some submitters proposed alternative representation arrangements, including a proposal from Ashburton District Council which combines Ashburton District with the Malvern and Ellesmere Wards from Selwyn District.

## 2. Background

The Council's representation arrangements were last reviewed in 2018/19. The new arrangements determined by this review will apply for the local elections in 2025 and 2028.

The review process requires the council to determine:

- (a) the proposed number of constituencies; and
- (b) the proposed name and the proposed boundaries of each constituency; and
- (c) the number of members proposed to be elected by the electors of each constituency.

Following a series of briefings and workshops, as well as preliminary community engagement, the Council resolved its initial proposal for representation arrangements on 24 July 2024.

The initial proposal was to create a new constituency which combines the Ashburton district with the Ōtuhituhi/South Canterbury constituency, to create a new constituency to be known as Mid-South Canterbury/Ōtuhituhi. This would leave Selwyn district as its own constituency, to be named Selwyn/Waikirikiriri. The proposal also included realigning Christchurch City constituency boundaries to match the current Christchurch City Council wards.

## 3. Consultation on initial proposal

The initial proposal was publicly notified on 2 August 2024 and public consultation opened on that date for a period of one month, closing on 2 September 2024.

Members of the public were invited to make submissions on the proposal, with submissions able to be made online, by email, or in writing on hard copy forms.

The Council also directly contacted key agencies and stakeholders including territorial authorities within the region, community groups and Papatipu Rūnanga, inviting them to submit on the proposal.

Online submissions could be made via a submission form on the representation review page of the Council's online engagement platform, which also included an outline of the proposal, maps, supporting information, copies of background documents, a project timeline and

The consultation was promoted throughout the consultation period through a variety of channels including:

- Online news stories
- Print ads
- Media releases
- Social media
- Email to community groups and previous submitters.

The submission form allowed submitters to indicate support or opposition to the main elements of the proposal:

- (i) Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury) is proposing to combine the Ashburton District with the existing South Canterbury/Ōtuhituhi constituency, leaving Selwyn/Waikirikiriri as its own constituency. The proposal also includes realigning Christchurch City constituency boundaries to match the current Christchurch City Council wards. Do you support this proposal?
- (ii) Do you support the proposed name change of the Mid-Canterbury constituency to Selwyn/Waikirikiriri?
- (iii) Do you support the proposed name change of the South Canterbury/Ōtuhituhi constituency to Mid-South Canterbury/Ōtuhituhi?

Submitters could also provide free text comments on each question.

## 4. Overview of submissions

A total of 217 submissions were received. This compares with 64 submissions received for the 2018 representation review.

In terms of geographical spread across the region, the highest proportion of submissions was received from submitters in Christchurch City (101), followed by Selwyn (52), Ashburton (46), Timaru (27), Waimakariri (15), Mackenzie (11), Hurunui (10), Waimate (8), Kaikoura (4), Waitaki (4) and other (4).

The majority of submissions (206) were received from individuals, while 11 submissions were made on behalf of an organisation or group. These included:

### **Territorial authorities:**

- Ashburton District Council
- Mayors of the South Canterbury Councils
- Waimakariri District Council (late submission)
- Selwyn District Council (late submission).

### **Papatipu Rūnanga:**

- Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua
- Te Taumutu Rūnanga.

### **Stakeholder organisations:**

- Selwyn Youth Council
- Combined Canterbury Provinces, Federated Farmers of New Zealand
- Mid Canterbury Independent Irrigators
- Arthur's Pass Association
- Opuha Water Ltd.

## 5. Analysis of submissions

The following sections set out a summary and analysis of the responses to the consultation questions and comments made by submitters.

The analysis includes overall responses across the district, as well as a breakdown by affected areas. Because the areas of Selwyn District, Ashburton District and the South Canterbury/Ōtuhituhi constituency are directly affected by the proposed changes, and in different ways, responses have been identified separately for each of these areas.

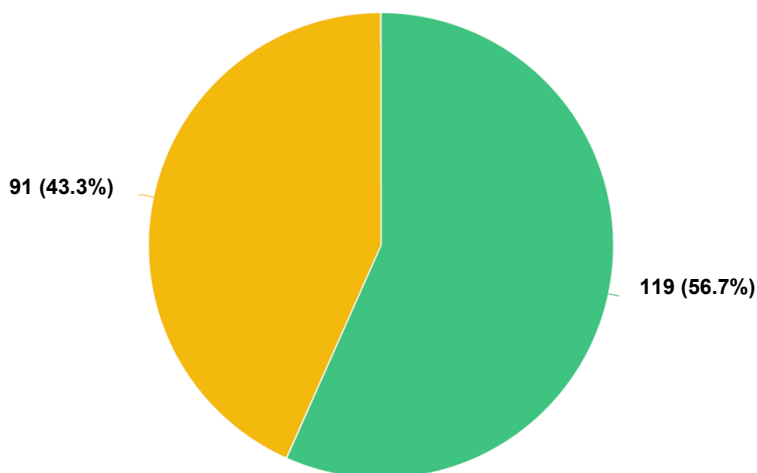
### Question 1

**Canterbury Regional Council (Environment Canterbury) is proposing to combine the Ashburton District with the existing South Canterbury/Ōtuhituhi constituency, leaving Selwyn/Waikirikiriri as its own constituency. The proposal also includes realigning Christchurch City constituency boundaries to match the current Christchurch City Council wards. Do you support this proposal?**

Overall, across the Canterbury region (210 responses):

- **56.7%** of submitters (119) indicated they supported the proposal
- **43.3%** of submitters (91) did not support the proposal.

### *Q1 Support the proposal: All responses*

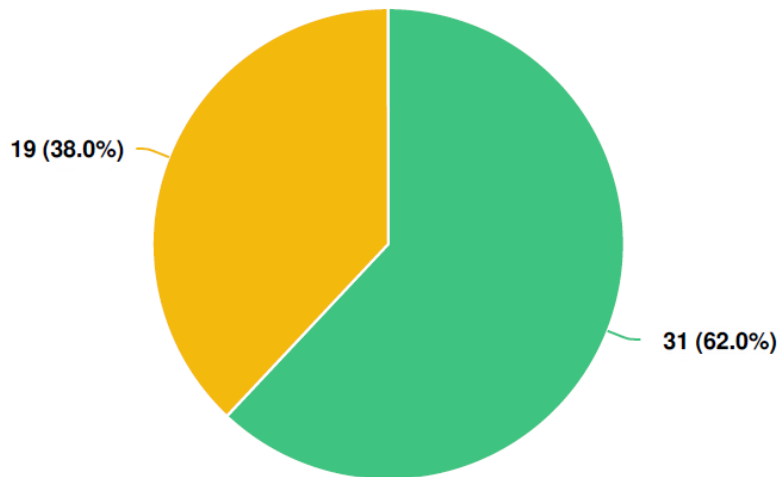


On a geographical basis, there were distinct contrasts in the responses across different areas, when analysed by those areas most affected by the proposal (Selwyn District, Ashburton District and the South Canterbury/Ōtuhituhi constituency).

In Selwyn (50 responses):

- **62%** of submitters (31) supported the proposal
- **38%** of submitters (19) did not support the proposal.

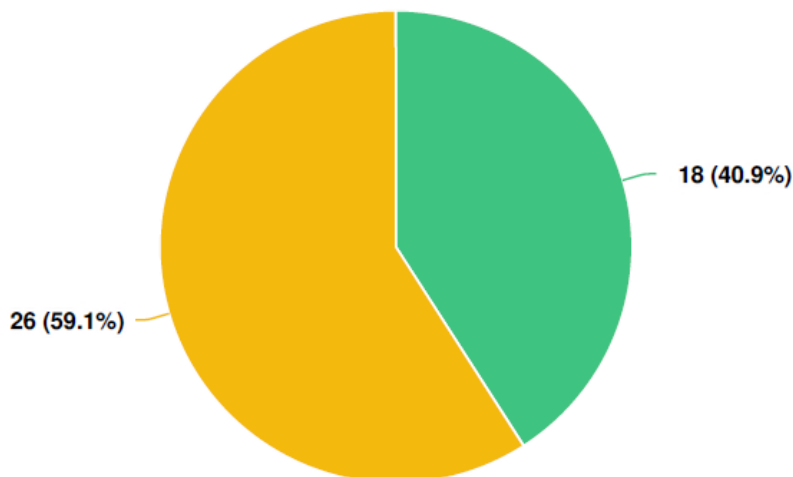
***Q1 Support the proposal: Selwyn responses***



In Ashburton (44 responses):

- **40.9%** of submitters (18) supported the proposal
- **59.1%** of submitters (26) did not support the proposal.

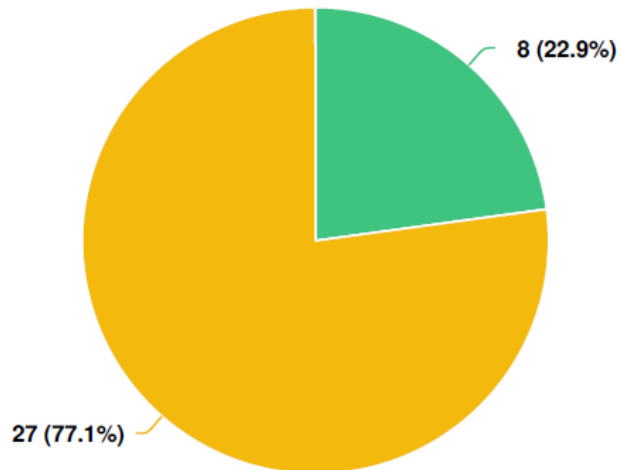
***Q1 Support the proposal: Ashburton responses***



In South Canterbury (Timaru, Mackenzie, Waimate and Waitaki) (35 responses):

- **22.9%** of submitters (8) supported the proposal
- **77.1%** of submitters (27) did not support the proposal.

***Q1 Support the proposal: South Canterbury constituency responses***

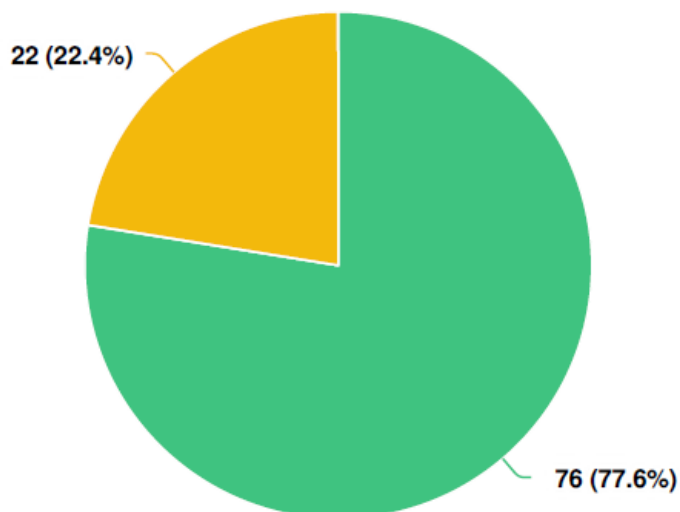


The proposal also includes realignment of the Christchurch City constituency boundaries to align with the current Christchurch City Council ward boundaries.

Of submitters in the Christchurch City area (98 responses):

- **77.6%** of submitters (76) supported the proposal
- **22.4%** of submitters (22) opposed the proposal.

***Q1 Support the proposal: Christchurch City responses***



## Key themes: Support for the proposal

Themes most commonly mentioned by submitters who supported the proposed change included:

- ***Fairness of representation***: a number of submitters noted that the proposed change better aligned with the statutory requirement for fair and equal representation on a population basis.
- ***Response to population change***: submitters noted the substantial increase in Selwyn's population and that the proposed arrangement reflected that growth.
- ***Alignment of interests***: submitters commented that Ashburton's interests and values were more aligned with South Canterbury than with Selwyn.
- ***Response to growth***: The proposal recognises the sustained high level of population growth in the Selwyn District and provides improved representation.

The following summarises common themes submitted in support of the proposed change, analysed by area, for those areas most affected by the proposal:

(a) From submitters in Selwyn:

- Opportunity to have Selwyn-based councillors
- Fairest way to ensure effective voice
- Recognises growth in Selwyn population.

(b) From submitters in Ashburton:

- Fair implementation of the rule governing representation
- Ashburton's closer alignment with the environment, social and provincial issues of South Canterbury
- Will improve outcomes and provide better alignment between rural and urban communities
- Disagree that representation should be based on land area rather than population
- Would provide advantages of rural and smaller city areas being combined
- Important that all areas have equal opportunity to be represented.

(c) From submitters in the South Canterbury constituency (Timaru, Mackenzie, Waimate and Waitaki):

- n/a.

(d) From submitters in other areas within Waitaha/Canterbury (Christchurch City, Hurunui, Kaikōura, Waimakariri):

- Reflects rural/urban differences and aligns with broad climate zones
- Reflects population changes/growth
- Ashburton's values and needs align more closely with South Canterbury's than with Selwyn's.
- More aligned with population
- Agree with realigning Christchurch City constituency boundaries
- Supports fair representation
- Votes should have similar weighting
- In line with representation requirements.