



Taranaki Triennial Agreement 2025-2028

Purpose

1. This Triennial Agreement represents an expression of the desire of local government in the Taranaki region to work collaboratively, to optimise efficiency and to promote the sustainable development of both the Taranaki region as a whole and its different communities.
2. To achieve these objectives this Agreement outlines ways in which the parties have agreed to work together to align their efforts in addressing significant issues in which the parties have a common interest and/or achieve a range of mutually beneficial outcomes for the region.

Background

3. Under the Local Government Act 2002, the purpose of local government is to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities, and to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future.
4. The Act recognises that local authorities should collaborate and cooperate with one another and a variety of other organisations to find solutions to local issues and promote the development of their local communities.
5. This Agreement is deemed to meet the requirements of section 15 of the Local Government Act 2002 to ensure appropriate levels of communication, co-ordination, and collaboration between local authorities within the region by including:
 - a) Principles that will guide the way in which the councils will work together and with other stakeholders
 - b) protocols for communication and co-ordination between the councils;
 - c) defining the role of the Mayoral Forum as a vehicle for leading implementation of this Agreement and in working with Government and other stakeholders on initiatives of significance to the Taranaki region
 - d) the process by which councils will comply with section 16 of the Act, which applies to significant new activities proposed by regional councils;
 - e) processes and protocols through which all councils can participate in identifying, delivering, and funding facilities and services of significance to more than one district.
6. The Agreement also incorporates formal recognition of the activities of the Taranaki Mayoral Forum and Chief Executives Forum.

Parties to the Agreement

7. The Parties to this Agreement are New Plymouth District Council (NPDC), Stratford District Council, South Taranaki District Council (STDC), and Taranaki Regional Council (TRC).

Standing Together for Taranaki

8. The Parties agree to work collaboratively and in good faith for the good governance and sustainable development of their districts and the region. In doing so, they agree that they will use the Mayoral Forum as a key vehicle for presenting a voice on behalf of the region, acting as a nexus between central and local government, facilitating collaboration across the region, in deciding on, monitoring, and evaluating, significant programmes of work that might be undertaken at a regional level.
9. Strengthened institutions, governance, partnership, and collaborative arrangements will be more important in the future and the Mayoral Forum can play a leading role in influencing how those arrangements are formed and activated. The region's councils cannot address significant challenges on their own, requiring coordinated regional responses.
10. They need to work together closely and with key partners, funders, and collaborators.
11. The Mayoral forum can and should play a role in convening partners and collaborators, and in coalescing resources to support regionally significant programmes of work that are adjacent to or outside business as usual for Councils but serve to promote development of the region in the present and for the future.
12. The Chief Executive Forum is an important group in orchestrating and supporting a) the implementation and progress reporting of this triennial agreement, b) regionally significant and strategic programmes of work, and c) regional representation where required for and on behalf of the Mayoral Forum, the region's councils and the local communities they serve.
13. Given the level of change affecting the Taranaki region and local government generally, the parties acknowledge the need to be agile and proactive on behalf of their communities in the next three years. They will also have to lay the ground for longer-term programmes of work that serve regional and national interests.

Principles

The parties agree to work in good faith together for the good governance of their local communities and the region. The parties recognise that:

- a) The communities within the region are diverse and encompass a range of desired outcomes
- b) Issues and concerns that are shared by some councils may be of little relevance to others. This Triennial Agreement therefore acknowledges that it may, from time to time, be appropriate to have sub-agreements that address more localised or sub-regional issues between and among councils or with other groups.
- c) Collaboration can aid in effective and efficient planning and encourage shared services and a collective approach to reduce costs, increase available resources, and help to make strategic judgements about the allocation of resources.
- d) Collaboration can assist councils promote outcomes consistent with the purpose of local government including the delivery of quality public services and infrastructure that support development of the region.
- e) There is a need for open communication, information sharing and seeking agreement on strategic issues.
- f) They should speak as one voice and in good faith attempt to reach unanimity on issues of regional and national significance which are critical to the wellbeing of the region and its communities.
- g) Common direction on all strategic issues may not be achieved given that each party to the agreement has functions, obligations, and rights to make decisions for their area which may conflict with the position of

other signatories to this agreement. In such circumstances the party should not, in adopting a different view, be critical of the position reached by others.

- h) Where a council(s) make (or propose to make) a decision that is significantly inconsistent with this Triennial Agreement or a previously agreed regional position, they will notify the other parties as soon as reasonably practical.
- i) Where appropriate aligning with and influencing Central Government policy is important to the delivery of good quality, cost effective infrastructure, public services, and regulatory functions to promote and enhance the wellbeing of our communities.
- j) The Mayoral Forum (and/or Chief Executives Forum) will play an active role negotiating with Central Government on common, agreed, positions on national policy that affect local government and their communities.

Communication and Coordination

- 14. Councils will work together on issues where it is agreed that the region will benefit from a collaborative approach.
- 15. When a council has a significant disagreement with the position of the others, the other councils will make every effort to accommodate, acknowledge or at least fairly represent the dissenting view.
- 16. When a significant decision or issue affects a particular council then that council should be consulted in formulating the region's response.
- 17. This Triennial Agreement acknowledges that each council has accountability to different communities.
- 18. Councils agree to act in good faith and in a transparent manner on issues of information and disclosure.
- 19. Councils should provide early notification of decisions that may affect other councils in the region. Communication protocols may be developed between Councils where it is agreed better communication is desired.
- 20. All formal public communications from Mayoral Forum meetings will be circulated to all councils for comment prior to release.
- 21. Councils will apply a 'no surprises' approach whereby early notice will be given over disagreements concerning policy or work programmes before critical public announcements are made.
- 22. If councils make decisions for their district/region that are inconsistent with the agreement, they must explicitly note that inconsistency and the reasons for it and notify the other councils that are parties to the agreement.

General Approach to Collaboration

- 23. The parties to this agreement will:
 - a) Share resources for the purpose of preparing background information on the various communities within the region. Such information may include demographics, survey data and scientific studies and the analysis of social, economic, environmental, and cultural trends.
 - b) Seek to attract investment and Government support into the region by aligning community interests, working collaboratively through the Mayoral Forum work streams and other options, developing agreed positions on matters of importance to the region and continuing to develop and strengthen existing joint approaches to engage with Government agencies and other organisations.
 - c) Determine and prioritise strategic collaborative initiatives and projects.

- d) Promote communication and co-operation among the region's councils with respect to shared services and other collaborative opportunities.
- e) Make draft strategies, policies and plans available to all councils in the region for discussion and development.
- f) Provide guidance on the implementation of strategic collaborative projects and monitor progress of collaborative initiatives, such as the implementation of resource management reform including development of a Regional Spatial Plan.
- g) Utilise the Mayoral Forum work streams and other collaborative options to ensure that all councils can participate in identifying, delivering, and funding regionally significant projects and programmes, facilities, and services to more than one council.
- h) Invite Government Ministers, relevant officials, corporate, community and iwi leaders to meet to discuss issues of strategic importance to the region.
- i) Advocate for strategic investment in the region and promote the strategic benefits and advantages of the Taranaki region.
- j) If necessary, establish one or more joint committees or other joint governance arrangements to give better effect to communication and coordination or to assist with identifying, delivering and funding regionally significant projects and programmes, facilities, and services to more than one district, or to consider proposals for new regional council activities.

Significant New Activities

- 24. When a Party is considering a major policy initiative or proposal that may have implications for other Parties, it will give early notification to the affected Parties and share the information with the Taranaki Mayoral Forum and the Taranaki Chief Executives Forum.
- 25. If the Taranaki Regional Council (or one of its council controlled organisations) proposes a significant new activity, it will discuss the issues involved with the other Parties, provide early drafts for comment, and inform all territorial authorities of the nature, scope, reasons, and expected effects of the proposal. The affected authorities will be given a reasonable period to respond, and the Regional Council will fully consider all submissions.

Local Government Structure in Taranaki

- 26. Notwithstanding the spirit of co-operation and collaboration embodied in the Agreement, the Parties, individually or collectively, reserve the right to promote, consult on, and/or research change to the structure of local government within the Taranaki region.
- 27. This right is consistent with the intent to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of local government (Local Government Act 2002 s.24AA), having particular regard to communities of interest and community representation.

Implementation

- 28. A primary mechanism to implement this Agreement is the Taranaki Mayoral Forum. The Forum will meet quarterly (or as otherwise agreed).
- 29. The Taranaki Mayoral Forum will:

- a) develop and lead the implementation of a sustainable development strategy for the Taranaki region for the 2025–28 local government triennium;
 - b) advocate for the interests of the region, its councils, and communities;
 - c) explore the development of joint regional work programmes as agreed by the councils.
30. The Taranaki Mayoral Forum will be supported by the Taranaki Chief Executives Forum.
31. The Parties agree that responsibility for servicing this agreement (providing secretarial services and acting as a media contact) shall be shared, with the Taranaki Regional Council leading for the 2025-2028 term, after which it shall pass to the remaining local authorities alphabetically, unless otherwise agreed.

Agreement to Review

32. This triennial agreement may be varied by agreement between all the local authorities within the region and remains in force until local authorities ratify a new agreement. Any Party can request an amendment by writing to the Chair of the Mayoral Forum at least two weeks before a regular quarterly meeting.
33. The Taranaki Mayoral Forum will review this Agreement no later than the final meeting before the 2028 triennial local body elections and recommend any changes to the incoming councils.

Resolving Disagreement

34. In the event of a disagreement over the terms of this Agreement, the Parties agree to meet to try and resolve their differences.
35. If this process is not successful, then it will refer the matter to mediation before a mediator appointed by the president of the Taranaki Branch of the New Zealand Law Society.

Authority

36. This Taranaki Triennial Agreement 2025–28 is signed on this day, 02 April 2026, by the following on behalf of their respective authorities:

New Plymouth District Council

Signed by:


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Max Brough- Mayor

South Taranaki District Council

Signed by:


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Phil Nixon- Mayor

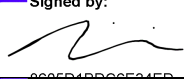
Stratford District Council

Signed by:


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Neil Volzke- Mayor

Taranaki Regional Council

Signed by:


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Craig Williamson- Chair

Dated: 02 April 2026