



MEDIA RELEASE

Local government reform leaves the basics untouched

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“The Government’s decision to remove the requirement for citizens’ referenda to guide council activities reinforces our belief in the expertise of elected members to build better communities,” said Local Government New Zealand President Lawrence Yule.

Mr Yule was speaking today after Local Government Minister Rodney Hide’s announcement of local government reforms.

“We’re pleased that the role of elected members is not being undermined by mandatory referenda of council services.

“We’re also pleased the Minister has dropped any suggestion of mandatory core services. Elected members have been given a mandate by their community to represent the best interests of communities and decide in consultation what councils should do. All communities are different - with different visions and challenges.

“The sector is happy that the measures announced will streamline some of the decision-making and planning processes councils have to undertake.

“However, it’s not going to significantly change the major drivers that have caused rates to rise over recent years. These drivers are the cost of building and maintaining the essential infrastructures necessary for our communities to grow and prosper in the future.

“More than 90% of council capital expenditure over the next ten years will be spent on network and community infrastructure like water, roads, public transport, flood management and community facilities.

“It’s good to see that the Minister and the Government recognises the importance of diversity at the local level. One of the strengths of local government is its ability to respond to local circumstances,” said Mr Yule.

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