

Environment Canterbury transition plan announced

The Government has today announced that Environment Canterbury (ECan) will move to a mixed governance council of seven elected councillors and up to six appointed in 2016 as a transition to a fully elected council in 2019.

Elected representatives were replaced in March 2010 by commissioners appointed by the Government under the Environment Canterbury (Temporary Commissioners and Improved Water Management) Act 2010. The Act is due to expire in 2016.

The mixed governance plan means a majority of ECan councillors would be elected at the local body elections in October 2016, with four elected at large in Christchurch, one elected from North Canterbury for the districts of Kaikōura, Hurunui and Waimakariri, one elected from mid-Canterbury for the Selwyn and Ashburton districts, and one from South Canterbury representing the Timaru, Mackenzie, Waimate districts and the parts of Waikati north of the Waitaki River.

The chair and deputy chair of the mixed model council will be elected post-October 2016 by the elected and appointed councillors. The mixed council will carry out a representation review in 2018 under the standard Local Government Act provisions to determine the make-up and wards of the fully elected council for 2019.

The Cabinet decisions announced today follow informal discussions with the Canterbury Mayoral Forum and Ngāi Tahu by Ministers in February, the release of a public discussion document in March, and Ministers meeting all 10 Canterbury councils during consultation. A majority of Canterbury's 10 councils supported the mixed model subject to the return to a fully elected council in 2019.

The decisions announced today will be included in a bill to be introduced to Parliament. The bill will be referred to the Local Government and Environment Select Committee with the public having a further opportunity to make oral and written submissions later this year.

Please contact Mark Christensen or Jen Crawford if you would like further information.