



Hamilton City Council – Staff Submission

**Term of Parliament (Enabling 4-Year
Term) Legislation Amendment Bill**

Parliament's Justice Select Committee



17 April 2025

Improving the Wellbeing of Hamiltonians

Hamilton City Council is focused on improving the wellbeing of Hamiltonians through delivering to our five priorities of shaping:

- **A city that's easy to live in**
- **A city where our people thrive**
- **A central city where our people love to be**
- **A fun city with lots to do**
- **A green city**

The topic of this staff submission is aligned with all of Hamilton City Council's five priorities.

Council Approval and Reference

This staff submission was approved by Hamilton City Council's Chief Executive on 17 April 2025.

Submission # 796

It should be noted that the following submission is from staff at Hamilton City Council and does not, therefore, necessarily represent the views of the Council itself.

Key Messages and Recommendations

1. Overall, Hamilton City Council staff support the principle and intent of the **Term of Parliament (Enabling 4-Year Term) Legislation Amendment Bill**.
2. We also support the submissions made by the local government sector representative organisations, Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) and Taituarā, on the Bill.
3. As noted in Taituarā's submission, *"A four-year electoral term sends better incentives for quality policy-making and law-making in general. With the three-year term, an election is always 'just around the corner'. A shorter term incentivises governments to look for short-term policy wins as opposed to longer-term structural reforms"*.
4. However, we note the Bill is completely 'silent' on the implications that a four-year central government electoral term will have on local government.
5. We recommend that any move to a four-year electoral term for central government **must** be accompanied by a similar move to a four-year electoral term for all forms of local government i.e. city, district, regional, and unitary councils, as well as local and community boards.
6. As noted in LGNZ's submission, *"The arguments that a four-year term would increase productivity and enable longer-term thinking and better-thought-through reform applies equally to local government"*.
7. We concur with LGNZ that the proposed referendum on this issue should cover both parliamentary and local government elections in the same question.
8. There would be considerable negative impacts if local government and parliamentary elections were 'out of sync'.
9. Hamilton City Council has previously advocated for the introduction of four-year electoral terms for local government (and indirectly, for central government), as evidenced in its 3 March 2023 submission ([refer here](#)) to the **Review into the Future for Local Government**.
10. This submission noted that *"Council strongly supports the introduction of four-year terms. This would be a far more efficient and less expensive than three-year terms, which are extremely short by international standards. Too much time in a three-year time is spent bedding in new Councillors and preparing for the following election. We introduced a remit on this issue at the LGNZ AGM three years ago, which passed with the overwhelming support of the sector. As with other remits, it is frustrating that progress has been so slow on this issue, especially considering the then leaders of Labour and National both said they supported four-year terms for central government elections during the 2020 general election campaign"*.
11. As noted above, Hamilton City Council was one of four 'sponsoring' councils that submitted a Remit on the local government electoral cycle to LGNZ's 2020 national conference i.e. the Remit advocated for central government to extend the local government electoral term from three to four years (Remit # 6 – page 19 – [refer here](#)).
12. The Remit was passed in August 2020, with 87 percent support of the sector ([refer here](#)). However, there was no immediate response from the government of the day.

Further Information and Hearings

13. Should Parliament's Justice Select Committee require clarification of the submission from Hamilton City Council staff, or additional information, please contact **James Clarke** (Corporate Planning and Advocacy Manager) on **027 808 9580**, or email James.Clarke@hcc.govt.nz in the first instance.
14. Hamilton City Council representatives **do wish to speak** to Parliament's Justice Select Committee at the hearings in support of this staff submission on the **Term of Parliament (Enabling 4-Year Term) Legislation Amendment Bill**.

Yours faithfully



Lance Vervoort

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

FURTHER INFORMATION

Hamilton City Council
Garden Place, Private Bag 3010, Hamilton

-  /hamiltoncitycouncil
-  @hamiltoncitycouncil
-  07 838 6699

hamilton.govt.nz