

12 April 2017

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Dear Oliver

## Request under the Official Information Act 1982

Thank you for your email of 25 March 2017, requesting the following information:

- *How many mayors and in which towns did they lead within the current geographic boundaries of the 'Rangitikei District' prior to the 1989 reforms;*
- *What was the principle reason or reasons that led the New Zealand government to carry out these reforms; and*
- *What data does our government hold and/or what research either officially commissioned or ad hoc, or whatever – regarding the effectiveness of the 1989 reforms and what positive and negative effects it has had on me as a New Zealand tax and rate payer?*

Information to answer your first query is available on the Rangitikei District Council (the Council)'s website, under the *District, About Rangitikei* and *History* tabs. It explains that the Council was established in November 1989, after the amalgamation of the Marton and Taihape Borough Councils and the Rangitikei County Council.

This amalgamation was part of wide reforms of New Zealand's local government arrangements between 1987 and 1989. The reforms focused on achieving clearer and stronger accountability to local communities, and to separate roles in local government. This resulted in approximately 800 councils and special purpose bodies being consolidated into 86 local authorities.

In 1988, the Local Government Commission (the Commission) considered two options for determining the boundaries of the new local authority in the Rangitikei area:

- a single district, comprising Rangitikei County, Marton Borough and Taihape Borough; or
- two districts, one comprising the southern half of Rangitikei County, Marton Borough, Whanganui City and Whanganui County; and the other comprising the northern half of Rangitikei County, Taihape Borough and Waimarino District.

The Commission decided that a single Rangitikei District would improve local government functions and services in the area. It considered that Taihape Borough would find it increasingly difficult to carry out its functions and responsibilities effectively or efficiently. Although Waiouru was part of the Rangitikei County Council prior to the amalgamation, the Commission decided it should be under the jurisdiction of a single authority. As there appeared to be greater community interest in the Waimairno area, Waiouru was incorporated into that area and included in the new Ruapehu District.

In response to your third query, I advise that the Department has not undertaken or commissioned research into the effectiveness of the reforms. However, a report commissioned by Local Government New Zealand in 1998 is available at the following link: [http://www.academia.edu/938170/Local\\_Government\\_Reform](http://www.academia.edu/938170/Local_Government_Reform)

I trust that you find this information helpful.

Yours sincerely



Richard Marshall  
Policy Director