

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Electoral Reference Group**

#### **Introduction**

1. Taituarā is a national membership organisation. Its focus is on providing professional leadership, promoting innovation and excellence in management practice, as well as developing local government capability to enhance service delivery to our local communities.
2. In undertaking its core businesses Taituarā relies on the input of local government professionals to help it:
  - identify the training and professional development opportunities and good practice that build the capability of the local government sector; and
  - provide technical and policy advice to support Taituarā's sector leadership activity.

#### **Purpose**

3. The purpose of Taituarā's Electoral Reference Group (ERG) is to assist the local government sector to achieve high standards in the planning, management and conduct of legislative requirements under the Local Electoral Act 2001 and Local Electoral Regulations 2001, and to give effect to Te Tiriti and Te Tiriti principles.

#### **Scope**

4. In promoting its purpose the ERG shall focus on the following, in alignment with the agreed Taituarā workplan and endorsed by the Executive Board:
  - a. identifying and promoting leading practice in the management of local government elections and polls
  - b. assisting local authorities, electoral officers and electoral staff to meet the requirements of the Local Electoral Act, and any other associated statutes and regulations
  - c. identifying policy and practice issues relating to electoral functions and developing appropriate responses from a managerial and operational perspective
  - d. working with other agencies on programmes or projects that builds capacity to participate in the electoral process

- e. working with other agencies on programmes or projects which include effective means for building the capacity of Māori to contribute to, and encouraging the participation of Māori in, these processes
- f. working with other agencies to promote participation in the local electoral process
- g. negotiating terms of purchase for election related services on behalf of the sector, including price and service delivery standards.

## **Responsibilities**

- 6. In giving effect to its purpose the ERG shall be specifically responsible for:
  - a. monitoring the environment within which local authorities operate for relevant issues impacting on electoral function including proposed legislative change and developments in overseas jurisdictions
  - b. preparing and presenting submissions representing local government sector concerns from a management and operational perspective to appropriate organisations and Ministers
  - c. providing advice to electoral officers on issues within its area of focus. This may involve the preparation of good practice guidance, tools and training
  - d. participate in or undertake national programmes to help promote awareness of and participation in local elections and polls collaboratively with Local Government New Zealand, subject to the approval of the Chief Executive
  - e. develop and maintain co-operative working relationships with the local government sector and other organisations that have related interests.

## **Accountability**

- 7. The ERG is accountable to the Taituarā Chief Executive, and may not undertake any action not in accordance with these terms of reference without the approval of the Chief Executive.
- 8. The ERG must prepare a proposed annual work programme for consideration by the Chief Executive. That the proposed work programme will include sufficient detail of financial, staffing, and consultancy needs to enable accurate costing of the proposals.
- 9. The ERG must provide the Chief Executive with a report on its activities, at least once per year, or at other times as the Chief Executive determines. In turn, the Chief Executive will report to the Executive Committee.

10. Where the ERG undertakes actions as per paragraph 6 it shall ensure that these activities are taken at no risk to Taituarā, and with the full support of local authorities.

## **Powers**

12. In fulfilling its purpose and responsibilities, the ERG may;
  - a. appoint working groups or teams
  - b. recommend the retention of specialist advisors to the Chief Executive of Taituarā for one-off projects .
13. In fulfilling its purpose and responsibilities, the ERG must
  - a. ensure that its activities do not conflict with the policies and procedures of Taituarā
  - b. ensure that its advice meets any Taituarā standards for policy advice.

## **Membership**

14. The Taituarā Executive may, at its discretion, appoint the Chair and Deputy Chair of Working Parties. All other reference group members will be appointed or removed by the Chief Executive. Any vacancy on the ERG may only be filled by the Chief Executive having first called for nominations from amongst the membership of Taituarā.
15. The Chief Executive will review the membership of the ERG following every triennial election in collaboration with the ERG Chair.
16. Members of the ERG must be a full member of Taituarā. The appointment of members from outside the sector to a reference group (other than observers appointed under paragraph 16) will require the approval of the Chief Executive of Taituarā or their nominee.
17. Membership should have representation from a range of local authorities with varying geography, population and type, e.g. territorial, regional, unitary.
18. At its discretion, the ERG may invite representatives from other organisations to attend meetings in an "observer" capacity. Observers will have speaking rights, but may not move or vote on recommendations. Participation in meetings by observers does not bind those organisations to any statement, submission or other release or publication, however issued, by the ERG and may not to be taken as the position of any or all of the other participating organisations.

## **Review of Terms of Reference**

18. The ERG will review these Terms of Reference not less than once every three years. At this time it may make recommendations to the Chief Executive that it considers will ensure that the ERG meets its purpose.
19. The Chief Executive may review these Terms of Reference at any time.