



24 February 2023

Minister of Local Government
Hon Kieran McAnulty
Parliament
Wellington

E te Minita, tēnā koe

Changing the Local Government Act 2002 to enable online quorums to support councils affected by Cyclone Gabrielle

We ask that, with urgency, you enable those councils affected by Cyclone Gabrielle to hold virtual meetings without a physical quorum.

In July 2022 LGNZ wrote to Minister Mahuta, asking that the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA) be changed to allow councils to use online quorums at council meetings, as occurred while the Epidemic Preparedness (COVID-19) Notice was in place.

Under that Notice, which expired in September 2022, councils were able to hold virtual meetings without the need to have a "physical quorum". The ability to have fully virtual meetings was essential to enable councils to continue to operate during a time when it was impossible for many elected members to physically participate.

This situation has re-emerged in the wake of Cyclone Gabrielle and the number of significant weather events that have impacted Aotearoa this year. The state of local and regional infrastructure has made it impossible for many councillors to travel to their council offices for meetings. This is at a time when councils need to meet frequently to make significant decisions about recovery and their communities' well-being.

We expect you and your officials will be looking at a range of possible emergency measures to assist councils affected by Cyclone Gabrielle and other extreme weather events to meet their statutory obligations. This should include the matter of non-physical quorums. We have attached a list of the councils that we understand have been significantly affected by Cyclone Gabrielle and other weather events that have taken place in recent weeks.

As well as urgently providing this support to the immediately affected councils, we encourage you and your officials to consider making changes to the LGA to ensure that any councils significantly affected by an extreme weather event in the future can make use of online quorums. We think this makes sense given the increasing frequency and severity of weather events that are impacting Aotearoa.



We are happy to provide further detail or support if useful.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. A. Crosby".

Stuart Crosby
President
Local Government New Zealand

Cc – Michael Lovett, DIA



Councils affected by Cyclone Gabrielle and other extreme weather events

These regions were included in the Government's National State of Emergency Declaration on 14 February 2023: Northland, Auckland, Tairāwhiti, Bay of Plenty, Waikato, Hawkes Bay, Tararua.

Northland

Whangarei District Council
Kaipara District Council
Far North District Council
Northland Regional Council

Auckland

Auckland Council

Waikato

Thames-Coromandel District Council
Taupo District Council
Waikato Regional Council
Kawerau District Council
Otorohanga District Council
Waikato District Council
South Waikato District Council
Waitomo District Council
Matamata-Piako District Council
Rotorua District Council
Otorohanga District Council
Hamilton City Council
Waipa District Council
Hauraki District Council

Bay of Plenty

Ōpōtiki District Council
Whakatane District Council
Western Bay of Plenty District Council
Tauranga District Council
Bay of Plenty Regional Council



Tairāwhiti

Gisborne District Council
Wairoa District Council

Hawkes Bay

Hastings District Council
Central Hawke's Bay District Council
Napier City Council
Hawkes Bay Regional Council

Tararua

Tararua District Council

Also badly affected, but didn't declare a State of Emergency

Masterton District Council
Manawatū District Council