

TE ARAWA WAKA

Simplifying Local Government — Head Start

Te Arawa Presentation

29 July 2026

Where things stand

Te Arawa's input to Council ahead of its Head Start decision-making hui

1

Four models considered

Te Arawa has weighed a range of options, including those developed by Rotorua Lakes Council. The paper comments on four.

2

Assessed on their merits

Each is tested against its economic possibilities and the Government's MCERT criteria — what delivers for the community and for councils.

3

Document

A full analysis, evidence and sources as the accompanying paper.

The paper does not pre-empt any decision — it sets out the options, the evidence and the open questions.

The four options at a glance

Status of each model as it stands

1

Mai i Maketū ki Tongariro

Sub-regional Te Arawa footprint

Preferred direction — endorsed by resolution 16 July; not yet fully mandated

2

Waka Hourua

Regional footprint across iwi

No Mataatua support — cannot proceed as a joint mandated proposal

3

Rotorua only

Council's Option E

Simplest to establish — but splits iwi and catchments; may be too small

4

Bay-wide, three districts

Council's Option F

Untested with Te Arawa, no iwi mandate — improvements recommended

Option 1 — Mai i Maketū ki Tongariro

Te Arawa's preferred direction — with two open questions on viability

Endorsed by formal resolution at the Hui ā-lwi, Te Papaiōuru Marae, 16 July 2026, with significant support from Te Arawa representatives. It remains the preferred direction — but further analysis and consultation are required before it can be considered fully mandated.

Two questions bear on whether the full model is currently achievable

Tarawera catchment

Inclusion remains to be confirmed. Both Te Arawa and Mataatua iwi and hapū hold interests, and mandate has not been obtained across those iwi and hapū or the relevant councils.

Taupō District

Council has not indicated support for joining. Without Taupō the model is incomplete — it excludes Tūwharetoa and leaves the southern extent unresolved.

The design survives either way. Even if the standalone model is not currently achievable, its catchment-based footprint is preserved as the Central district of a Bay-wide authority (Option 4).

Option 2 — Waka Hourua

Strong on the criteria, but without the mandate to proceed

Performs well on MCERT

The largest viable footprint — strongest on economies of scale, with the Quayside / Port dividend and the widest rating base inside.

But no Mataatua support

Tested directly with Mataatua at the Hui ā-Iwi and in separate discussions with iwi representatives. Support was not indicated.

Where that leaves it. The option cannot proceed as a joint Te Arawa–Mataatua mandated proposal. It is carried in the paper for completeness, so the regional-scale case can be seen alongside the others.

Options 3 and 4 — feedback on Council's models

Te Arawa's response to Rotorua Lakes Council's Options E and F

Option 3 — Rotorua only

Council's Option E

- Likely the simplest option to establish
- But splits Te Arawa iwi and hapū, and their related catchments, across separate unitary authorities
- May be considered too small to satisfy the MCERT criteria

Option 4 — Bay-wide, three districts

Council's Option F

- Not tested with Te Arawa; holds no mandate from any iwi
- Complex at this scale, with risks including the balancing of competing interests
- Strongest on rating base, Quayside / Port and emergency-management coordination
- Te Arawa offers recommended improvements (next slide)

What Te Arawa recommends on Option F

Design changes to bring it closer to the bottom lines and the wānanga feedback

1

Catchment-based districts

Three districts drawn on catchments, not old administrative lines — the Central district being the Mai i Maketū ki Tongariro footprint.

2

Voice retained, not absorbed

Genuine local decision-making in each district, so local and individual voices are held — a federation of distinct voices, not a merger.

3

Entrenched in legislation

Representation and existing co-governance arrangements secured in law rather than by resolution a later council can unwind.

4

Region-scale delivery

One emergency-management structure, and a single regional tourism and economic-development arm across the three districts.

Each is keyed to a Te Arawa bottom line and to what was heard at the Hui ā-lwi from iwi and the invited speakers.

Where to from here

Dates in front of us, and the questions still open

24 Jul

Council decision point

27 Jul

Joint Te Arawa–RLC working group hui

29 Jul

RLC Decision-making Hui

9 Aug

Outline proposals due to Government

Open questions

- Whether the Tarawera catchment can be included — mandate not yet obtained across the iwi and hapū with interests, or the relevant councils
- Whether Taupō District Council will indicate support — without it, the southern extent of Option 1 is unresolved
- Further analysis and consultation with iwi and hapū before Option 1 can be considered fully mandated