

Which Waikato councils have established Māori wards?

By [Danielle Zollickhofer](#)

28 Oct, 2023 09:00 AM ⌚ 5 mins to read

The number of councils with Māori wards is growing across the Waikato region as Hauraki District Council has joined eight other local authorities in establishing the seats.

In a historic vote on Thursday, Hauraki councillors opted to set up the wards for the 2025 and 2028 local elections.

Māori wards are represented by councillors who sit alongside general ward councillors on the local council. Like their colleagues, they are elected representatives, but only voters enrolled on the Māori electoral roll can vote for them.

People on the Māori roll are only able to vote for the mayor and the candidates standing in the Māori wards. They can't vote for candidates standing in the general wards.

Which Waikato councils have established Māori wards?

- **Waikato Regional Council**

The regional council was the first in the Waikato to establish Māori wards in 2013.

The council has two Māori wards named Ngā Tai Ki Uta and Ngā Hau E Whā with one councillor each.

The seats are held by Kataraina Hodge and Tipa Mahuta. Both councillors were elected unopposed at the last local election in 2022.

Mahuta held the Ngā Hau E Whā seat since its inception, while Hodge has held her seat since 2016. The Ngā Tai Ki Uta constituency was previously held by Timoti Bramley.



~~Waikato District Council was one of seven councils that opted to implement Māori wards at the last local election in 2022.~~

The council has two Māori wards with one councillor each.

The Tai Runga Takiwaa Māori Ward is held by Tilly Turner and the Tai Raro Takiwaa Māori ward councillor is Tutata Paaniora Sevilla Matatahi-Poutapu.

- **Hamilton City Council**

Hamilton City Council also established two Māori wards with one councillor each in 2022. The constituencies both have the name Kirikiriroa Māori Ward. Melaina Huaki and Moko Tauariki currently hold the two seats.

- **Waipā District Council**

Waipā District Council has one Māori ward with one councillor since 2022. Takena Stirling was first elected to the constituency, but he resigned earlier this year after being struck from the roll of barristers and solicitors. In a by-election, Dale-Maree Morgan has been elected as the new Māori ward councillor.

- **Matamata-Piako District Council**

Matamata-Piako District Council has one Māori ward called Te Toa Horopū ā Matamata-Piako with one councillor. It was established in 2022. The seat is held by Gary Thompson (Ngāti Paoa), a member of the council's Te Manawhenua Forum, who was elected unopposed.

- **Ōtorohanga District Council**

Ōtorohanga District Council established one Māori ward called Rangiātea Māori Ward with two councillors in 2022. Jaimee Tamaki and Roy Willison hold the seat.

- **Taupō District Council**

Like Ōtorohanga, Taupō District Council also established one Māori ward with two councillors in 2022. The ward is called Te Papamārearea Māori ward.

Danny Loughlin and Karam Fletcher have been elected.

- **Ruapehu District Council**

Ruapehu District Council has one Māori ward with three councillors since 2022. Fiona Kahukura Hardley-Chase, Korty Wilson and Channey Iwikau have been elected.

Which Waikato councils don't have Māori Wards?

● **Thames-Coromandel District Council** currently doesn't have Māori wards, but will decide next Tuesday if they are going to establish Māori wards for the 2025 and 2028 local elections.

If the council decides in favour of the establishment, there would likely be one Māori ward councillor elected in the district, based on the ratio of the Māori electoral population to the total electoral population.

The council has not made a decision on Māori wards previously.

● **South Waikato District Council** made the decision not to establish Māori wards at its council meeting on October 11.

Councillor Bill Machen put forward the motion to retain the current system. At the meeting, Machen said during his 10 years on the council, he had never been approached by anyone to ask for Māori wards within the district.

"I would have thought that if there was a need for it, somebody would have raised it with us. Certainly no one from the local iwi, no senior person ... I speak with from time to time has ever raised it," he said.

"It's not that I'm against it in principle... but unless anyone has a counter-argument, I would put forward the motion that we retain the current representation system."

The motion was carried.

● **Waitomo District Council** just made the decision not to establish Māori wards for the next two local government elections. Instead, the council said it would work with mana whenua to establish a committee with Māori representation.

Danielle Zollickhofer is a multimedia journalist based in Hamilton. She joined the Waikato Herald, then named Waikato News, in 2021.

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