



LESSON ONE WEB CONTENT: An introduction to Auckland Council

Akoranga tuatahi: He whakamārama mō Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau

Get an overview of Auckland Council and learn about the difference between central and local government.

The difference between local and central government

In Aotearoa, we have two tiers of government: central government makes decisions affecting New Zealand as a whole, while local government looks after the interests and needs of specific communities of our regions, cities, and district areas.

Central government

Central government is made up of members of parliament who are elected from across the whole country to make decisions for all New Zealanders.

Local government

In Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland local government is made up of the mayor, councillors and local board members who are elected to look after the specific needs of our region and local communities.

Our local government organisation is Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland Council.

Working together to get the job done

While central government and local government have two separate jobs to do, they often work together to get things done.

Let's put it this way

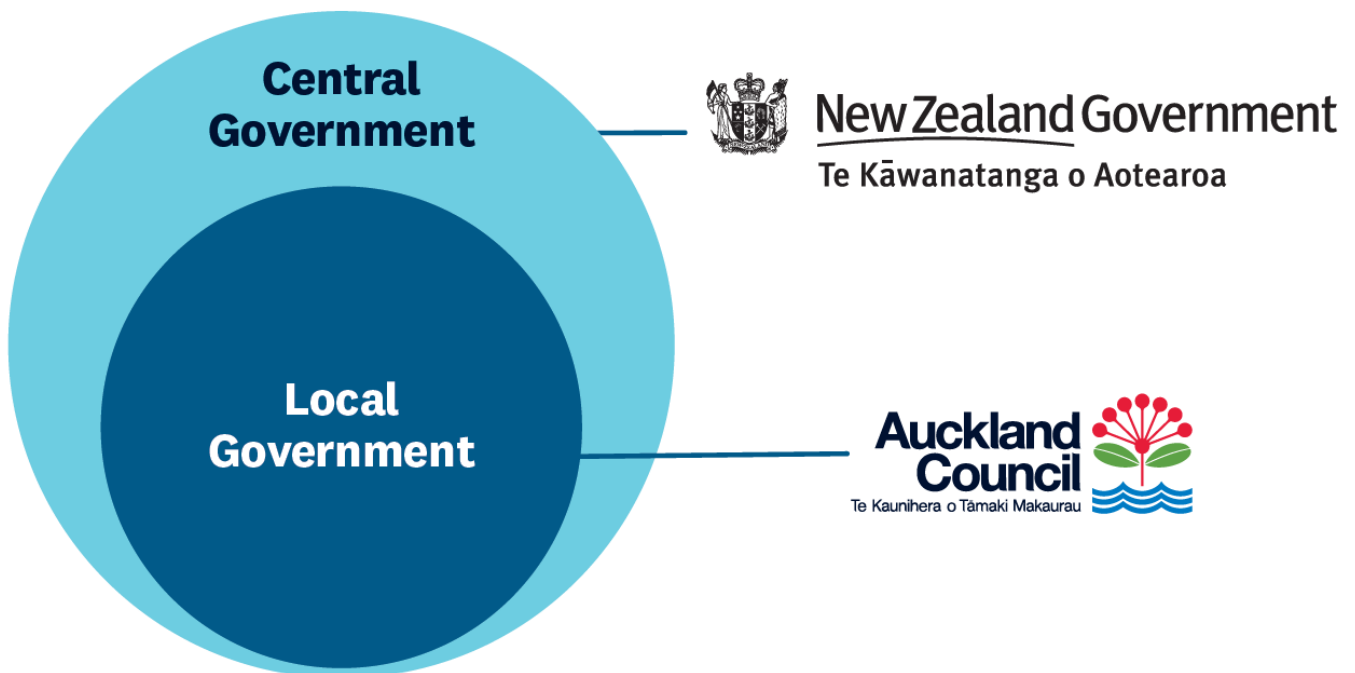
You could think of the central government as your school principal, who looks after everything across the whole school and local government as your class teacher, who looks after everything that happens in the classroom, day to day.

Or you could think of central government as the directors of a large company. They look at the bigger picture and strategies and make sure that all of the departments are working together.

Local government is like a department within a large company., They look after and run a specific area of the business to make sure everything runs smoothly on a daily basis. Both the directors and separate departments have their own jobs to do, but they both rely on each other for direction and support to get those jobs done.

Who does what

Let's have a closer look at what central government looks after for our whole country, and what local government looks after for our regions.



Central government (country-wide)

- Makes laws for all of New Zealand.
- Runs the big things like housing, welfare, education, health, energy, national road and rail systems, defense, foreign policy, and public finances.
- Keeps an eye on employment, import and export, and workplace safety.
- Deals with taxes for the whole country.

Local government (council area)

- Provides local services like water, rubbish collection, parks, animal management, roads, public transport, and libraries.
- Makes decisions about building consents.
- Makes bylaws (special laws for certain areas) within its boundaries.
- Collects rates from Aucklanders to keep the city going.

More information

To find out more about the differences between central government and local government in New Zealand, see the [New Zealand Immigration website](#).

You may find this interesting

Auckland Council is the biggest council in Oceania.

Oceania includes:

- New Zealand
- Australia
- Melanesia
- Micronesia
- Polynesia.

Auckland Council hasn't always been as big as it is today.

In 2010, the Auckland Council was formed by an Act of Parliament, which was decided by central government.

Auckland Council was formed by bringing together all of the eight previous councils in the Auckland region into one, which some people called the 'Supercity'!



What makes our structure unique?

When the 'supercity' was formed, we needed a structure which enabled us to meet both regional and local needs. This is how our unique governance model was born.

A new governance model

Most local councils in New Zealand have a Governing Body, which is made up of the mayor and elected councillors. The Governing Body makes all of the decisions for the region.

When central government decided to create Auckland Council back in 2010, it also decided on a new governance model.

Merging all the previous councils into one 'super' Auckland Council meant that it had to be structured in a way to meet the needs of both our region and our local communities.

This meant that we needed a unique structure which was unlike any of the other local councils throughout the country.

Two complementary decision-making parts

Through the Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009, central government decided that Auckland would benefit from having two complementary decision-making mechanisms to ensure regional and local needs are met.

Overseeing Auckland as a whole

Today, Auckland Council has a Governing Body that is made up of the mayor and 20 elected councillors from the 13 ward areas, who look after regional issues that affect all of Auckland.

Looking after local communities

Unlike other councils, we also have 21 local boards who look after the issues that are important to their local communities within the Auckland region.

Meet the wider council family

In addition to the Auckland Council organisation itself, our wider family includes:

- council-controlled organisations (CCOs)
- Advisory Panels
- Houkura (Independent Māori Statutory Board).

At council, we refer to this family as the 'council group'.

A big responsibility

A lot of decisions made at council affect a lot of people, so our structure reflects how big of a job we have to do.

This might seem confusing now, but we will take a close look at each of these parts to see how they work together.

So, what kind of council are we?

We are a unitary authority. Let's take a look at what that means.

In New Zealand, there are two kinds of local government:

Territorial authorities and regional councils

Territorial authorities are responsible for districts and cities.

Regional councils are responsible for larger areas, and the focus is largely on environmental management

A unitary authority is a combination of both. There are eight unitary authorities in New Zealand.

Putting the pieces together

The following puzzle pieces show what territorial authorities and regional councils look after. When they are combined into a unitary authority, they become a complete set of responsibilities under one organisation.

Territorial authority

These are also known as city or district councils.

They are responsible for:

- local land use management
- water, sewerage, stormwater, solid waste management
- local roads
- libraries, parks and reserves.

Regional council

The focus of regional councils is largely environmental management.

This includes:

- wastewater
- coastal management
- river and lake management
- regional land management
- regional transport
- biosecurity.

Unitary authority

A unitary authority is responsible for both territorial authorities and regional councils. Auckland Council is a unitary authority.

Our governance model

When it comes time to make decisions for Auckland, elected members can draw on the guidance of Auckland Council staff (including council-controlled organisations), the advisory panels and Houkura.

Elected members for our city and region

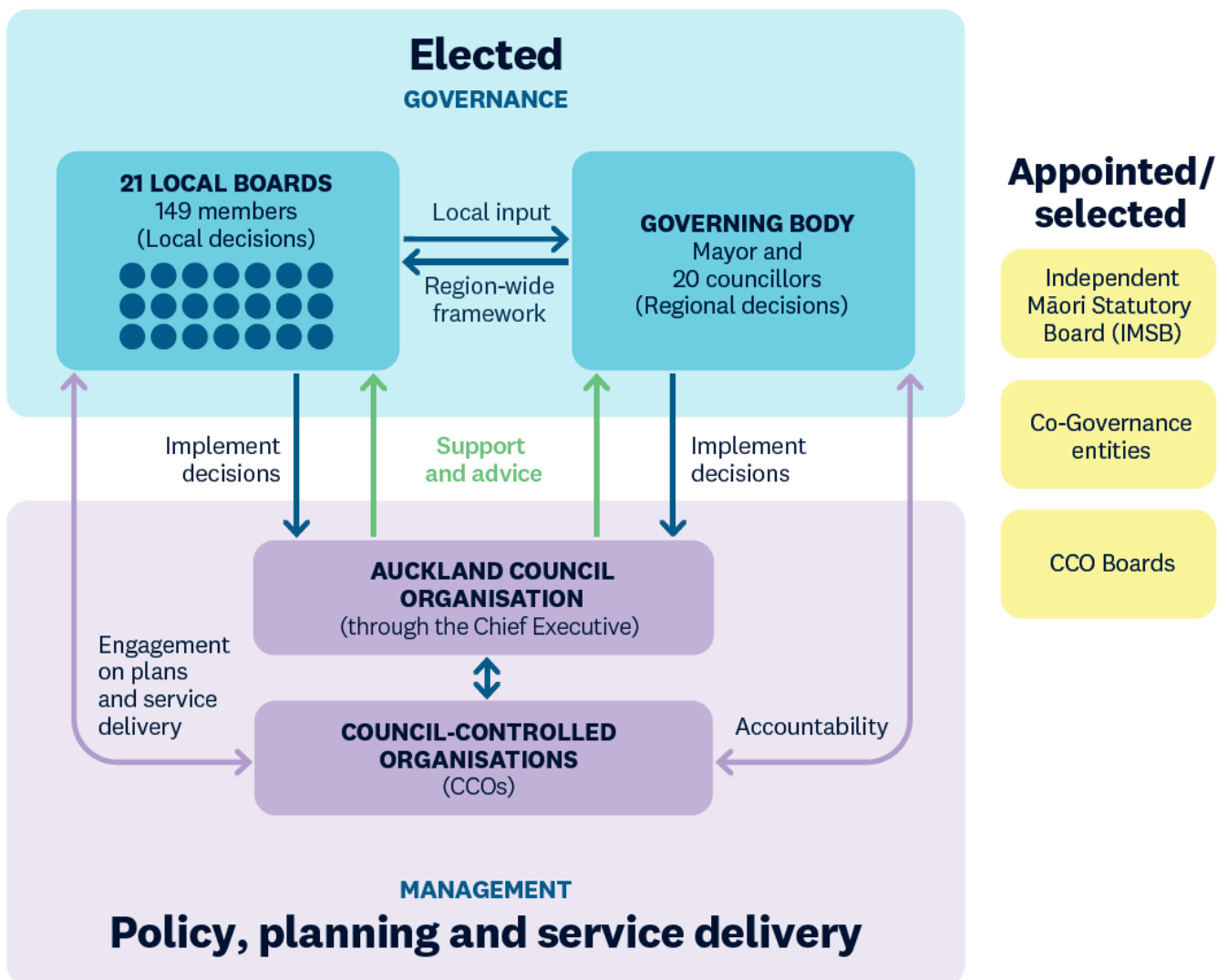
The elected members of the Governing Body and local boards make decisions about Auckland for all Aucklanders.

The mayor, councillors and local board members are all elected by Aucklanders to represent the specific interests of the region and its diverse communities.

Once elected, they spend the next three years serving as representatives.

Gathering the necessary information

Representing our many communities is a very important role, so we make sure that elected members have all the information they need when it comes to decision-making.



Governing Body

The Governing Body focuses on the big picture and on region-wide strategic decisions.

It is made up of the mayor and 20 ward councillors, elected by voters from the 13 Auckland wards.

Houkura are separate to the Auckland Council and make sure that we are honouring our partnership under the Treaty of Waitangi, taking the views of Māori into account in decision-making.

21 Local boards

Local boards represent the communities in their area and make decisions on local issues, activities, and facilities.

Each of the 21 local boards has between five and nine members, elected by voters from the area they represent.

Auckland Council organisation

Our staff provide support for the elected members. We provide advice on decisions being made, and make sure their decisions are implemented.

Advisory panels

The advisory panels offer advice on issues important to their communities.

There are nine advisory panels.

Council-controlled organisations (CCOs)

Like our staff, the CCOs advise elected members on special areas of decision making.

These areas include transport, water, development, tourism, and events.

How it all works together

When making decisions for Auckland, elected members use all or some of the parts of the council group to help guide them.

To ensure they're aware of all the important information when making a decision, elected members work with, for example:

- our staff (including CCOs)
- the Advisory Panels
- Houkura.

Let's find out a bit more about each of these groups.

What CCOs do

Council-controlled organisations look after:

- special council assets
- services
- infrastructure.

They work separately from the Auckland Council organisation, but they are accountable to the Governing Body.

Specialists in their fields of expertise

You can think of the CCOs as teams that specialise in their areas of expertise. They keep everything running on behalf of the council and then report back to the Governing Body.

The Governing Body makes sure that the CCOs are doing the best job possible.

Have a look at the different CCOs and what they do.



Watercare services- All things water

Watercare looks after all of the water and wastewater services for Auckland – next time you turn on a tap you can thank Watercare!



Tātaki Auckland Unlimited - all the fun stuff!

Tātaki Auckland Unlimited looks after arts, culture, heritage and sports venues and facilities. That includes the Auckland Zoo and our museums!



Auckland Transport - how we get around

Auckland Transport looks after the buses, trains, cycle paths, footpaths, and parking in Auckland. We all use these everyday so it's a big job!



Eke Panuku- building the best Auckland

Eke Panuku focusses on development throughout our city and region.

They make Auckland a great place to live through projects like Wynyard Quarter.

More information about CCOs

To find out more about what each of the CCOs, head to their websites to see what projects they are working on at the moment.

What is Houkura (Independent Māori Statutory Board)?

When the Auckland Council was established back in 2010, Houkura was also formed.

The voice of Māori in Auckland

The role of Houkura is to provide advice to council on ways to promote important matters to Māori and to make sure that we honour our partnership and obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi / Treaty of Waitangi.

Who?

When?

What?

Where?

Issues of significance for Māori

Houkura have produced a lot of important documents throughout their work, such as the Māori Plan.

The Māori Plan is a 30-year plan that describes how they and council will continue to be a voice for Māori values and aspirations in Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland.

[Watch a video about the Māori Plan](#)

Important local government-led projects and initiatives

Here are some examples of projects and initiatives we lead:

Safeswim



Safeswim provides up-to-date safety information on the levels of risk for swimming locations around Auckland.

Next time you are heading to the beach, check out the website and make sure it is safe to swim.

Safeswim is a joint initiative between the Auckland Council, Northland Regional Council, Surf Life

Saving, Watercare and Auckland Regional Public Health Service.

Te Tāruke-ā-Tāwhiri: Auckland's Climate Plan



Auckland's Climate Plan is the way we respond to climate change.

The plan outlines how we are going to approach climate action for Auckland and how we can reduce emissions as well adapt to climate change.

The plan outlines priorities and how we plan to implement actions.

Auckland Emergency Management



Auckland Emergency Management provides coordinated approaches to significant risks and hazards across Auckland.

Hazards are things like floods, tsunamis, volcanos, earthquakes, severe weather, pandemics and other hazards.

We work with emergency services and other organisations through Auckland Emergency Management to make sure everyone is informed, alert, and safe.

City Rail Link



The City Rail Link is a new underground rail line that will connect the city centre to the existing western line.

This project will make moving around the city easier and help towards the reduction of cars on the road.

The City Rail Link will at least double Auckland's rail capacity!

This is a joint venture between Auckland Council and central government.

Advisory panels - advocating for our diverse communities

It is important that everyone’s voices are heard when making decisions for Auckland, and the advisory panels make sure elected members know how their communities feel.

The role of advisory panels

Advisory panels advise elected members on specific areas or issues that affect the communities they represent.

They offer advice on:

- policies
- strategies
- important issues that affect the city and region.

They don't make any decisions for Auckland, but they do offer advice and influence decisions elected members make.

Types of advisory panels

There are two different types of advisory panels.

Demographic panels

Demographic panels advise on how issues affect their demographic communities. There are six demographic advisory panels.

Sector panels

Sector panels advise on how issues affect their specific sectors of Auckland. There are four sector advisory panels.

Panels	
Demographic Advisory Panels	Sector Advisory Panels
<u>Pacific Peoples Advisory Panel</u> Provides knowledge on issues that are important to Pacific people, and advises on how to engage affectively on them.	<u>City Centre Advisory Panel</u> A key advisory group, supporting the City Centre Masterplan’s vision.
<u>Ethnic Communities Advisory Panel</u> Provides knowledge on issues important to Ethnic people, and advises the council on how to engage effectively on them.	<u>Public Art Advisory Panel</u> Assists the council with planning arts projects and programmes in public places.
<u>Disability Advisory Panel</u> Provides knowledge on issues important to people with disabilities.	<u>Auckland Urban Design Panel</u> Provides independent design review of significant projects across Auckland.

<p><u>Rainbow Communities Advisory Panel</u> Provides knowledge on issues that are important to Auckland’s GLBTI and Takatāpui or Rainbow communities.</p>	<p><u>Rural Advisory Panel</u> Advises the council on policies and plans specific to the rural sector.</p>
<p><u>Youth Advisory Panel</u> Provides knowledge on issues that are important to young Aucklanders, and advises us on how to engage effectively with them.</p>	
<p><u>Seniors Advisory Panel</u> Provides knowledge on issues that are important to older Aucklanders, and advises us on how to engage with them effectively.</p>	

Ethnic Communities Advisory Panel – Community Storytelling

The Ethnic Communities Advisory Panel advises us on issues that are important to ethnic people in Auckland.

Auckland’s population is expected to grow a lot in the coming years, meaning that we will have more diverse populations and views on what is best for our region.

The Ethnic Communities Advisory Panel engages with Auckland’s ethnic communities to share their stories, hopes and dreams for the future of Auckland.

[This video contains a collection of these stories, and an example of why the advisory panels are such a valuable part of the Auckland Council.](#)