**Electorate Review- General Elections 2026: Palmerston North electorate**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a comment on the Electorate Review. In summary, we object to the exclusion of Ashhurst from the proposed Palmerston North electorate for the following reasons.

**Existing boundaries align Ashhurst with Palmerston North, not Wairarapa**

Ashhurst has been part of the Palmerston North City territorial authority since the local government realignment of 1989.

State Highway 57 or the Tararua ranges to the East are a much more logical and natural boundary than the proposed line, which seemingly carves out Ashhurst for the convenience of population quota. The Māori electorate, Te Tai Hauāuru, stretches across Palmerston North and follows the ranges in this way.

**Communities of interest align Ashhurst with Palmerston North, not Wairarapa**

The Ashhurst communities of interest are more aligned with Palmerston North with Ashhurst residents travelling to Palmerston North for work for instance. Ashhurst high school students travel to Palmerston North. Residents predominantly shop in Palmerston North. They do not travel to Hawkes Bay or Wairarapa regularly.

Rangitāne o Manawatū is recognised by Palmerston North City Council as mana whenua of Palmerston North. Rangitāne o Manawatū rohe covers Ashhurst.

Where the Commission describes “communities of Summerhill, Fitzherbert, Kairanga and Turitea”, Summerhill and Fitzherbert are suburbs of Palmerston North, with Kairanga and Turitea rural communities, Bunnythorpe, Longburn and Linton Camp village communities, and Ashhurst the only village community with strong association to Palmerston North not included in the proposed electorate. It is inconceivable to us that the Commission would propose aligning the Palmerston North electorate “as much as possible with Palmerston North City” and yet include all but one of the villages of Palmerston North.

**Topographical features align Ashhurst with Palmerston North, not Wairarapa**

Ashhurst sits at the foot of the Ruahine and Tararua mountain ranges and a short drive to the North of the City. The windfarms, a key feature of the Ashhurst landscape, lease land on these ranges from Palmerston North City Council. The Pohangina and Manawatū rivers feature strongly in the Ashhurst landscape. The Manawatū river is the only river in New Zealand that begins its journey on the opposite side of the main divide to where it joins the sea. It flows from the Ruahine Ranges through the gorge Te Apiti, across the Manawatū plains to the Tasman Sea at Foxton.