



Submission on the proposed formation of the Wellington Regional Economic Development Agency (WREDA)

Prepared by Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce & Industry Incorporated

The Hutt Valley Chamber of Commerce & Industry Incorporated appreciates this opportunity to provide feedback on the proposal to create a single economic development agency for the Wellington Region.

The proposed formation of the Wellington Regional Economic Development Agency (WREDA) by the Wellington Regional Council and Wellington City Council, who are indicated as being the sole shareholders, lacks the desirable involvement of all the local authorities who comprise the Wellington Region. Whilst it is acknowledged that those other councils will have some say it will be limited to those avenues/structures currently in place and will not provide the direct input and influence that the shareholders will have.

The Hutt Valley (Lower and Upper Hutt) is a key player in the economic performance of the wider Wellington Region with a significant contributions in all of the areas highlighted as the reason for the establishment of WREDA. To not have a direct involvement through the integration of the Hutt Councils' function could see the Hutt miss out on opportunities to participate and benefit from WREDA's economic promotions and directives.

We support the appointment of independent directors with appropriate commercial acumen to provide the governance of WREDA and believe this will remove the politics that have to date played a detrimental part in the Wellington Region being deprived of many forward thinking opportunities with my patch first mind sets or misguided politics. The Wellington Region needs to think regionally if it is to compete with other regions in NZ to not only maintain its economic performance but to have it grow and provide opportunities for the benefit of those wishing to reside and visit our region.

The outlined key sectors in the Wellington Regional economy that have been identified as needing to be represented through directorships on WREDA appears to have overlooked the importance of Infrastructure and Transport. Both of these are key to most economic performance outcomes and paramount in;

- The movement of people and freight (Road, Rail Air and Sea)
- Connectivity (fibre optic)
- Services (electricity,water,sewage etc)

WREDA could have a strong influence, if truly regional in its composition and well managed, in ensuring that the Wellington Region is promoted in all economic areas to achieve its fair share of economic growth opportunities. It is important that where there is economic benefit to all parts of the region that the cost of achieving those benefits should be borne by all and where appropriate through encouragement of the Crown or commercial business financial support/commitment.

Mark Futter
Chief Executive