

Office of the Mayor



7 August 2026

Simplifying Local Government
Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions, and Transport
Via email: SimplifyingLocalGovernment@mcert.govt.nz

Kia ora koutou

HEAD START OUTLINE PROPOSAL: COASTAL OTAGO AND INLAND OTAGO UNITARY AUTHORITIES

1. Thank you for the opportunity to submit a Head Start outline proposal.
2. The Dunedin City Council and the Queenstown Lakes District Council have worked together on a proposal that establishes two subregional unitary authorities within Otago, supported by a shared regional services structure for functions requiring scale, specialist capability, and regional coordination.
3. The proposal builds on the strengths of Dunedin and Queenstown as Otago's two largest centres, which together provide infrastructure capability, planning expertise, regulatory capacity, specialist services, educational institutions, economic activity, and investment attraction.
4. The proposal creates two subregional unitary authorities:
 - an Inland Otago Unitary Authority centred on Queenstown Lakes and Central Otago
 - a Coastal Otago Unitary Authority centred on Dunedin and Clutha, with Waitaki's future position to be determined.
5. The two proposed authorities will be supported by shared regional services, delivering functions undertaken across Otago.
6. In submitting this proposal, we note that there is a lack of detail provided on the expectations of councils to fund and provide resourcing to implement any changes decided as part of this reform process. Information and clarity about support from central government, including financial support, would be appreciated to assist with forward and contingency planning in preparation for implementation of any changes.
7. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss the Head Start outline proposal for the Coastal and Inland Otago unitary authorities with you.

Kā mihi

A blue ink signature, likely belonging to Sophie Barker, the Mayor of Dunedin.

Sophie Barker
MAYOR OF DUNEDIN
TE KOROMATUA O ŌTEPOTI

A black ink signature, likely belonging to John Glover, the Mayor of Queenstown Lakes District Council.

John Glover
MAYOR
QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL