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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ATTENTION: CHIEF REPORTERS  
CIVIC REPORTERS

### **Primary school children given Voice Your Choice booklet**

Primary school children in Invercargill and Bluff are being given a copy of the Council's Voice Your Choice booklet to take home, the Invercargill City Council's Policy Advisor Janette Malcolm said today.

The booklet, with Highlanders' Captain Jimmy Cowan on the cover, explains the city's Representation Review, and asks how Invercargill's Councillors should be elected and whether there should be community boards.

The booklet will also be available in Invercargill at specially marked boxes at most supermarkets, the Public Library, Bluff Service Centre and the Civic Administration Building. Copies can also be downloaded from Council's website.

Council Policy Advisor Janette Malcolm said that the release of the Voice Your Choice booklet today would be followed by a series of public meetings throughout the city and a hui.

"Meetings will be held between 11 and 27 May in North and South Invercargill, Myross Bush, Otatara and Bluff. The hui will be held at Murihiku Marae on 3 June. We are encouraging people to come along, meet Councillors, learn more about Voice Your Choice and tell us what they think.

"People can also give Council their feedback through a submission form in the Voice Your Choice booklet, or by filling in an on-line form at Council's website [www.icc.govt.nz](http://www.icc.govt.nz)," she said.

Ms Malcolm said that said the Local Government Act 2002 requires local authorities to conduct a formal Representation Review every six years. This includes reviewing how Councillors are elected and whether there should be community boards.

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*Manager Communications and Secretarial Services, Eirwen Tulett, 211 1678, (027) 293 8680  
Fax: 211 1435 Email: eirwen.tulett@icc.govt.nz*

*Or*

*Communications Officer, Diane Morris, 211 1601, (027) 231 3939  
Fax: 211 1433 Email: diane.morris@icc.govt.nz*

In December 2008, Council advertised publicly for expressions of interest from people willing to serve on an Independent Panel to assist with the development of representation options and the discussion of these with the community. The panel comprises Margaret Cook, Allan Derrick, Robyn Hickman, Joe O'Connell, Tony O'Neill, Iwi Representative Stephen Bragg, and Councillor Norman Elder (Chair).

Ms Malcolm said in appointing members to the panel, Council had tried to achieve a balanced group that would include representation from different geographic areas of the city. They also looked for representatives of both urban and semi-rural areas and key sectors in the community such as business, education and the voluntary sector.

"The aim of the review is to look at providing Invercargill residents with the most accessible and effective local representation.

"A key aspect of the review is deciding whether Councillors should be elected at- large (city wide), by wards, or by a mixed system of both at-large and by wards. Currently all Councillors are elected on an at large basis," she said.

Ms Malcolm said the Representation Review is being conducted in two parts:

1. **The Pre-Review Phase (March to May 2009):** involves the generation of representation options and discussing these with the community, which will also provide an opportunity for residents to generate their own ideas. At the end of this phase the Council is required to select one option which will then go through the formal statutory consultation process.
2. **The Statutory Process:** the Council publicly notifies its initial proposal and residents have one month to make submissions (likely to be July/August 2009). Council then hears submissions (likely to be September 2009) and decides on a final proposal, which is notified with people having one month to lodge appeals or objections. If there are appeals or objections the review is referred to the Local Government Commission for decision.

"Council would continue to keep the community fully informed on the progress of the review and of their opportunity to participate," she said.

ENDS.

Inquiries, Janette Malcolm, Policy Advisor, (03) 2111 689.