

CONFIDENTIAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Council

MEETING DATE: 10 December 2025

TITLE: Appointment of Directors to Central Economic Development Agency

PRESENTED BY: Hannah White, Manager Governance

APPROVED BY: Cameron McKay, General Manager Corporate Services

It is recommended that this report be considered with the public excluded, as permitted by the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 under clause:

s7(2)(a) PRIVACY - This information needs to be kept private to protect personal information that is confidential or sensitive. This includes people who are no longer alive

REASONS FOR APPLYING THESE GROUNDS

A candidate's right to privacy outweighs the public's interest to know who has applied to the CEDA Trust Board until the appointment has been confirmed.

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RECOMMENDATION(S) TO COUNCIL

1. That Council approve the increase in directors from five to six, which is consistent with the allowable number of directors in the Central Economic Development Agency Appointment of Directors Policy 2025.
 2. That Council re-appoint Katie Brosnahan as director of Central Economic Development Agency, for a second term, until 31 December 2028.
 3. That Council appoint Colin McFadzean as director of Central Economic Development Agency until 31 December 2028.
 4. That Council appoint Antony Heywood as director of Central Economic Development Agency until 31 December 2028.
 5. That Council note the cost for the additional director (\$25,000pa) is not budgeted. CEDA will be required to fund this from operational funding.
 6. That Council release the report once appointments have been confirmed.
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1. ISSUE

- 1.1 The current Central Economic Development Agency (CEDA) Board of five directors has two appointments expiring 31 December 2025.
- 1.2 One director whose term expires, Katie Brosnahan, is completing her first term and is able to be reappointed without a recruitment process. The CEDA Electoral College seeks to reappoint Katie Brosnahan for a further three-year term.
- 1.3 The other director whose term expires has completed more than one term, which triggers a recruitment process to fill this 'vacancy'. The report brings to Council the recommendation from the Electoral College who seek to:
 - increase the number of directors from five to six, and
 - make two new appointments for three-year terms.
- 1.4 Manawatū District Council considered this report at its meeting of 3 December 2025 and agreed to proceed according to the recommendations.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 CEDA is a jointly owned Council-controlled Organisation (CCO) between Manawatū District Council and Palmerston North City Council (the councils). Each council is a 50% shareholder.
- 2.2 As a council-controlled organisation, CEDA is required by the LGA to regularly report to its shareholders (the councils); and the shareholders are responsible for appointing directors to the CEDA Board.
- 2.3 The current CEDA Board of five directors has two directors' terms expiring 31 December 2025. Manawatū District Council (MDC) approved at the 02 October 2025 Council meeting for advertising to commence to seek directors for the CEDA Board, and Palmerston North City Council appointed the Mayor, and Councillors Vaughan Dennison and Leonie Hapeta to the Electoral College to initiate the appointment process on 12 November 2025.
- 2.4 There has been a shared direction of travel to reduce the number of CEDA directors over time. The shareholding councils¹ [agreed in March 2023](#) to adjust the CEDA Appointment of Directors Policy (Directors Policy) so that the board of directors of CEDA has between four and six directors (reduced from a range of five to seven directors).
- 2.5 The current CEDA board is:

¹ Manawatu District Council and Palmerston North City Council each hold 50% of the shares in CEDA.

First Name	Last Name	Appointment Date	Term ends	Term No.
Term expiry this year				
Robbie	Pickford	Appointed 12 March 2020 Reappointed 4 May 2023	31 December 2025	2
Katie	Brosnahan	Appointed 4 May 2023	31 December 2025	1
Term expiry 2026				
Margy	Maré	Appointed 25 March 2021 Reappointed 2 May 2024 Reappointed 18 December 2024	31 December 2026	3
David	Norman	Appointed 9 December 2021 Reappointed 18 December 2024	31 December 2026	2
Term expiry 2027				
Bobbie	O'Fee	Appointed 18 March 2020 Reappointed 9 December 2021 Reappointed 18 December 2024	31 December 2027	3 *Chair

2.6 Two directors' terms expire on 31 December 2025; Katie Brosnahan will have completed one term as a CEDA director and is available for re-appointment, and Robbie Pickford will have completed two terms and chose not to apply for re-appointment consideration.

3. RECRUITMENT PROCESS

3.1 A robust recruitment process is in progress as per the [CEDA appointment of Directors Policy](#).

- 3.2 The Electoral College² met on 17 November 2025 to consider the reappointment of Katie Brosnahan, confirm the number of directors being sought, and confirm the shortlist applicants to interview.

Katie Brosnahan reappointment

- 3.3 As described in clause 3.8 of the Directors Policy, any director who has completed one term can stand again without triggering the recruitment process, if the CEDA Chair and the Electoral College agree.
- 3.4 CEDA board Chair Bobbie O’Fee’s recommendation to reappoint Katie was considered along with her skills and strengths detailed in the skills matrix (Attachment 1). The Electoral College expressed confidence in Katie as a director and unanimously recommends Katie Brosnahan’s reappointment for a second three-year term as a CEDA director.

Shortlist applicants

- 3.5 The Electoral College shortlisted 23 applications and agreed to interview four applicants on 24 November 2025, with the intent to identify one preferred applicant to recommend for appointment to the CEDA board.
- 3.6 The Electoral College confirmed all four interviewed as strong candidates with two identified as outstanding. The unanimous recommendation is to appoint both of the preferred candidates bringing the number of directors to six.
- 3.7 While this is allowed within the Directors’ Policy, the shareholder councils are required to approve the increase in number of directors from five to six, before considering the Electoral College recommendation to appoint both candidates.
- 3.8 The Electoral College recommendation is that both candidates would bring different and important strengths to complement the current board, and the value added would outweigh the impact of the additional board members remuneration of \$25,000. The two preferred candidates and the Electoral College’s comments are:

Antony Heywood - The Electoral College recommends appointing Antony Heywood to the CEDA Board due to his strong government relationships, extensive food and fibre leadership experience, and proven ability to partner effectively across regions. Antony offers more than six years as Chief Executive Officer of Vegetables New Zealand, during which he strengthened national advocacy and built influential connections with ministers and senior officials, particularly in horticulture and agriculture. His experience working closely with economic development agencies in

² The Mayor of Manawatū District Council (Michael Ford) and Manawatū District Councillors Grant Hadfield and Shelley Dew-Hopkins (and Jerry Pickford as proxy for Shelley Dew-Hopkins for shortlist interviews), together with the Mayor of Palmerston North City Council (Grant Smith) and Palmerston North City Councillors Vaughan Dennison and Leonie Hapeta.

multiple regions, alongside his strong partnership-driven approach and international exposure in Australia and the USA, aligns well with CEDA's priorities.

Antony's background as a fourth-generation horticulture leader and Chair / Director of his family's apple, pear, and kiwifruit orchard brings practical commercial insight, complemented by governance roles in the vocational education reform for the food and fibre sector.

With his leadership experience, culture-building capability, and ability to deliver complex projects, the panel considers him a valuable addition who would strengthen CEDA's sector expertise, regional connectivity, and influence with central government.

Colin McFadzean - The Electoral College recommends appointing Colin McFadzean to the CEDA board due to his extensive export, manufacturing, and product commercialisation experience, which spans more than 40 years and reaches over 50 international markets.

As a long-standing Manawatū business owner, Colin brings a strong local grounding paired with global perspective – particularly in logistics, distribution, and the development of innovative agricultural products. The Electoral College highlighted his strategic and lateral thinking, strength in building compelling value propositions, and track record as a skilled deal-maker.

Colin also brings meaningful governance experience, having served as a director of a public company, a board member of the Manawatū Rugby Union, a former MDC councillor, and most recently the external chair of MDC's Water Services Unit.

His career demonstrates an ability to take ideas from concept to commercial success, apply technology to create solutions, and optimise supply chains through innovation and partnerships. With this blend of regional experience, global reach, and commercial acumen, the Electoral College considers Colin well-positioned to contribute to CEDA's strategic direction and support growth across the region's business ecosystem.

3.9 For both of the recommended new appointees a director check and insolvency check have satisfactorily been completed. Verbal references are currently being completed and are positive to date. Ministry of Justice criminal record checks have been submitted. Any appointments made will be subject to all checks being satisfactory.

3.10 The CVs for both candidates are attached as Attachment 2.

Electoral College Recommendations

3.11 The Electoral College recommends:

- the appointment of both Antony Heywood and Colin McFadzean to the CEDA board, each for a three-year term.
- the additional \$25,000 p.a. board remuneration be re-allocated from CEDA's general operational funding.

3.12 The Electoral College agreed to again reconsider the number of directors near the end of next year when two existing directors' terms end and may recommend to the respective councils to reduce the number of directors at that time.

3.13 Should the councils differ on a way forward, the Directors Policy sets out in clause 3.4 that the Electoral College may be asked to make an alternative recommendation.

In this instance the alternative would be to select one of the two preferred candidates for appointment. The Electoral College would then be engaged to meet and decide on the preferred candidate before bringing a recommendation back to the councils early in 2026. Should this occur, and if the respective councils agree to re-appoint Katie Brosnahan, the minimum number of directors (four) required would be satisfied until a revised recommendation is approved.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The key risks identified are:

- **Board Size and Cost Pressure** - Increasing the board to six directors introduces an additional unbudgeted annual cost of \$25,000, which CEDA must absorb through operational funding. This may create short-term pressure on CEDA's finances and may mean a reduction in a service or project. The Electoral College determined the value added in having a further board member would outweigh the additional cost.
- **Risk of Divergent Council Decisions** - If the two shareholder councils' decisions differ on appointment of the recommended candidates, the Directors Policy would trigger a further Electoral College process, delaying appointments, and temporarily reducing the board to the minimum of four directors.

5. NEXT STEPS

5.1 Should Palmerston North City Council agree the recommendations in line with the Manawatū District Council decision, the candidates and Board will be advised of the outcome by Manawatū District Council Officers (administering CEDA for this term).

- 5.2 Should Palmerston North City Council not agree the recommendations in line with the Manawatū District Council decision, the Electoral College will be called to propose another recommendation.

6. COMPLIANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Does the Council have delegated authority to decide?	Yes
Are the decisions significant?	No
If they are significant do they affect land or a body of water?	No
Can this decision only be made through a 10 Year Plan?	No
Does this decision require consultation through the Special Consultative procedure?	No
Is there funding in the current Annual Plan for these objectives?	No
Are the recommendations inconsistent with any of Council's policies or plans?	No
The recommendations contribute to: Whāinga 1: He tāone auaha, he tāone tiputipu Goal 1: An innovative and growing city	
The recommendations contribute to this plan: 14. Mahere mana urungi, kirirautanga hihiri 14. Governance and Active Citizenship Plan The objective is: Provide leadership and advocacy for Palmerston North	
Contribution to strategic direction and to social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being	By carefully considering appointments, Council will ensure that there is effective representation on the CEDA Board. This will contribute to the desired outcome of an effective and responsible Council that excels in good governance.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Board Member Skills Matrix
2. Cover letters and CVs for recommended candidates