

Frequently Asked Questions Relating to Local Government Elections

General Information

Q1	<i>When is the next Local Government election?</i>	Ans	Election Day is Saturday 8 October 2016 and voting closes at midday on that day. The voting period starts on Friday 16 September 2016.				
Q2	<i>Who is running the election?</i>	Ans	The Electoral Officer has full responsibility for running the election.				
Q3	<i>What is the name of the Electoral Officer/Deputy Electoral Officer?</i>	Ans	<table><tr><td>Craig Grant Electoral Officer</td><td>craig.grant@horizons.govt.nz Tel. 06 952 2863 / 021 2277 083</td></tr><tr><td>Kay Booth Deputy Electoral Officer</td><td>kay.booth@horizons.govt.nz Tel. 06 952 2814</td></tr></table>	Craig Grant Electoral Officer	craig.grant@horizons.govt.nz Tel. 06 952 2863 / 021 2277 083	Kay Booth Deputy Electoral Officer	kay.booth@horizons.govt.nz Tel. 06 952 2814
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Q4	<i>What type of voting method do you use?</i>	Ans	First Past the Post (FPP) for Horizons Regional Council.				
Q5	<i>What issues (elections) will we vote for?</i>	Ans	Horizons Regional Council has six (6) constituencies. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Horowhenua–Kairanga• Manawatu–Rangitikei• Palmerston North• Ruapehu• Tararua• Wanganui				
Q6	<i>What is the role of a councillor?</i>	Ans	A Councillor: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participates in strategic planning for the whole Region;• Develops policy across a wide range of activities and services;• Represents the Region at functions as required;• Reviews and develops bylaws for the Region;• Advocates on a wide range of issues;• Coordinates and forms partnerships with other spheres of government and other agencies;• Participates in the appointment and performance review of the Chief Executive;• Acts on all these matters within a legislative and regulatory framework, and sets a budget and rates.• Monitors the performance of the Council organisation.				

Candidates

Q7 *I want to be a candidate in these elections. What do I need to do?*

Ans You must be a New Zealand Citizen and your name must be on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll (anywhere in New Zealand).

You will need to have two people registered in the area of the election you are standing for to nominate you – eg if you stand for the XYZ Constituency, they will need to reside within that Constituency. (Please note the candidate does not need to reside in the constituency in which they are standing but will need to disclose that fact on his/her nomination form which will be shown in his/her Candidate Profile Statement).

The nominators must also be on the Parliamentary electoral roll at the address they are listed on the nomination paper (which must be in the area that they are nominating the person for).

You cannot be interested in Council contracts of \$25,000 (GST incl) or over unless prior approval is sought.

Q8 *When do nominations open?*

Ans Nominations open on Friday, 15 July 2016 and close at 12 noon on Friday, 12 August 2016.

Q9 *How much will it cost me to stand?*

Ans You will need to pay a deposit of \$200 GST inclusive. The deposit applies to each issue (election) you stand for.

Your nomination must be received by close of nominations at 12 noon on 12 August 2016.

If you pay the deposit by cheque and it is dishonoured after nominations close, your nomination will not be accepted.

If you poll greater than 25% of the lowest polling successful candidate (for FPP elections) you will receive your deposit back on receipt of the Electoral Expenses Form.

Would you like me to send out a nomination form?

Q10 *What qualifications and experience do I need?* **Ans** Nothing formal. Elected members come from all walks of life and generally have will/desire to serve the community.

However the following skills would be helpful if you are elected: time management, communication, listening, relationship building, influencing and negotiating, media skills.

Q11 *Does a criminal record affect a person standing as a candidate?* **Ans** No, not at all for city, district and regional council elections.

Q12 *How long is the term of the elected member?* **Ans** Three years

Q13 *Do I need to be resident in the city, district or region I am standing for?* **Ans** No, but you must be on the Parliamentary Roll and be a New Zealand Citizen.

Q14 *How many offices can I stand for?* **Ans** You cannot stand for both a regional council and one of its constituent district or city council.

Q15 *I am a serving Police Officer. Can I stand for council and continue to work as a Police Officer?* **Ans** Yes. There are no restrictions on police officers standing for local authority elections, apart from the normal eligibility criteria.

Q16 *How much can I spend on my campaign?*

Constituency	No. of Members	Estimated Population [†]	Expenditure
Horowhenua–Kairanga	2	39,000	\$20,000
Manawatu-Rangitikei	2	36,400	\$20,000
Palmerston North	4	85,500	\$50,000
Ruapehu	1	12,650	\$14,000
Tararua	1	17,400	\$14,000
Wanganui	2	43,600	\$30,000
	12	234,550	

Ans All candidates are required to lodge an electoral expenses and donations return within 55 days after the results are officially notified. If this is not done it is possible that a non return will be advised to the NZ Police. This return needs to be made before a candidate deposit is refunded.

Enrolment

Q17 <i>Where can I view the electoral roll that will be used for this election?</i>	Ans Public libraries, or at city and district council offices.
Q18 <i>How do I enrol to vote in these elections?</i>	Ans If you are on the Parliamentary roll at an address in the constituency you want to vote in then you will automatically appear on the roll that is used for these elections. If you don't know, see Q17 and Q21. If you are not enrolled, you need to complete an enrolment form for this. You can either: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• pick one up at any New Zealand Post Shop• contact your local city or district council• you can enrol online at www.elections.org.nz• ring 0800 36 76 56• send your name and address to Freetext 3676• download a form at www.elections.org.nz If you own a property in a district and it is not your main residence you may be able to enrol as a Ratepayer elector. Contact your city or district council Electoral Officer.
Q19 <i>I am a student and spend my time in different places. Where should I enrol?</i>	Ans You should enrol where you spend the greater part of your time.
Q20 <i>I am a New Zealand Maori, do I need to enrol on the Maori roll?</i>	Ans Not necessarily. If you are enrolling for the first time you can decide whether you want to go on the Maori Electoral roll or the General Electoral roll by signing the appropriate panel on the Parliamentary Elector Enrolment form. However, if you have already made that choice you will have to wait until the next Maori Option period to change, which occurs following the next census likely in 2018/19. The last Maori Option period was in 2013.

Q21 <i>How do I know whether I am enrolled?</i>	Ans	You can check your enrolment status on www.elections.org.nz . The Electoral Enrolment Centre will be undertaking a roll update campaign at the end of June for the Parliamentary Electoral roll which forms the basis of our roll for the local authority election. If you do not receive a letter in the post during late June/early July 2016, the chances are you are not enrolled or your details are incorrect.
Q22 <i>I turn 18 on Election Day. Can I vote?</i>	Ans	Yes, but you need to make sure you have enrolled which you can do provisionally from the age of 17 and it automatically changes when you turn 18. You will also need to apply for a special vote. Please contact your city or district council Electoral Officer.
Q23 <i>We own a business in your area and pay rates, but we don't live in your area – do we get a say in the local elections?</i>	Ans	Yes, subject to being eligible to become enrolled as a ratepayer elector and becoming enrolled. Contact your city or district council Electoral Officer.
Q24 <i>I own a property in the district but it is not my fulltime residence. How do I get on the Ratepayer Electoral Roll?</i>	Ans	Contact your city or district council Electoral Officer.
Voting		
Q25 <i>Is it a postal vote and will I be sent my voting documents in the mail?</i>	Ans	All local authority elections will be conducted by postal vote. Voting documents will be delivered by NZ Post between Friday, 16 September and Wednesday, 21 September 2016.
Q26 <i>I got my voting documents but my partner didn't receive theirs.</i>	Ans	Contact your city or district council Electoral Officer.
Q27 <i>I didn't get my voting documents so I called and got a special vote. Now I have two documents which one should I use?</i>	Ans	Use the original and destroy the special vote, or contact your city or district council Electoral Officer.
Q28 <i>I received voting documents for (children, parent) and have Power of Attorney for them, can I vote for them?</i>	Ans	No – Power of Attorney does not apply to voting for that person.

Q29 <i>What should I do with the documents?</i>	<p>Ans If they are overseas, you could fast post them to the person or destroy them if that is not practicable.</p> <p>If they are for an elderly parent who is unable to vote please destroy them by ripping/cutting them up.</p>
Q30 <i>I received voting documents that do not belong to me and I don't know these people or where they have gone.</i>	<p>Ans Write GNA (Gone No Address) on the envelope and put them back in the mail.</p>
Q31 <i>What is that barcode that I can see through the return envelope or on the front of the voting document?</i>	<p>Ans It is a legal requirement to scan the barcode number to mark the Electoral roll that you have voted so we can ensure that we do not receive two votes from the same person.</p>
Q32 <i>How do you ensure the secrecy of my vote?</i>	<p>Ans Envelopes containing a voting document cannot be opened until there is a JP present. The JP is required to sign off that the processes used by the Electoral Officer met the legal requirements.</p> <p>The voter's name is not on the voting document.</p> <p>When the envelope is opened the only thing the Electoral Officer is looking for is that the vote for each election is valid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This means that for FPP they are making sure that the voter's intention is clear and they have not ticked or marked more than the number of candidates that they are electing. • For STV it is to make sure that no preference numbers are used more than once or omitted, eg, 1, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5, and that there is always a number one marked against a candidates name. It should be like this: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc, in numerical order up to as many preferences the voter wishes to vote for. <p>Explanations of FPP and STV can be found in Q49 and Q50.</p>
Q33 <i>Do I have to vote? I don't know any of these candidates</i>	<p>Ans No you don't have to vote. You also don't have to vote for all candidates or for all elections. But your vote is important because the people elected will be responsible for making decisions about what happens in your community for the next three years.</p> <p>To help you get to know about the candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate meetings are usually held in each area if you wish to go and hear what policies the different candidates are advocating for.

- Additionally there is a candidate profile booklet that comes out with the voting documents in which there is a photo and a statement from candidates. This information may also be available on Horizons website.
- Candidates may have their own website page, social media page(s), advertise in local newspapers or send out information to letterboxes in your area.
- Local newspapers are likely to cover information about the election.

Q34 *Do I have to post my voting document back?*

Ans You can post them but make sure you have them in the mail by Wednesday, 5 October 2016 to make sure they get back to us in time (by 12 noon Saturday, 8 October 2016).

However, you can also deliver it to the voting boxes at the city or district council until 12 noon Saturday, 8 October)

Q35 *I have lost my return envelope.*

Ans You can use an envelope of your own and put the return address and Freepost number on it.
OR contact your city or district council Electoral Officer.

Q36 *I am on the Unpublished Parliamentary roll and I want a special vote please.*

Ans Contact your city or district council Electoral Officer.

Q37 *I didn't receive my voting paper, how do I obtain a special vote?*

Ans Contact your city or district council Electoral Officer.

Q38 *I spoiled my voting documents / I have made a mistake on my documents. What can I do?*

Ans If you can amend it so that your voting intention is clear then do so and initial the changes.

or

Contact your city or district council Electoral Officer so they can issue you with another voting document.

Q39 *Where can I have a special vote?*

Ans Contact your city or district council Electoral Officer.

Q40 *I am going away and will not be here when the voting documents are posted out.*

Ans Contact your city or district council Electoral Officer.

Q41 *Do I have to vote for all the candidates for any issue? If I don't vote for all the candidates or all the issues on my voting document, will all my votes be informal?*

Ans Under FPP you can vote for as many candidates as you want but not more than the instruction states on the voting document. So if you are electing 5 councillors then you can vote for **up to** five candidates. Remember for FPP you tick the candidates you want to elect.

With STV you can vote for all or as many candidates as you wish but these must be in order of your preference and no number can be repeated. Remember for STV you rank the candidates you want to elect from number 1 onwards.

You can decide not to vote for one or more of the different elections on your voting document. This does not invalidate all your other votes.

Explanations of FPP and STV can be found in Q49 and Q50

Q42 *Why can't I vote for a certain candidate who is standing for a different constituency?*

Ans You can only vote for the elections relevant to the area in which you reside and are an elector of. You cannot vote for a candidate for the same region who is standing in another constituency because you are not an elector of that constituency.

Q43 *My husband's paper and mine are different. He has more/less things to vote for. His list of candidates is different to mine?*

Ans Is your council using random name order on the voting documents? If YES, then this could explain why the list looks different; otherwise contact your city or district council Electoral Officer.

Q44 *I have received two voting documents*

Ans Contact your city or district council Electoral Officer.

Q45 *Do all the staff working on the election know who I voted for?*

Ans No, your vote remains secret under the required roll scrutiny and counting procedures.

Q46 *Can I help someone fill out their voting documents?*

Ans Under the Local Electoral Act 2001, you cannot interfere or influence any person as to how they can vote.

If authorised by a voter who is physically impaired, visually impaired or for whom English is a second language, a person can assist them to vote as directed by the voter. An authorisation to do this should be completed (Local Electoral Regulations # 34).

<p>Q47 <i>What happens to all the voting documents after the elections?</i></p>	<p>Ans They are delivered to the District Court and kept for 21 days so that the Court can access them should there be any application for recount or petition for inquiry.</p> <p>After 21 days the court is responsible for destroying them</p>
<p>Q48 <i>Do I get a vote for the DHB?</i></p>	<p>Ans Yes, if you are a resident elector. Ratepayer electors cannot vote for DHB elections.</p> <p>Please note that DHB elections are conducted under STV and so you will exercise your vote by ranking your preferred candidates.</p>
<p>Q49 <i>What is STV and how do I vote in an STV election?</i></p>	<p>Ans STV stands for Single Transferable Vote. STV is a preferential system of voting where you can rank as few or as many candidates as you like. It is a <u>single</u> vote which can be transferred between candidates to ensure the vote contributes to the election or at least one candidate and is not wasted. If a popular candidate does not need all the votes he or she receives, a proportion is transferred to the voter's next preference. On the other hand, if a candidate is not popular and receives few votes, those votes are transferred to a voter's next preference.</p> <p>For more information about STV go to www.stv.govt.nz.</p> <p>To exercise a STV vote, start by writing the number 1 in the box next to the candidate you most want to be elected. Write the number 2 next to your second most preferred candidate and so on 3, 4, 5 etc.</p> <p>You can write as many preferences or as few as you like up to however many candidates are standing for that election.</p> <p>You must write the number 1 for your vote to be counted.</p> <p>Do not write the same number more than once, eg, 1, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5, and do not miss a number from your preferences, eg, 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 or your vote may be invalid.</p>
<p>Q50 <i>What about FPP?</i></p>	<p>Ans This is the First Past the Post voting system. The candidate or candidates that gets the most votes wins.</p> <p>You should mark those you want to vote for with a tick in the circle. Do not vote for more than the number of candidates shown in the instructions.</p>

Election Results

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- Q51** *When will we know the results of the election?* **Ans** Progress and preliminary results will be announced as soon as possible after 12 noon on Saturday, 8 October 2016.
- The official results will be announced when the final count is complete and special votes have been checked, but likely to be in the week of 13-19 October 2016.
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- Q52** *How will I find out?* **The Candidates**
- Ans** Will be advised as soon as possible after Preliminary results are known. This may be by email or phone from the Electoral Officer or Deputy Electoral Officer.
- The Voters**
- Ans** Preliminary Results will be released to the media and placed on our website as soon as possible after noon on Saturday, 8 October – www.horizons.govt.nz.
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- Q53** *What do I need to do if I want to challenge the results of the election?* **Ans** Contact the Horizons' Electoral Officer.
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Members

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- Q54** *When do elected members take up their roles?* **Ans** Elected members take up office the day after the official result has been declared by public notice. However, they cannot act until they have sworn the oath of office which is usually at the first meeting of council. This first meeting is usually held as soon as practicable after the final election results are known.
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- Q55** *Who are elected members responsible to?* **Ans** Ultimately the elected members' final responsibility is to the local community. The Minister of Local Government and the Auditor-General do have a role in ensuring that councils follow the law.
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- Q56** *Do elected members get paid and if so how much?* **Ans** This is set by the Remuneration Authority. Some expenses are also reimbursed. See the Candidate Information Book for more details.
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- Q57** *Would being an elected member take up much time?* **Ans** The time commitment varies depending on the role and the size of the constituency you are representing.
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Q58 *How many elected members are there?*

Ans Twelve (12)

Complaints

Q59 *I have a complaint about Electoral signage?*

Ans Contact the city or district council Electoral Officer for that Council's Signage Policy.

The signs don't have the required authorisation on them.

The signs have been pulled over.

The signs are bigger than they should be.

What locations can signs be erected?

When can they be erected and when must they be pulled down?
