



2019 Local Authority Elections

Frequently Asked Questions relating to Local Authority, District Health Board

October 2019

Introduction

The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) have been compiled by the SOLGM Electoral Subcommittee to assist Electoral Officers, Electoral Officials and Customer Service Staff to answer enquiries from citizens, electors, ratepayers, potential candidates, media, etc.

Please note that the FAQs are not, and cannot be, inclusive of every question or query that may be asked about the local elections.

The FAQs are in two sections:

Section A FAQs primarily covering local government elections – regional, city, district, community boards etc.; and

Section B FAQs relating specifically to district health boards

The FAQs are also designed for Electoral Officers to adapt or augment them to suit their particular election circumstances. In other words, factor in where they have licensing/community trust elections, are holding a poll or referendum in conjunction with the elections or in the case of the Auckland Council, specify the roles of the governing board members and that of local board members.

The FAQs also recognise that some types of questions received will need to be referred to the Electoral Officer for answer due to their complex/sensitive nature.

Section A

Frequently Asked Questions Relating to Local Government Elections

General Information

Q1	<i>When is the next Local Government election?</i>	A	Election Day is Saturday 12 October 2019 and voting closes at midday on that day. The voting period starts on Friday 20 September 2019
Q2	<i>Who is running the election?</i>	A	The Electoral Officer has full responsibility for running the election.
Q3	<i>What is the name of the Electoral Officer/Deputy Electoral Officer?</i>	A	<p>The Electoral Officer is: Warwick Lampp, c/- electionz.com E: rotorualc@electionz.com T: +64 0800 398 683</p> <p>The Deputy Electoral Officer is: Rick Dunn, c/- Rotorua Lakes Council E: rick.dunn@rotorualc.nz T: +64 7 351 8321</p>
Q4	<i>What type of voting method do you use?</i>	A	<p>Rotorua Lakes Council – First Past the Post (FPP) Bay of Plenty Regional Council – FPP Waikato Regional Council – FPP Lakes District Health Board – Single Transferable Vote (STV)</p>

Q5 *What issues (elections) can we vote for?*

A Electors will be able to vote for:

- Mayor
- Councillors
- Lakes Community Board
- Rural Community Board
- Regional Council
- District Health Board

Q6 *What is an At Large Councillor?*

A These councillors are elected by the electors of the whole district or city – not just by electors from part of the district or city.

Some councils elect all their councillors At Large (District-wide), while some have councillors who are elected to a specific ward, while others have a mixture of both.

The Mayor of a district or city is elected at large.

Breakdown of Rotorua Lakes Council

- Mayor (elected at large)
- 10 Councillors (elected at large)
- Rotorua Lakes Community Board (four members elected by the electors of the Rotorua Lakes community as a whole)
- Rotorua Rural Community Board (four members elected by the electors of the Rotorua Lakes community as a whole)

Regional councillors are elected on a constituency basis.
District Health Board members are elected at large.

Q7 *What is the role of a councillor/local board/community board member?*

A A Councillor:

- Participates in strategic and long-term planning for the whole City/District/Region;
- Participates in setting a budget and rates
- Develops policy across a wide range of activities and services;
- Represents the City/District/Region at functions as required;

General Information cont.

- Reviews and develops bylaws for the City/District/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 Officer;
- Acts on all these matters within a legislative and regulatory framework
- Monitors the performance of the Council organisation

A Community Board member:

- Promotes residents' issues and initiatives to the Board and the City or District Council;
- Makes decisions about activities delegated to the Community Board by the Council;
- Monitors the provision of Council services and advocates changes as necessary;
- Engages in community development activities in conjunction with council officers;
- Takes a proactive stance anticipating strategies and policies that may be needed;
- Represents the community to other agencies;
- Promotes the role of the community board in the wider community;
- Works cooperatively with the Council.

General Information cont.

Q8 *What is the difference between Māori and general wards/constituencies?*

A

Some councils have established Māori wards or constituencies. For those councils, members of Māori wards / constituencies are elected by those enrolled to vote on the Māori electoral roll; and members of general wards / constituencies are elected by those enrolled to vote on the general electoral roll.

Candidates

Q9 *I want to be a candidate in these elections. What do I need to do?*

A

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 electors registered in the area of the election you are standing for to nominate you – e.g. if you stand for the XYZ Ward, the nominators will need to be registered within that Ward. (Please note the candidate does not need to reside in the area in which they are standing, but will need to disclose that fact on their nomination form which will be shown in their 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).

Q10 <i>When do nominations open?</i>	A	Nominations open on Friday 19 July 2019 and close at 12 noon on Friday 16 August 2019.
Q11 <i>How much will it cost me to stand?</i>	A	You will need to pay a nomination deposit of \$200 GST inclusive. This deposit applies to each issue (election) you stand for.
Candidates cont.		Your nomination must be received by the close of nominations (12 noon on Friday 16 August 2019).
		If you pay the nomination deposit by cheque and if it is dishonoured after nominations close, your nomination will not be accepted.
		If you poll more than 25% of the final quota as determined by the last iteration (for STV) or greater than 25% of the lowest polling successful candidate (for FPP elections) you will receive your nomination deposit back.
Q12 <i>What qualifications and experience do I need?</i>	A	Nothing formal. Elected members come from all walks of life and generally have a will/desire to serve the community.
Q13 <i>Does a criminal record affect a person standing as a council candidate?</i>	A	No, not at all for city, district and regional council elections. For DHBs a criminal record may affect your candidacy (See DHB section).
Q14 <i>How long is the term of the elected member?</i>	A	Three years

Q15 *Do I need to be resident in the city, district or region I am standing for?* **A** No, but you must be on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll (anywhere in New Zealand) and provide proof that you are a New Zealand citizen.

Candidates cont.

Q16 *How many offices can I stand for?* **A** You can stand for mayor, at large councillor **or** ward councillor and local/community board member. However, if elected to more than one position, you will take up the highest ranked position.

You can stand as a member of the governing body (i.e. Council) and a local/community board if the triennial local election is happening at the same time. However, if you win more than one election, you must take up the highest ranked position.

You cannot stand for both a regional council and one of its constituent district or city councils or a community board.

You cannot stand for more than one district health board.

Q17 *I am a serving police officer. Can I stand for council and continue to work as a police officer?* **A** Yes. There are no longer any restrictions on police officers standing for local authority elections, apart from the normal eligibility criteria.

Q18 *How much can I spend on my campaign?* **A** There is a limit on what you can spend on your campaign and it relates to the population of the area you are standing for.

Candidates cont

The Rotorua district population is estimated to be 72,500 which creates an expenditure limit of \$40,000.

If you stand for more than one position, the amount you can spend is the highest amount for **one** position. You cannot add positions together to allow you to spend more than the limit.

All candidates are required to lodge an electoral donations and expenses return within 55 days after the day on which the successful candidates are declared to be elected (Public Notice of Final Results). If a candidate is outside NZ on this day, the return must be filed within 76 days after election result day. If this is not done, the non-return will be advised to the NZ Police. This return needs to be made before a candidate nomination deposit is refunded.

Q19 *Do I need to be on the Māori electoral roll if I am standing for election in a Māori Ward / Constituency?*

A

NO. To be eligible 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 be nominated by two electors whose names appear on the Māori electoral roll within the area of election for which you are standing.

Enrolment

Q20 *Where can I view the electoral roll that will be used for this election?*

A online: www.elections.org.nz

Or

Rotorua Lakes Council, Civic Centre
1061 Haupapa Street
Rotorua District Council

Or

Te Akau Mauri/Rotorua Library & Rotorua Childrens Health Hub
1127 Haupapa Street
Rotorua

Q21 *How do I enrol to vote in these elections?*

A Is this your main place of residence? → **Yes**

Have you lived at your current address for more than one month? → **Yes**

Are you on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll at an address in the Rotorua district → **Yes**

You will automatically appear on the roll that is used for these elections.

or

Is this your main place of residence? → **Yes**

Are you on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll at an address in the Rotorua district → **No or Don't Know**

Enrolment cont

You need to complete an enrolment form for this. You can either:

- enrol online at www.elections.org.nz
- ring 0800 36 76 56 (who will post a form)
- send your name and address to Free text 3676
- download a form at www.elections.org.nz
- pick a form up at your local electorate office, Council office or any New Zealand Post Shop

Is this your main place of residence? → **No**

Are you on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll at an address in another district? → **Yes**

If you own a property in this district and it is not your main residence you may be able to enrol as a Ratepayer elector (Refer to ratepayer enrolment advice below).

A +64 0800 666 049

Q22 *I am a student and spend my time in different places. Where should I enrol?*

A You should enrol where you spend the greater part of your time.

Q23 *I am a New Zealand Māori, do I need to enrol on the Māori roll?*

A Not necessarily. If you are enrolling for the first time you can decide whether you want to go on the Māori 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 Māori Option period to change, which occurs following the next census, likely in 2023. The last Māori Option period was in **2018**.

Q24 *How do I know whether I am enrolled?*

A You can check your enrolment status on www.elections.org.nz.

Enrolment cont

The Electoral Commission will be undertaking a roll update campaign in early July 2019 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 2019, the chances are you are not enrolled or your details are incorrect.

Q25 *I turn 18 on Election Day. Can I vote?*

A 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.

You can do both if you call at
Rotorua Lakes Council, Civic Centre
1061 Haupapa Street
Rotorua

Q26 *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?*

Yes, subject to being eligible to become enrolled as a ratepayer elector and becoming enrolled.

A non-resident ratepayer enrolment form is available:

- online at www.rotorualc.nz
- from the Rotorua Lakes Council, Civic Centre
- phone 07 3484199
- phone 0800 666 049

The non-resident ratepayer enrolment form should be returned to the electoral office by 16 August 2019 and absolutely no later than 11 October 2019.

Q27 *I own a property in the district but it is not my fulltime residence. How do I get on the Ratepayer Electoral Roll?*

→ Yes

Enrolment cont

A You may be eligible to be on the ratepayer roll. Contact the Rotorua Lakes Council on 07 348 4199 and request a ratepayer enrolment form. This should be returned to the electoral office by 16 August 2019 and no later than 11 October 2019.

If it is easier you can call at (Special Voting venue) and complete the ratepayer enrolment form and have your special vote at the same time.

In no case does this allow you to have two votes at the election.

If you are the sole ratepayer for the property (i.e. the rate account is only in your name), then you can apply to be the Ratepayer Elector.

If you are a joint ratepayer (i.e. the rate account is in more than one name), or the rate account is in the name of a Trust or Company etc., you must appoint a nominee to vote on behalf of the joint ratepayers or entity. For the case of companies, corporations, trusts etc., the nominee should be a member or officer of the entity. → **No**

Q28 *I am on the Māori roll, does this affect who I can vote for?* **A** YES, but only if your council has established Māori wards or constituencies. In that case, this affects who you get to choose from to represent you. Choosing between Māori Roll and General Roll is a personal choice and you'll need to decide which roll best represents your views and interests.

Voting

Q29 *Is it a postal vote and will I be sent my voting documents in the mail?* **A** All local authority elections will be conducted by postal vote. Voting documents will be delivered by NZ Post between Friday 20 September 2019 and Wednesday 25 September 2019.

Q30 *I got my voting documents, but my partner didn't receive theirs.*

A → **Yes**
Is it before Wednesday 25 September 2019 and you are correctly registered on the electoral roll?
Please wait until the mail has been delivered on Wednesday 25 September 2019. If documents are not received then please call back.
After mail delivery Wednesday 25 September 2019 or if not enrolled correctly

A Check the address on the printed roll to see whether correctly enrolled.

Voting cont.**→ Yes**

They will need to apply for a special vote. Electoral Officer will need to speak with the caller.

→ No

You need to complete an elector enrolment form for this. You can pick one up at any New Zealand Post Shop, or I can send one out, or you can enrol online at www.elections.org.nz or ring 0800 36 76 56 or send your name and address to Free text 3676.

Q31 *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?*

A

Use the original and destroy the special vote.

Q32 *I received voting documents for (children, parent) and have Power of Attorney for them can I vote for them?*

A

No – Power of Attorney does not apply to voting on behalf of that person.

Q33 *I received voting documents for (children, parent) and have Power of Attorney for them. What should I do with the documents?*

A

If they are overseas, you could airmail them to the person or destroy them if that is not practicable.

If they are for an elderly parent who is unable to vote, please destroy them by ripping/cutting them up.

Q34 *I received voting documents that do not belong to me and I don't know these people or where they have gone.*

A

Write GNA (Gone No Address) on the envelope and put them back in the mail.

Voting cont.

Q35 *What is that barcode that I can see through the return envelope or on the front of the voting document?*

A 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.

Q36 *How do you ensure the secrecy of my vote?*

A 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.

The voter's name is not on the voting document.

When the envelope is opened the only thing the Electoral Officer is looking for is that the vote for each election is valid.

- 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 than there are vacancies.
- For STV it is to make sure that no preference numbers are used more than once or omitted, (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5), and that there is always a number one marked against a candidate's name. It should be like this: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc., in numerical order up to as many preferences as the voter wishes to vote for.

Q37 *Do I have to vote? I don't know any of these candidates*

Voting cont.

A 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.

To help you get to know about the candidates:

- There may be candidate meetings being held if you wish to go and hear what policies the different candidates are advocating for.
- 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 the Council 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 newspaper(s) are likely to cover information about the election.

Q38 *Do I have to post my voting document back?*

A You can post it but make sure you have them in the mail by Wednesday 9 October 2019 to make sure it gets back to us in time (by 12 noon Saturday 12 October 2019)

However, you can also deliver to one of our voting boxes which are at:

Voting cont.

Rotorua Lakes Council, Civic Centre
1061 Haupapa Street
Rotorua

Or

Te Akau Mauri, Rotorua Library & Rotorua Childrens Health
Hub
1127 Haupapa Street
Rotorua

(until 12 noon Saturday 12 October 2019)

Q39 *I have lost my return envelope.*

A You can use an envelope of your own and put the return address and Freepost number on it.

Q40 *I am on the Unpublished Parliamentary roll and I want a special vote please.*

A You can cast your special vote at the Rotorua Lakes Council, Civic Centre, 1061 Haupapa Street, Rotorua.

Q41 *I didn't receive my voting paper, how do I obtain a special vote?*

A Are you on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll for the address you want to vote for?

→ **Yes**

Check the printed roll including the ratepayer roll to ensure they were included in the mail file and that they are correctly enrolled.

→ **No/Don't Know**

Check the printed roll, including the ratepayer roll.

Voting cont.**Their main residence**

If not enrolled or not enrolled correctly, advise they need to complete an enrolment form for this. You can pick one up at any New Zealand Post Shop, or I can send one out, or you can enrol online at www.elections.org.nz or ring 0800 36 76 56 or send your name and address to Free text 3676. This form needs to be with the Registrar of Electors before close of business Friday 11 October 2019.

Ratepayers - not main residence

If not enrolled, send out an application for Ratepayer enrolment with a stamped addressed envelope for return. Advise that it must be in the hands of the Electoral Officer by close of business Friday 11 October 2019.

In both instances, they will need to also be sent a special vote, and return this with their enrolment.

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| Q42 <i>I spoiled my voting documents / I have made a mistake on my documents. What can I do?</i> | A | If you can amend it so that your voting intention is clear, then do so and initial the changes.

If necessary, we can issue you with a special voting document, but this will require you to complete a declaration. |
| Q43 <i>Where can I have a special vote?</i> | A | Rotorua Lakes Council, Civic Centre
1061 Haupapa Street
Rotorua |
-

Q44 *I am going away and will not be here when the voting documents are posted out.*

A

You will need to contact the electoral office 0800 666 049 or the Rotorua Lakes Council 07 348 4199 before 22 August 2019 to have a temporary address recorded for you.

Voting cont.

Q45 *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?*

A

Under FPP you can vote for as many candidates as you want but not more than the number of positions available 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.

Q46 *Why can't I vote for a certain candidate who is standing for a different ward, community board or other issue?*

A

You can only vote for the elections relevant to the area in which you live. You cannot vote for a candidate for the same city, district or region who is standing in another ward or constituency because you are not an elector of that ward or constituency.

Breakdown of Rotorua Lakes Council

- Mayor (elected at large)
- 10 Councillors (elected at large)
- 4 Rotorua Lakes Community Board (members elected by

the electors of the Rotorua Lakes Community as a whole)
 - 4 Rotorua Rural Community Board (members elected by the electors of the Rotorua Rural Community as a whole)

Q47 *My husband's paper and mine are different. He has more/less things to vote for. His list of candidates is different to mine?*

A Contact the Electoral Officer on 0800 398 683

Voting cont.

Q48 *I have received two voting documents*

A Contact the Electoral Officer on 0800 398 683

Q49 *Do all the staff working on the election know who I voted for?*

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

Q50 *Can I help someone fill out their voting documents?*

A 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 (LER 34).

Q51 *What happens to all the voting documents after the elections?*

A 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.

After 21 days, the court is responsible for destroying them.

Q52 *Do I get a vote for the DHB?*

A Yes, if you are a resident elector. Ratepayer electors cannot vote for DHB elections.

Voting cont.

Please note that DHB elections are conducted under STV and so you will exercise your vote by ranking your preferred candidates.

Q53 What is STV and how do I vote in an STV election?

A 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 single vote which can be transferred between candidates to ensure the vote contributes to the election of 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.

For more information about STV, go to www.stv.govt.nz.

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.

You can write as many preferences or as few as you like up to however many candidates are standing for that election.

You must write the number 1 for your vote to be counted.

Do not write the same number more than once, e.g., 1, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5 and do not miss a number from your preferences, e.g., 1, 2, 4, 5, 6.

Voting cont.

54 *What about FPP?*

A This is the First Past the Post voting system. The candidate or candidates that get the most votes win(s).

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.

Election Results

Q55 *When will we know the results of the election?*

A Progress and preliminary results will be announced as soon as possible after 12 noon on Saturday 12 October 2019.

The official results will be announced when the final count is complete and special votes have been checked which will be between Thursday 17 October 2019 – Wednesday 23 October 2019.

Q56 *How will I find out?*

Candidates

A Will be advised as soon as possible after Preliminary results are known. This may be by email or phone.

The Voters

A Preliminary Results will be released to the media and placed on our website as soon as possible after noon on Saturday 12 October 2019.– www.rotorualakescouncil.nz

Q57 *What do I need to do if I want to challenge the results of the election?*

Contact the Electoral Officer

Warwick Lampp c/- electionz.com

E: rotorualc@electionz.com

T: 0800 398 683

Members

Q58 *When do elected members take up their roles?*

Members cont.

A 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.

DHB board members take up office 58 days after election day.

Q59 *Who are elected members responsible to?*

A 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.

All DHB board members are accountable to the Minister of Health.

Q60 *Do elected members get paid and if so how much?*

A This is set by the Remuneration Authority. Some expenses are also reimbursed.

DHB board members are paid on the basis of the Cabinet Fees framework.

Q61 *Would being an elected member take up much time?*

A The time commitment varies depending on the role and the size of the local authority/community you are representing.

Being an elected member is a busy job that involved meetings, events and engaging with the community during and outside normal business hours. Flexibility and the ability to prioritise and manage time effectively are essential. This includes balancing a high volume of reading, paperwork and emails with a schedule of meetings and public commitments. As a consequence the positions average 20 to 28 Hours per week.

Q62 *How many elected members are there?*

A

- Mayor (elected at large)
- 10 Councillors (elected at large)
- Rotorua Lakes Community Board (four members elected by the electors of the Rotorua Lakes Community as a whole)
- Rotorua Rural Community Board (four members elected by the electors of the Rotorua Rural Community as a whole)

Complaints

Q63 *I have a complaint about Electoral signage?*

*The signs don't have the required authorisation on them.
The signs have been pulled over.
The signs are bigger than they should be.
In what locations can signs be erected?
When can they be erected and when must they be pulled down?*

Council requirements for Election Hoardings and Signage can be found on Councils [website www.rotorualc.nz/our-council/Elections](http://www.rotorualc.nz/our-council/Elections)

A

Within the Rotorua District temporary election hoardings and signs will not require a building consent or sign permit provided the following conditions are met where appropriate:

All election hoardings and signs:

- Only be displayed during the period beginning 9 weeks before polling day and ending at midnight the day before polling day
- Must be located on private property only
- Must not be located on road reserve
- Have landowner consent prior to erection of the sign
- That free standing signs have a ground clearance of 1.4m under the sign
- Not exceed 3m in height (from ground level)
- Not exceed 3m² in area (2.4 x 1.2m sheet)
- Be securely braced from the ground up to carry wind loads for 60 days
- Not be affixed to any Rotorua Lakes Council tree, fence, parks furniture or sign.
- Not obscure any other sign (election or otherwise)