

# WE BUILD.

**A stronger  
local government.**

**A candidate's guide  
to local authority  
elections.**

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LGNZ.**

**Vote.  
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LOCAL ELECTIONS

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< Local democracy drives strong and diverse communities. It builds local and national success, confidence and character. >

**Lawrence Yule**

President, LGNZ





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## Foreword



As a member of a local authority you have the opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of your fellow citizens. This is an exciting time to be part of local government.

I am thrilled that you are considering this challenge.

If you are reading this candidate's guide you must be thinking about standing in the coming local authority elections or nominating someone else to stand. It is an important decision to make. Local government is a fundamental part of a democratic system and the performance of your council, whether a city, district or region, matters. As a mayor, councillor or board member your decisions will have a major impact on the quality of life that you and your fellow citizens get to experience.

Democracy only works if citizens who care for and understand the needs and aspirations of the communities are prepared to stand up and be counted. As a member of a local authority you have the opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of your fellow citizens.

It is important not only to our communities but also to New Zealand as a whole that local government fulfil its potential and build strong and resilient communities. To achieve this we are looking for elected members with the vision and commitment to make their towns, cities or regions a better place in which to live.

As an elected member you will be supported. Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ), the association of local authorities, is committed to providing all elected members with advice, support and professional development opportunities to enable you to make a difference for your community. LGNZ's vision is for "local democracy powering community and national success" and we are continually working to improve governance, leadership and performance across the local government sector.

New Zealand needs local leaders who are prepared to guide the transformation of their communities so that they are best placed to meet emerging challenges of the 21st century and build strong local economies and vibrant, resilient communities.

This is an exciting time to be part of local government. New initiatives are underway to strengthen the sector and change public understanding about what councils do and why it is important. As a new elected member you will have the opportunity to contribute this work.

I am thrilled that you are considering this challenge.

If you would like more information please check out our website at [www.vote2016.co.nz](http://www.vote2016.co.nz) or speak to the electoral officer of the council in the area in which you wish to stand.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. Yule', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Lawrence Yule**

President

Local Government New Zealand

# 1

**Standing for**

**local government.**





## Standing for local government

Local government is our most fundamental level of democracy. It enables residents, through their elected representatives, to make decisions about the way their district, city or region works. Councils have a unique role as they are the only form of government with responsibility for a specific area. This role is often called 'place-shaping' and involves both governance and accountability for local public services and infrastructure. LGNZ's vision for local government is "local government powering community and national success".

There are three types of local authority:

- territorial authorities (these are cities and districts);
- regional councils; and
- unitary councils (cities and districts with regional council functions).

Altogether New Zealand has 78 local governments. Of these 67 are territorial authorities, including six unitary councils, and 11 are regional councils. Of the territorial authorities 12 are city councils and 55 are district councils. The six unitary are Auckland Council, Nelson City Council, Tasman District Council, Marlborough District Council, Gisborne District Council and the Chatham Islands Council.

Many territorial authorities have community boards or local boards. Community boards exist to make sure that a community's interests are being adequately represented and to bring decision-making closer to citizens themselves (depending on the functions and responsibilities delegated to them by the council). Local boards are similar to community boards but possess a greater range of functions and decision-making powers than most community boards. Currently only Auckland Council has local boards.

## What roles can I stand for?

There are a number of roles within local government that you can stand for:

- mayor;
- councillor (in either a territorial authority or regional council);
- local board member; or
- community board member.

In addition you can also stand for your District Health Board and your local licensing trust if your district or city has one.

### Mayor

Mayors are directly elected by voters in our territorial authorities. The role of mayor is described in the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA 2002) as being able to provide leadership to the other members of the territorial authority and the people in the district of the territorial authority. The mayor is also expected to lead the development of the territorial authority's plans (including the long-term plan and the annual plan), policies, and budgets for consideration by the members of the territorial authority.

A mayor's job is varied, involving long hours and a wide range of duties, such as chairing meetings, taking a public stand on local issues and being available to constituents. The size of the job differs depending on the size of the district or city with mayors of larger communities working full-time.

The role of mayor does vary between councils. The mayor of Auckland council has a range of executive powers that are not available to other mayors, such as the right to have an independent mayoral office and to appoint their deputy and committee chairs. Some of these roles have been extended to other mayors, such as the ability to appoint a deputy and chairs, but these appointments can be reversed by their councils.

One of the most challenging aspects of being mayor is ensuring the orderly conduct of business during council meetings. By keeping order and providing sound leadership elected members help ensure the council decision-making process works at its best. The mayor is normally the spokesperson for the council as well. In addition to these roles, the mayor also fulfils the responsibilities of a Justice of the Peace (while holding office).

## *Councillor*

The role of councillor can, at times, be very demanding. You will have to balance a number of competing interests and wear a number of hats, as councillors can be required to act simultaneously as community leaders, representatives and community board members. The role and responsibilities of a councillor fall into two main categories:

- being a member of the governing body of the council; and
- being an elected representative of the community.

For the three year term councillors need to juggle work, the community's demands, their own priorities, the policies of their political team (if they have one) and the challenges facing their council. Being a councillor is a very public role. Whenever councillors appear in public, even though it may not be in an official capacity, they are usually regarded as a councillor and judged accordingly. It is not a nine to five job.

The role of a councillor in a territorial authority is different to a councillor's role in a regional council. This is due to the different range of service delivered and proximity to communities. A councillor in a city or district tends to be more involved in community matters and will spend, on average, more hours a week in the job.

## *Local board member*

Established under the governance arrangements for Auckland, local boards have a significant and wide-ranging role. They make decisions on a range of local government matters at the local level, provide local leadership and build strong local communities. Local boards provide important local input into region-wide strategies and plans. Every three years local boards prepare a three-year plan that informs the Auckland Council's Long Term Plan. Every year boards negotiate an agreement with the governing body detailing the delivery and funding of services in its local area.

## *Community board member*

Many councils have community boards, which are elected in tandem with the election of the mayor and councillors. The role of community board member will vary depending on the level of responsibility delegated to them by their parent council. At the least community boards make recommendations to councils on policies, bylaws, and strategies reflecting the views of the communities they represent.

The primary role of a community board member is to represent and advocate for the interests of their communities, liaise with community organisations and government departments, and maintain an overview of the local services provided by the council. Community boards can also make written and oral submissions to their council on local issues.

## The capabilities of effective elected members

Being an effective elected member can be a challenging experience, it requires balancing competing demands for your times and exercising your judgement about what is important. It also requires being able to work well with other people and using a broad range of skills and competencies. The following skills and knowledge are important for becoming an effective elected member:

### Quality decision-making

- Makes good decisions based on staff advice, community views, wisdom, experience and informed judgement.
- Is financially prudent and has an eye for risk.

### Strategic thinking

- Understands the district, city or region's priorities and how they relate to national and international developments.

### Political acumen

- Understands the political environment as well as the respective roles of governors and management.

### Leadership

- Provides leadership and direction and makes things happen to achieve the vision and outcomes with an emphasis on strategic priorities.

### Cultural awareness

- Understands and empathises with different peoples and cultures within the council's jurisdiction.
- Understands tikanga Māori and the council's responsibilities under the Treaty of Waitangi.

### Knowledge and understanding of local government

- Understands the role of the council and its financial language, budgets and processes.
- Understands and complies with relevant legislation.

### Communication and engagement

- Represents and promotes council in a measured, unified and dignified light and avoid risks to council's reputation.
- Works effectively with the media, as appropriate.

### Relationship building and collaboration

- Builds productive relationships and support within the community and with other organisations to create and deliver on the vision and outcomes.

### Behaviours

- Understands and models the council's values and behaviours and discourages unethical behaviour.
- Works respectfully with council staff, and others, and values their roles.

### Integrity and trust

- Takes ownership and responsibility for actions.
- Does not misrepresent him/herself or others for personal gain.



## As an elected member what will I be doing?

Elected members have two broad roles, a representative role and a governance role. The amount of time spent on each will vary depending upon the particular elected position. Mayors and councillors will spend a large part of their time on governance matters, as they have the overall responsibility for the performance of the council organisation. Local and community board members will spend more of their time on representation matters and less on governance, although this will depend upon each board's delegations.

< In short, your task is to provide good governance. >

< Good governance balances short-term and long-term responsibilities, the stewardship of the organisation, as well as the knowledge of external opportunities and challenges. >

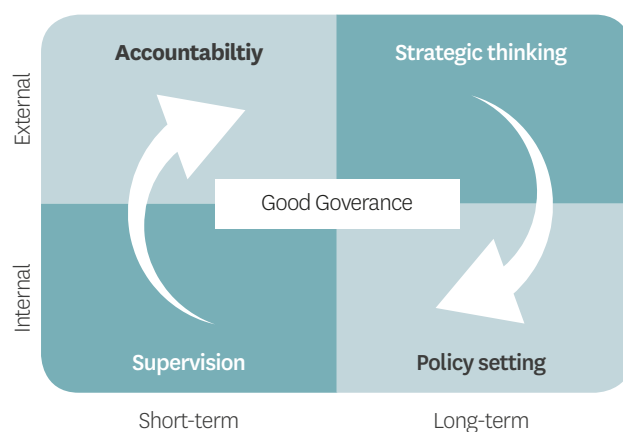
## Exercising your governance role

Mayors and councillors, in particular, will be concerned with the overall performance of the council organisation - the degree to which it meets its statutory obligations, fulfils community expectations and looks after its assets. The role includes:

- planning and policy making;
- making decisions on the allocation of resources;
- ensuring council is fulfilling its regulatory functions in an appropriate manner;
- adopting a Long Term Plan that sets out how you will meet community expectations and exercise responsible stewardship of the community's assets;
- overseeing the strategic direction of the district, city or region; and
- reviewing the council's performance.

In short, your task is to provide good governance. This is summarised in the graphic below prepared by the NZ Institute of Directors.

Good governance balances short-term and long-term responsibilities, the stewardship of the organisation, as well as the knowledge of external opportunities and challenges.



## Exercising your representation role

In your representative role you will be expected to speak on behalf of individuals and organisations in your community and this may include people who didn't vote for you. You won't be able to please all the people all of the time but you must still represent their views, even though you may not vote in support of their views at the council's table. As an elected member you swear an oath to act in the best interests of the district or region as a whole, or for a board member, your community. This is because you will often be making decisions that take into account the wider context and the needs of future generations.

Representing citizens in your community goes beyond simply being an advocate. It involves forming relationships, consulting and empowering groups and organisations. Being a good communicator and listening to people is clearly important. This role involves:

- representing the interests of the residents and ratepayers;
- networking and communicating with local residents;
- providing leadership and guidance to the community;
- facilitating communication between the council and the community; and
- promoting the overall interests of the council to external stakeholders.

## Putting the needs of the district, city or region first

Elected members must act in the interest of the total district, city, region or community in which they have been elected, not just a particular ward or constituency. This is reinforced by the oath that you will have to agree to shortly after being elected:

"I, [full name of mayor, councillor or board member], declare that I will faithfully and impartially, and according to the best of my skill and judgment, execute and perform, in the best interests of [name of region, district, city, local or community board], the powers, authorities, and duties vested in or imposed upon me as a member of the [name of local authority] by virtue of the LGA 2002, the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA), or any other Act."

The oath identifies the need for elected members to use their best skills and judgment and to perform in the best interests of the whole community, not just the ward from which they were elected. Successful elected members manage to balance both their responsibility to raise issues affecting their wards or constituencies while making decisions on behalf of the interests of the total community, and future generations.

## Day-to-day life of an elected member

Life as an elected member is largely dictated by the frequency of meetings and the time taken to prepare for them. At times the sheer volume of business papers may seem daunting, although councils are increasingly turning to new technology to reduce the paper burden.

In addition there are always informal duties such as interviewing constituents, talking to the media, attending functions and speaking engagements.

It is essential that people in the community have an opportunity to contribute their views and ideas to council discussions. Elected members are expected to be accessible and will spend a lot of time meeting with community representatives. Even more time will be spent reading and responding to correspondence. Some of the work may impact on an elected member's personal or family life, such as phone calls at odd hours and meetings after hours.

## Important behaviours

There are certain behaviours that are either helpful or essential for achieving effective governance for your council. Many of them are incorporated into your council's Code of Conduct.

- **Impartial:** You were voted into local government on the understanding that you will use the powers of office to act in the best interests of your community. Because elected members are often active in many parts of their community they may, from time to time, face situations where they might have a potential conflict of interest. If you feel this might apply to you, don't hesitate to let the chairperson of the meeting know as soon as possible.
- **Public interest:** Your mandate is to take the interests of the "whole" community into account, to reflect the wishes of most, rather than a sole group or special interest faction. You should always listen carefully to all advice and weigh up all pros and cons before making recommendations or decisions, in order to make sure everyone gets a hearing and a "fair go".
- **Temperate:** The saying "play the ball not the person" applies in debate. Elected members should always attempt to argue the issue and facts under discussion rather than attack the competence, personality or ethics of the opposition.
- **Responsible:** Elected members should work to promote issues or actions they believe are in the public good across a range of considerations, both ethical and financial. Elected members should be prepared to defend their decisions as sustainable as well as financially prudent.
- **Open and sincere:** To maintain public trust in the integrity of the democratic process, elected members should be proactive in giving out information about council decisions and activities. An elected member's words and actions need to be a sincere representation of their purpose to promote issues or actions that they believe are right for the public good.

## Professional development opportunities

LGNZ, through its EquiP KnowHow professional development programme, provides a wide range of training opportunities for elected members. These are designed to strengthen competencies and bring all elected members up to speed with the requirements of office. Visit [www.lgnz.co.nz](http://www.lgnz.co.nz) for more information.



2

## How councils work.





## How councils work

Local government is the means by which communities make democratic decisions about the way in which their towns, cities and regions work and how they will develop. The LGA 2002 provides councils a broad purpose which is to:

- a) enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and
- b) meet the current and future needs of communities for good quality local infrastructure; local public services; and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses.

The purpose has two parts. The first part emphasises the democratic nature of local government and enables councils to make decisions and undertake services that their communities want and are prepared to pay for. The second part of the purpose requires councils to consider the needs of future generations when making decisions with regard to local services, infrastructure and regulations as well as ensuring that these are provided in a cost effective way.

## What councils do

Councils play a broad range of local roles, from services undertaken on behalf of the community itself, to most regulatory services undertaken on behalf of central government. Cities and districts have the widest range of responsibilities, which include:

- infrastructure services, such as waste water, storm water and drinking water (councils own assets worth more than \$120 billion);
- local roads (councils own 87 per cent of all roads);
- town planning and resource management;
- local regulatory services, such as building consenting, dog control and liquor licensing (councils undertake more than 30 separate regulatory functions);
- parks and recreation and cultural facilities;
- libraries and museums;
- cemeteries;
- community amenities;
- economic development (councils spend more than \$250 million per annum on economic development);
- tourist promotion; and
- local and regional leadership and advocacy.

Regional councils play a core role in the management of natural resources of an area. This includes:

- biosecurity control (including pest control and noxious plants);
- resource management (quality of water, soil, coastal planning);
- flood and river management;
- public transport;
- civil defence (natural disasters, marine oil spill); and
- regional transport planning and passenger transport services.

Functions may vary from place to place as activities can be transferred between territorial and regional councils and many councils have established joint service delivery arrangements.

## How councils operate

Each district, city or regional council has an elected council or governing body which is ultimately responsible for the performance of the local authority. In districts or cities, the governing body will be led by a mayor who is directly elected by all eligible citizens within the area. Regional councils are led by a chairperson who is elected by the members of the regional council's governing body.

Councils employ a chief executive who then employs all remaining staff on behalf of the council. The role of the chief executive and their staff is to provide advice to the council and implement its decisions. Each council is required to negotiate an annual performance agreement with their chief executive.

Most decisions are made in formally constituted meetings or under delegation by staff, committees, local boards or community boards. Delegating decisions is a way of managing the workload and ensuring that decisions are made as close as possible to the people affected by those decisions.

## How councils are funded

Councils' primary source of funding comes from rates. Rates make up around 60 per cent of all operational expenditure, although this will vary from council to council. Remaining revenue comes from user charges, investment income, regulatory fees and roading subsidies. Councils are required by law to balance their budgets, unless it is prudent not to do so, and borrowing is undertaken to fund capital expenditure.

Councils own assets worth more than \$120 billion and their level of debt is approximately \$10 billion. Councils are required to think of the inter-generational benefits arising from their activities and borrowing to fund assets that have a long life is a prudent way of sharing the cost of long life assets over succeeding generations which benefit from the investment. Most councils borrow from the Local Government Funding Agency which raises bonds and is able to lend to councils at lower interest rates than charged by the banking sector.

The critical planning document is the Long Term Plan (LTP). The LTP is reviewed every three years, includes a 10-year financial strategy and a 30-year infrastructure strategy.

## Making decisions

As an elected member you will be responsible for making decisions involving very large amounts of public money, including debt. The local government sector, as a whole, spends more than \$8 billion annually, so it is very important that decisions are based on accurate information and good advice. Elected members need to ask the right questions to ensure resources are used well and prudently. Poor investments and badly supervised projects can damage local economic development.

The way in which councils make decisions is subject to a number of rules and regulations set out in the LGA 2002 and other statutes.

Some critical ones are:

- decision-makers must be informed by the views of those affected by the decision;
- decision-makers must consider reasonable practicable options;
- decisions must be made in public unless there are specific grounds for excluding the public; and
- decision-making processes must acknowledge the diverse needs of the community.

Elected members have little authority by themselves. It is only when acting together with your colleagues that you can implement policies and make a difference. To be effective you need the support of the majority of your fellow elected members.

## Being transparent

Local government works well because it is open and transparent. This is one of the fundamental values of good government and both the LGOIMA and the Ombudsmen Act 1975 apply to councils. This means that all business, except when matters of personal or commercial sensitivity are concerned, must be conducted in public. It also means that all information, including information held by elected members in their council role, is also public information.

The public is entitled to attend meetings of councils, committees, local boards and community boards, except where the meeting has gone into public excluded. Members can elect to hold workshops to debate and find out more about an issue and these are often held without the public being present, however decisions cannot be made at workshops.

# 3

**Nomination**

**requirements.**





## Nomination requirements

To be eligible to stand for election you do not need any special qualifications. You must be a New Zealand citizen and enrolled on the parliamentary electoral roll (anywhere in New Zealand) and have lived at your current address for at least one month. You do not need to live in the area in which you wish to stand. You can stand for any of the following, however, you may not be able to hold some of these positions at the same time as some combinations are not lawful. The positions you can stand for are:

- a local council (mayor, councillor);
- a local board (if established);
- a community board (if established);
- a regional council;
- a district health board; and
- a district licensing trust (if established).

## Combinations allowed

Due to the potential for conflict of interest, there are some positions which you cannot stand for at the same time. There are also situations where you may stand for two positions at the same time but if elected to both must relinquish one, usually the less senior position.

- You **can** stand for your local council (including a local board or community board) and for a district health board at the same time.
- You **can** stand for regional council and a district health board at the same time.
- You **can** stand for mayor and another position in the council at the same time, but if you are elected to both you must relinquish your position as councillor (or community or local board member), which is then filled by the next highest polling candidate.
- You **can** stand for election for both a local council and a local board or community board at the same time, but if you are elected to both you must vacate your position on the local board or community board.
- You **cannot** stand for both a regional council and a local council or community board position in the same region.
- You **cannot** stand, if the council elects its members under the ward system, for election in more than one ward or constituency.

- You **cannot** stand as both a ward candidate and an at-large candidate in those councils that elect their members under a combined ward and at-large system.
- You **cannot** stand for more than one constituency.

You may stand for election if you are an employee of a council. However, if you are elected as a councillor or local board member in the local authority for which you work, you must resign your position as an employee before taking up your position as an elected member. This does not apply to council employees elected to community boards.

If you are employed you may need to talk to your employer about your intentions to stand for election, including the implications of being successful. In some instances you may need to take leave from work while you campaign.

\*At the time of publication it is possible to stand and be elected to more than one local board, however, we expect this to change before the 2016 election. If you are considering standing for more than one local board please check with your electoral officer first.

## Being a successful candidate

Most local elections involve a competition and this is a sign of a healthy democracy. One of the most important challenges facing a candidate is to successfully promote themselves and their platforms to their community – whether this is a ward, a constituency or an at-large election. Being a successful candidate involves selling yourself and your policies.

One of the most common reasons people use for not voting is a lack of knowledge about who the candidates are and what they stand for – so making it easy for local residents to understand your position on issues is critical to success.

In the past candidates held meetings on street corners and in community halls. These are all important but today people get their information from a much wider range of sources. In many parts of New Zealand a social media presence will be critical as many voters use online devices to search for information on candidates in their areas. A Facebook page, for example, provides an easy way of communicating key messages about yourself, why you wish to stand for public office and what your vision for the future of your community is. Many successful political candidates, such as President Obama, have found tools like Twitter to be a very helpful way of communicating to voters – particularly younger voters.



There are many methods of campaigning, including:

- telephoning people you know;
- distributing leaflets and pamphlets;
- door knocking;
- making contact with local organisations;
- meeting people in public areas like shopping centres;
- preparing articles for local newspapers;
- paying for press advertisements;
- providing a profile of your background to the local paper;
- addressing public meetings;
- giving interviews to local radio stations; and
- creating an online presence.

There are a number of rules that must be observed once you start campaigning, such as not exceeding the expenditure limit on advertising and keeping track of all your expenses, as you will need to submit them after the completion of the campaign if you are successful. There are also rules that apply to signage, such as where and when signs can be erected. It is very important to talk to your local electoral officer to find out what the obligations are in your local area.

There are limits to the amount of money candidates can spend on their election campaigns, which includes donations and joint campaigning. The maximum amount spent must not exceed the limits set out in the following table. If a candidate is standing for more than one position, such as mayor and councillor, the higher limit applies (not a combination of both). Please note that the amounts are GST inclusive.

### Election expenditure limits

Council population	Expenditure limit
Up to 4,999	\$3,500
5,000 – 9,999	\$7,000
10,000 – 19,999	\$14,000
20,000 – 39,999	\$20,000
40,000 – 59,999	\$30,000
60,000 – 79,999	\$40,000
80,000 – 99,999	\$50,000
100,000 – 149,000	\$55,000
150,000 – 249,999	\$60,000
250,000 – 1,000,000	\$70,000
1,000,000 or more	\$100,000 (plus 50c for each elector)

Finally, remember to be positive. Voters like candidates who can communicate a vision for the future of their communities but are also realistic enough to know that promises must also be affordable.



4

**Common**

**questions.**





## Common questions

### How much do elected members get paid?

As an elected member you will be classified as self-employed. You will need to pay ACC levies from your own income but you can reclaim some expenses from IRD. Elected members receive salaries that vary depending on the size of each council. The agency responsible for setting salaries is the Remuneration Authority.

Remuneration for each elected member is based on the population the council represents and its annual expenditure, and is adjusted annually based on changes to population and expenditure. As an elected member you cannot decline to accept your salary. There is no superannuation programme for elected members and remuneration cannot include any contribution to a member's Kiwisaver scheme. Some expenses, such as mileage, are also paid. See [www.remauthority.govt.nz](http://www.remauthority.govt.nz) for more information.

### How much time is involved?

Time commitments vary markedly depending on the position you are elected to. Many mayors find that the commitment is full-time. Most councils have monthly or six-weekly meeting cycles with councillors often placed on council committees. The amount of time per week that an elected member spends on council duties will depend on the number of responsibilities they have in their role and the size of the council.

The amount of time per week that a local board member in Auckland spends on local board duties will partly depend on the population the board represents. Many local board members will spend on average 20 hours a week on board activities. Chairs, for example, have to officiate at civic functions, such as citizenship ceremonies as well as other local board duties. Local boards have regular meetings and may choose to set up local board committees.

The work of community board members will also vary according to the size and population of their community and the range of delegated functions they are responsible for. Community board chairpersons can expect to work up to 20 hours a week while community board members might work up to ten hours a week.

Elected members are expected to be accessible to all members of their communities and should expect to spend a lot of time meeting with local organisations, such as neighbourhood associations and business organisations.

### What is the nomination process?

You will need two people to nominate you (on the official nomination form), then send your completed form to your council's electoral officer. You must consent to your nomination going forward (by signing the nomination form) and you cannot nominate yourself. Those who nominate you must be over 18 years old and enrolled to vote in the area you wish to stand in. When you send in the nomination form you will need to pay a \$200 (incl. GST) deposit.

The deposit may be refunded depending on how many votes you receive in the election and the particular type of election. The deposit is refunded if the number of votes you receive is greater than 25 per cent of the lowest successful candidate for that particular election (for First Past the Post elections) or greater than 25 per cent of the final quota as determined in the last iteration (for Single Transferable Voting elections).

When you submit your nomination forms you can also provide the electoral officer with a recent photograph of yourself and a 150 word profile statement. These will be published in a booklet and sent out with the voting documents.

Nominations open on Friday 15 July 2016. Nomination forms will be available from your local council's electoral office.

### Are there other requirements?

To be eligible to stand for election you do not need any special qualifications.

A criminal conviction will not usually affect your nomination. The only exception to this is that people currently serving a prison term of three years or more cannot stand. If you are elected and subsequently convicted of an offence punishable by imprisonment for two years or more, you automatically lose office.

However, if you are planning to stand for a district health board position, there are additional restrictions, these can be found at the following link: [www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2000/0091/latest/DLM82015.html](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2000/0091/latest/DLM82015.html)

## How does the electoral process work?

The local government elections will be conducted under the provisions of the Local Electoral Act 2001, the Local Electoral Regulations 2001, the LGA 2002 and the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 and their amendments. Most local government elections are conducted using the “First Past the Post” system (FPP) so the candidate with the highest number of votes wins. This year six councils, in addition to all 20 district health boards, will use the Single Transferable Voting system (STV).

Elections for all local authorities throughout New Zealand are held every three years and are all conducted by postal vote. This year the day of the election is Saturday 8 October 2016 and all votes must be received by 12 noon on that date.

Your council will have an electoral officer to run the election. This person is either a council employee or an independent contractor working on behalf of the council to conduct its election. Neither sitting elected members, nor anyone standing for election, can be an electoral officer.

People who are enrolled to vote by Friday 12 August 2016 will be sent their voting papers in the mail. An enrolment campaign will run from early July to late August to encourage people to enrol, check or update their enrolment details. Enrolment forms are available from your local council.

Voting documents will be sent to all eligible voters by post from Friday 16 September 2016. Voters will have three weeks to complete and return their voting documents. Completed voting documents must be returned to the electoral officer by 12 noon on Saturday 8 October 2016.

A polling place for the issuing of special voting documents and for the receiving of completed voting documents will be available from Friday 16 September 2016 to 12 noon Saturday 12 October 2016. Contact your local council for information on local polling places.

Preliminary results will be announced by the electoral officer as soon as practicable after voting closes, to be followed by the official results within a few days. The electoral officer will also write to all candidates once the final election result is known. The term of office is for three years.

Successful elected members take up office on the day after the official declaration is publicly notified. However, before they can make any decisions, elected members must swear an oath of office. The oath for mayor and councillors is made at the first meeting of the new council and the oath for board members at the first meeting of the community or local board. This meeting is usually held within two weeks of the official declaration of election results.



# 5

**Key dates**

**and next steps.**



## Key dates and next steps

If you wish to stand for a position in the forthcoming local authority elections you will need to have registered your nomination before midday on 12 August 2016 with the relevant electoral officer. Nominations will open on the 15 July 2016.

### Key dates for the 2016 elections

15 July	Candidate nominations open and roll opens for public inspection
15 July - 12 August at midday	Receipt of candidate nominations
12 August at midday	Candidate nominations close and roll closes
17 August	Public notice of candidate's names
16 - 21 September	Voting documents delivered
13 September - 5 October	Special voting period
16 September - 8 October	Progressive roll scrutiny, special voting, early processing
8 October at midday	Election day – voting closes midday
8 October from midday	Preliminary results
13 – 19 October	Declaration of results
October/November	Elected members' swearing in ceremonies

### How do I find out more?

If you would like to find out more information about your council, consider looking at its annual plan or Long Term Plan. These documents show what the council is doing and what it plans to do over the next ten years. The council's annual report is also helpful as it will provide details on how the council performed over the previous year, both financial and non-financial performance. These documents are available on your council's website or in the local library.

Also on the council's website will be its 30-year Infrastructure Strategy and its Governance Statement. The Infrastructure Strategy

will give you an insight into the state of the council's infrastructure and what renewals and replacements will be required over the next three decades. The Governance Statement explains how a council works.

If you would like more information on how the First Past the Post (FPP) or Single Transferable Voting (STV) systems work please check the Department of Internal Affairs' website at [www.dia.govt.nz](http://www.dia.govt.nz). For general information on councils go to the local councils' website at [www.localcouncils.govt.nz](http://www.localcouncils.govt.nz).

## We are.

Ashburton.  
Auckland.  
Bay of Plenty.  
Buller.  
Canterbury.  
Carterton.  
Central  
Hawke's Bay.  
Central Otago.  
Chatham Islands.  
Christchurch.  
Clutha.  
Dunedin.  
Far North.

Gisborne.  
Gore.  
Greater Wellington.  
Grey.  
Hamilton.  
Hastings.  
Hauraki.  
Hawke's Bay  
Region.  
Horowhenua.  
Hurunui.  
Hutt City.  
Invercargill.

Kaikoura.  
Kaipara.  
Kapiti Coast.  
Kawerau.  
Mackenzie.  
Manawatu.  
Marlborough.  
Masterton.  
Matamata-Piako.  
Napier.  
Nelson.  
New Plymouth.  
Northland.  
Opotiki.

Otago.  
Otorohanga.  
Palmerston North.  
Porirua.  
Queenstown-  
Lakes.  
Rangitikei.  
Rotorua Lakes.  
Ruapehu.  
Selwyn.  
South Taranaki.  
South Waikato.  
South Wairarapa.  
Southland District.

Southland Region.  
Stratford.  
Taranaki.  
Taranua.  
Tasman.  
Taupo.  
Tauranga.  
Thames-  
Coromandel.  
Timaru.  
Upper Hutt.  
Waikato District.  
Waikato Region.  
Waimakariri.

Waimate.  
Waipa.  
Wairoa.  
Waitaki.  
Waitomo.  
Whanganui.  
Wellington.  
West Coast.  
Western Bay  
of Plenty.  
Westland.  
Whakatane.  
Whangarei.

**LGNZ.**





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