

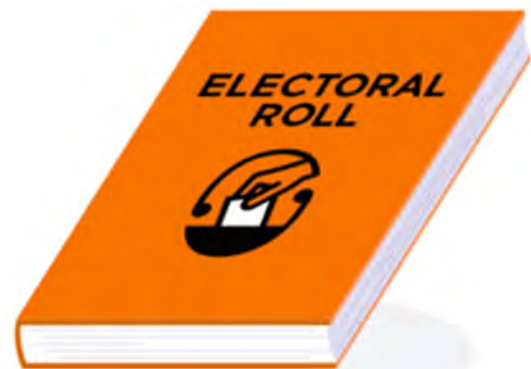


**ELECTORAL  
COMMISSION**  
TE KAITIAKI TAKE KŌWHIRI

**HE MANA  
TŌ TE  
KŌWHIRI**

**YOUR CHOICE  
HAS MANA**

# Information about the Māori Electoral Option – Te Kōwhiringa Pōti Māori



**Updated: January 2024**



**Easy Read**

# Before you read this document



This Easy Read document talks about things to do with **elections** in New Zealand.



An **election** is the time when you can **vote** for the people you want to make important decisions about:

- things that affect how you live
- the country you live in.



While this document is written in Easy Read it uses some hard words which you might not know.



Some things you can do to make it easier are:

- read a few pages at a time
- have someone support you to understand it.



# What you will find in here

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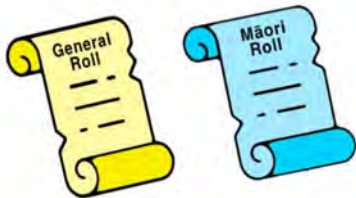
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## What is this document about?



This Easy Read document is from the **Electoral Commission** about the **Māori Electoral Option – Te Kōwhiringa Pōti Māori**.



We will talk more about the **Electoral Commission** on **pages 7 to 8** of this document.



The **Māori Electoral Option** is a choice for Māori about which **electoral roll** they want to be on.



The **electoral roll** is a list of all the people in New Zealand who have **enrolled to vote**.



Being **enrolled to vote** means:

- your name is on the electoral roll
- you can **vote** in an **election**.

When you **vote** you get to have your say about who you think should win an election.

An **election** is the time when you can **vote** for the people you want to make important decisions about:

- things that affect how you live
- the country you live in.

# What is the Electoral Commission?



## The Electoral Commission:

- looks after the running of **parliamentary elections** in New Zealand
- works to keep the electoral rolls up to date.



**Parliamentary elections** are when people get to vote for who will be a member of Parliament.



Someone who is a member of Parliament is also called an **MP**.





An **MP** is someone who:

- works in Parliament
- works to **represent** the people of New Zealand
- usually represents a political party.

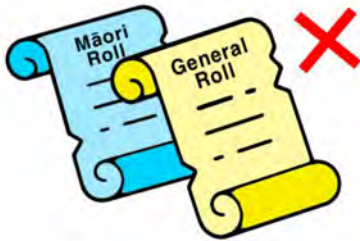
**Represent** means to stand / speak for someone.

## What are the electoral rolls?



The electoral roll is split into 2 lists:

- the **Māori roll** that is open to voters who are Māori
- the **general roll** that is open to all voters.



No one can be on both rolls at the same time.

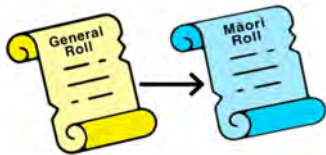
You can choose which electoral roll you want to be on **if**:



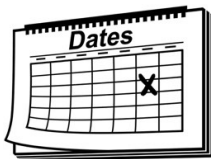
- you are Māori



There is more information later in this document about changes you can make once you are already enrolled to vote like:



- how you can change which electoral roll you are on
- when you can change which electoral roll you are on.



The information in this document can support people to make their choice about which electoral roll they want to be on.



It is a good idea to share the information in this document with people you know who are not yet enrolled to vote.



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To get enrolled to vote in New Zealand you must:

- be at least 18 years old

and

- have lived in New Zealand for more than 1 year at some time in your life



and

- be:
  - a **New Zealand citizen**



or

- a **New Zealand permanent resident.**





A **New Zealand citizen** is someone who can get a New Zealand passport.



Most New Zealand citizens were born in New Zealand.



A **New Zealand permanent resident** is someone who:

- is not a New Zealand Citizen.
- has been told by the government they can live in New Zealand all the time.



The people you vote for in an election are called **candidates**.

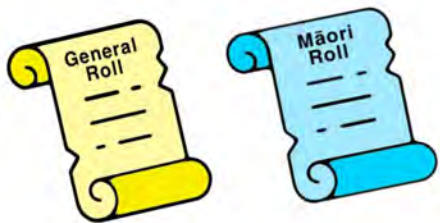


The candidate with the most number of votes becomes an MP.



It is important to know that the electoral roll you choose to be on affects which candidates you can vote for in elections.

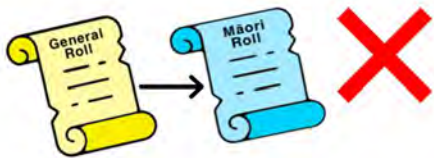
## When you can change the roll you are on



This change to the law means you can usually change which electoral roll you are on at any time.

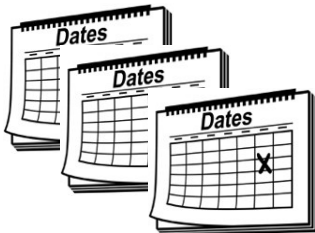


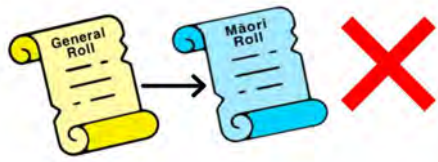
You can only change which electoral roll you are on if you are Māori.



The times you cannot change which electoral roll you are on are:

- in the 3 months before a **general election** happens
- in the 3 months before a **local election** happens.





The other time you cannot change which electoral roll you are on is:

- before a **by-election**

if

- it moves you into the area / **electorate** where the by-election is being held.



We will talk about **electorates** on **page 17** of this document.



A **general election** is when people vote for who they want in Parliament.



A **local election** is when people vote for who they want to be part of the councils in the place they live.





These 2 kinds of elections happen every 3 years.



A **by-election** happens when a member of Parliament leaves their job before a general election.



When this happens people in their area vote on who will replace them.

# What is an electorate?



New Zealand is **divided** into voting areas called **electorates**.

**Divided** means it is split into parts.



There are 2 kinds of electorates:

- **Māori electorates**
- general electorates.



A **Māori electorate** is a voting area where only people who are on the Māori electoral roll can vote.



Every place in New Zealand is part of both:

- a Māori electorate
- a general electorate.



In New Zealand there are currently:

- 7 Māori electorates
- 65 general electorates.



When you enrol to vote you are also enrolled in the electorate where you live.



Electorates:

- are not always the same size

**but**

- they usually have around the same number of people in them.



The **boundaries** of electorates can change / move over time.



**Boundaries** means the edges of the area of land that makes up an electorate.



A thing that can affect where the boundaries of electorates are is:

- how many people choose to be on the Māori roll
- which places those people live in.



The next time electorate boundaries will be looked at will be before the General Election in 2026.

# What is a local council ward or constituency?



Local government is separate from central Government.



Local government in New Zealand is currently made up of:

- 11 **regional councils**
- 11 **city councils**
- 50 **district councils**
- 6 other council areas.



**Regional councils** look after large areas of land called **regions**.



There are 16 regions in New Zealand.

Regions have voting areas called **constituencies**.



**City councils** look after the cities in New Zealand.



**District councils** look after areas that are not part of cities.

City councils / district councils have voting areas called **wards**.



Most places in New Zealand are part of both:

- a region

**and**

- a city **or** a district.



Some councils have both:

- Māori wards / constituencies
- general wards / constituencies.



In a local election you vote for people called **councillors** who will represent the people in each ward / constituency.





These voting areas:

- are not always the same size

**but**

- they usually have around the same number of people in them.



## Voting in general and by-elections



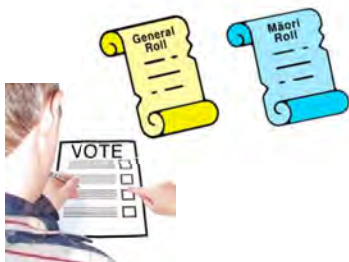
The electoral roll you choose to be on affects who you can vote for in elections.



If you choose to be on the Māori electoral roll you will vote for a candidate in the Māori electorate you live in.



If you choose to be on the general electoral roll you will vote for a candidate in the general electorate you live in.



In a general election everyone can still vote for the same list of political parties.



The electoral roll you choose to be on may change how many electorates there are for general elections.



The number of Māori on the Māori electoral roll can also change how many Māori electorates there are by:



- making more
- making fewer
- keeping the same amount.

# Voting in local elections



In local elections you will vote for candidates in a Māori ward / constituency if:



- you choose to be on the Māori electoral roll

and



- your local council has a Māori ward / constituency.



If you choose to be on the general electoral roll you will vote for candidates in the general ward / constituency.

# How to change which roll you are on



If you are happy with the electoral roll you are on you do not need to do anything.

If you want to change which electoral roll you are on you can do it by:



- going to the website at:

**vote.nz**



- filling in a paper enrolment form and sending it back to us.



If you choose to change your electoral roll online you must have a **form of ID** like:



- a New Zealand driver licence
- a New Zealand passport
- a RealMe **verified** identity.



A **form of ID** is an official document that you can use to prove who you are.



**Verified** means something that has been checked to make sure it is true.



We can also send you a paper enrolment form by post.



You can call us to ask us to send you a paper enrolment form on:

**0800 36 76 56**



It will not cost you any money to call this number.



Some people choose to be on the **unpublished electoral roll**.



The **unpublished electoral roll** means that information about you like your address will not be published where other people might see it.



If you are already on the unpublished electoral roll you will need to fill in a paper enrolment form to change which electoral roll you are on.



## Where to find more information



Our website has more information about:

- the Māori Electoral Option
- enrolling to vote.



The website address is:

**vote.nz**



You can also call us with any questions you have on:

**0800 36 76 56**



It will not cost you any money to call this number.



This information has been written by the Electoral Commission.



It has been translated into Easy Read by the Make it Easy Kia Māmā Mai service of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



The ideas in this document are not the ideas of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



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