

Information about the Māori Electoral Option - Te Kōwhiringa Pōti Māori



**ELECTORAL
COMMISSION**
TE KAITIAKI TAKE KŌWHIRI

**Kei a tātou
te mana**

Our choice has mana
MĀORI ELECTORAL OPTION

Updated May 2026

Developed with input from
People First New Zealand, Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi



About this booklet



This booklet has information about:

- elections in New Zealand
- the Māori Electoral Option.

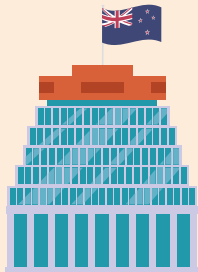


About elections - what is an election?



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

- things that affect your life
- the country you live in.



When you **vote** you have your say about who you think should be in **Government**.

The **Government** decides on things that affect your life like:



- schools
- hospitals
- roads.

About elections - types of elections

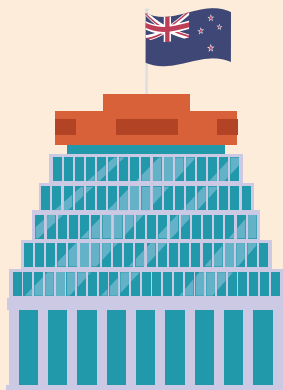


There are 2 different kinds of **elections**:

1. **Parliamentary elections**
2. **Local elections.**



Parliamentary elections are when people get to vote for who will be part of the government for the whole country.



There are 2 types of **Parliamentary elections**:

1. **General elections**
2. **By-elections.**

About elections - general elections

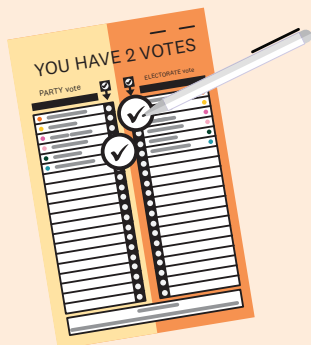


A **General Election** happens every 3 years.

At the **General Election** you can vote for the people who will:

- be in **Parliament**
- make decisions that affect your life.

Parliament is made up of all of the people and **political parties** who have been chosen in the election.



In the General Election you get 2 votes to choose the:

1. **political party** you want to be in Government
2. **person** you want to represent your electorate in Parliament.

About elections - By-election



A **by-election** happens when a member of Parliament is needed before the next general election.



This could be because a member of Parliament has:

- left their job
- died.



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

About elections - Parties and MPs

A **political party** is a group of people that want to be in Government.



They share the same ideas about how New Zealand should work.

Some of the parties in Parliament will form the Government.

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



The candidate with the most votes is elected to Parliament.

If you are elected to Parliament you are called a **member of Parliament**.

An **MP** is a short way of saying member of Parliament.

About elections - Parties and MPs



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 or speak for someone.

About elections - local elections

Local elections happen every 3 years.



A **local election** is when you vote for the people who you want to be in **local government**.

Local government is different to Parliament.



Local government decides on things about the place you live like:

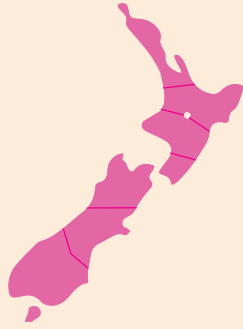
- libraries
- rubbish collection
- parks.



Local government in New Zealand is currently made up of:

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

About elections - local elections



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

There are 16 regions in New Zealand.



City councils look after cities in New Zealand.



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

Most places in New Zealand are part of both:

- a region
- and**
- a city **or** district.

About elections - local elections



Local council voting areas are called wards or constituencies.

Regions have voting areas called **constituencies**.

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



In a local election you vote for people called **councillors**.

They represent the people who live in a ward or constituency.



These voting areas:

- are not always the same size
- but**
- they usually have around the same number of people in them.

About elections - local elections



Some councils also have Māori wards or constituencies.



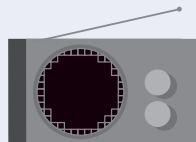
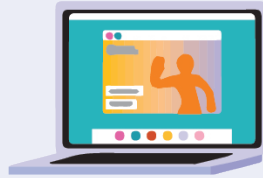
If your council has a Māori ward or constituency and you are on the Māori electoral roll you will vote for candidates in the Māori ward or constituency.

If your council does not have a Māori ward or constituency you will vote in the general ward or constituency.



If you choose the general electoral roll you will vote for candidates in a general ward or constituency.

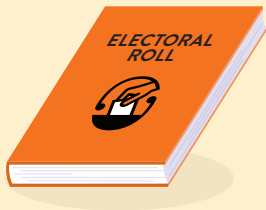
More information



Here is a list of where you might find more information about elections and who you can choose to vote for:

- websites
- social media
- newspaper
- television
- radio
- public meetings
- at school or work
- your friends
- your family.

Enrolling to vote



Disabled people can enrol and vote in New Zealand elections.

In New Zealand there are some rules about who must enrol to vote.



You must enrol to vote if all of these things are true about you:

- at least 18 years old
- have lived in New Zealand for more than 1 year in your life
- are either a **New Zealand citizen** or a **resident for electoral purposes**.



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

Most New Zealand citizens were born in New Zealand.

A **resident for electoral purposes** is someone who:

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

Enrolling to vote - What is enrolment?



You need to be **enrolled to vote** in an election.

Being **enrolled to vote** means you have filled out a form with your personal information.



Your personal information includes:

- your name
- your date you were born
- the address of where you live
- email address
- mobile phone number.

It is important to put down the right information.

Enrolling to vote - What is enrolment?



You also need 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.

A **RealMe verified identity** is a type of computer account run by the government where they have checked your information to make sure it is true.



You can ask someone to support you to fill out the enrolment form.

Enrolling to vote - How to enrol



To enrol you can:

- go to the website at:
vote.nz
- fill in a paper enrolment form and send it back to the Electoral Commission.



If you want to be sent an enrolment form in the mail:

- call **0800 36 76 56**
- text your name and address to **3676**.

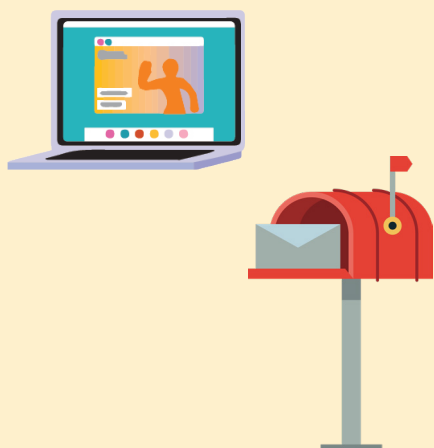
It will not cost you any money to call or text this number.

Enrolling to vote - How to update your details



You must update your information on the electoral roll if you:

- move house
- change your name.



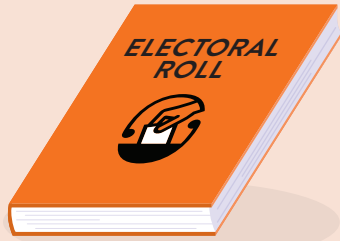
You can:

- go to the website at:
vote.nz
- fill in a paper enrolment form and send it back to the Electoral Commission.



You can enrol or update your details at any time.

Electoral roll

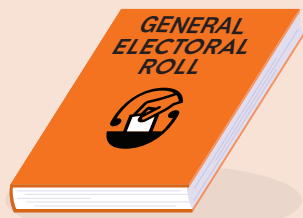
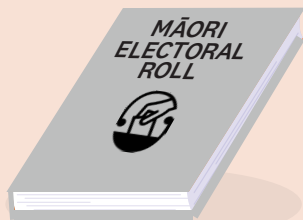


When you are enrolled to vote your name is on the **electoral roll**.

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

The electoral roll is **public**.

Being **public** means that other people can see it at places like libraries.

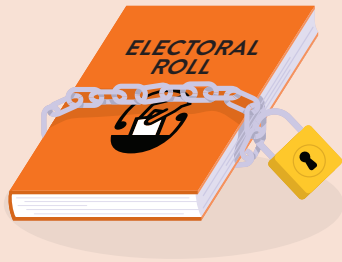


There are 2 electoral rolls:

- 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.

Unpublished roll



If it is not safe for your name and address to be made public on the electoral roll you can ask to go on the **unpublished roll**.

The **unpublished roll** is private.

Nobody can see your personal details.

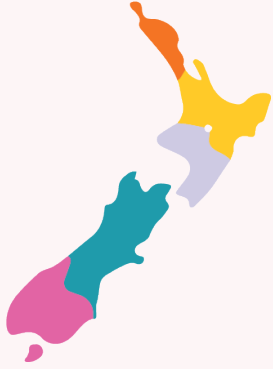


If you are already on the unpublished electoral roll you will need to fill in a paper enrolment form to change which electoral roll you are on.

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

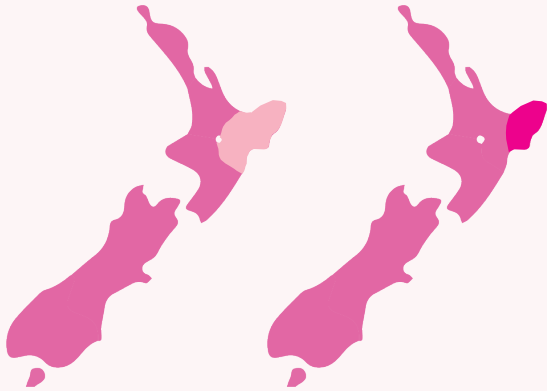
- o **0800 36 76 56.**

Electoral



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.

Electorates



Everywhere in New Zealand is in:

- a Māori electorate
- a general electorate.



In New Zealand there are currently:

- 7 Māori electorates
- 64 general electorates.

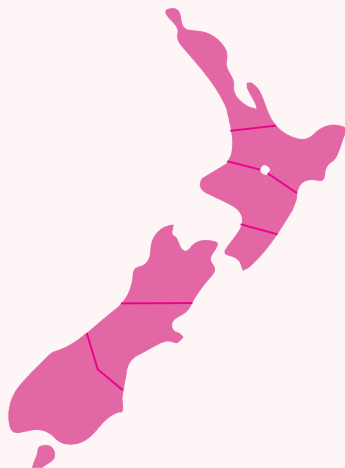
When you enrol to vote you are also enrolled in the electorate where you live.



Electorates:

- are not always the same size
- but
- they usually have around the same number of people in them.

Electorate boundaries

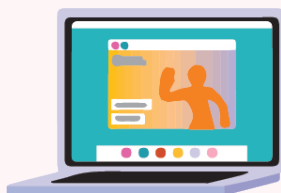


The **boundaries** of electorates can change or move over time.

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

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

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



You should check what electorate you are enrolled in before you vote.

You can do this:

- on our website:

vote.nz

- call:

0800 36 76 56.



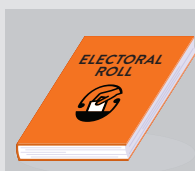
Roll choice



If you are Māori you can choose which electoral roll you want to be on.

This choice is called the **Māori Electoral Option**.

More information on the Māori Electoral Option can be found on page 27.



If you are not Māori you will be on the general roll.



No one is allowed to tell you what roll to choose.

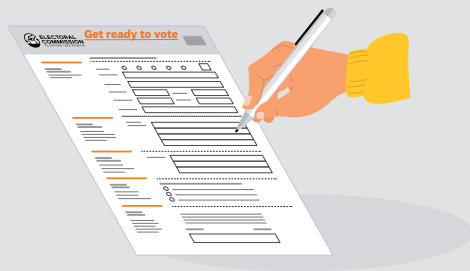
It is your choice.

Roll choice



The roll you choose to be on decides:

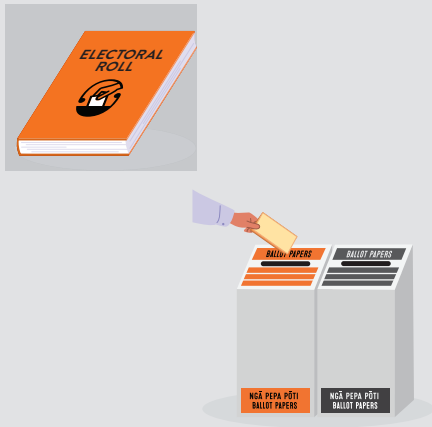
- which electorate you vote in
- the candidates you can choose from.



You make this choice when you:

- enrol for the first time
- or
- make a change to your enrolment details.

What the roll choice means for voting



It is important to know the electoral roll you are on.

This is because it decides which candidates you can vote for in elections.

Here is an example:



If you live in Rotorua and choose the Māori roll you will vote in the Waiariki electorate.

The person who wins the most votes in the Māori electorate of Waiariki will become your local MP.

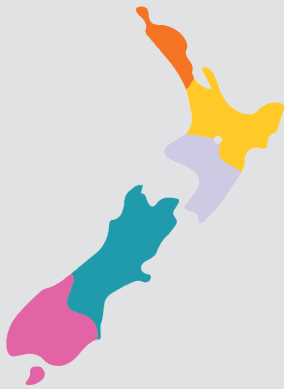
If you choose the general roll you will vote in the Rotorua electorate.

The person who wins the most votes in the general electorate of Rotorua will become your local MP.

What the roll choice means for voting

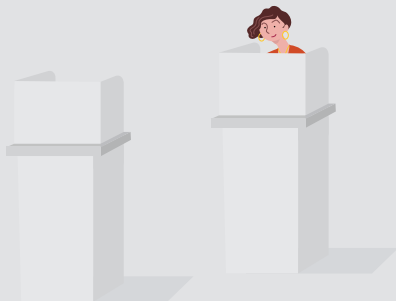


Your roll choice can also shape the number of Māori and general electorates in Parliament.



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

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



This choice does not affect your party vote.

You vote for the same list of political parties whichever roll you're on.

The Māori Electoral Option - what is it?



If you are Māori you can choose which electoral roll you want to be on.

This choice is called the **Māori Electoral Option**.



The Māori Electoral Option in te reo Māori is Te Kōwhiringa Pōti Māori.

The Māori Electoral Option - History of the Option



The Māori Electoral Option is special to New Zealand.

Māori have been able to choose which electoral roll to be on for over 50 years.

Making this choice means you have a say in how you want New Zealand to work.

It is also a choice about who will be in Government that represents:



- you
- your whānau
- your community.

Making this choice is a way to acknowledge Māori from the past and future.

The Māori Electoral Option - where to find information



Here is a list of where you might find more information about the Māori Electoral Option:



- a letter in the post

- websites

- social media

- newspaper

- television

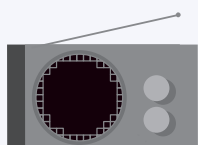
- radio

- public meetings

- at school or work

- your friends

- your family.



How to choose or change your roll



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

No one can tell you what roll to choose.



If you are Māori and enrolling for the first time you choose if you want to be on the Māori or the general roll.

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

How to choose or change your roll



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

- going to the website at:
vote.nz
- emailing:
enrol@vote.nz
- filling in a paper enrolment form and sending it back to us.



You might receive a letter in the post after **31 March 2026**.

This letter will tell you what roll you are currently enrolled on.

The letter has instructions on how to change your roll.



You can ask someone to support you to understand this letter and fill it in if you would like to change rolls.

How to choose or change your roll



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:

- o **0800 36 76 56.**



You need to have a form of ID like:

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

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

A **RealMe** verified identity is a type of computer account run by the government where they have checked your information to make sure it is true.

When to change your roll



In 2026 if you are Māori and want to change the roll you are on you need to do it by:

- **midnight on Thursday 6 August 2026.**

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



- in the 3 months before a general election happens

or

- in the 3 months before a local election happens

or

- before a by-election if it moves you into the electorate where the by-election is happening.

Get your whānau enrolled to vote



If any of your whānau or friends have not heard about the Māori Electoral Option you can give them this information.



They can also go to our website which has more information about:

- the Māori Electoral Option
- enrolling to vote.

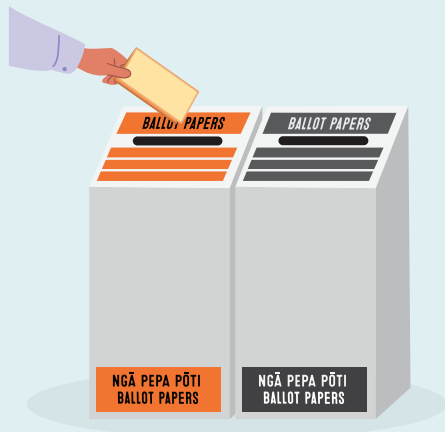


The website address is:

- **vote.nz.**

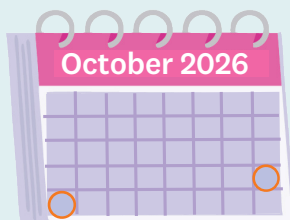
This will help them get enrolled so they can make a choice too.

2026 General Election



There is a general election in 2026.

This means you will vote for who you want to be in Government for the next three years.



You need to be enrolled to vote in the 2026 General Election by:

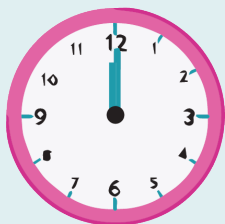
- **midnight on Sunday 25 October 2026.**

Voting in the General Election starts on:

- **Monday 26 October 2026.**

The last day to vote is:

- **Saturday 7 November 2026.**



If you want to change the roll you are on you need to do it by:

- **midnight on Thursday 6 August 2026.**

This date is important because you cannot change rolls in the 3 months before the election.

If you miss this date you will stay on your current roll until after the election.

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



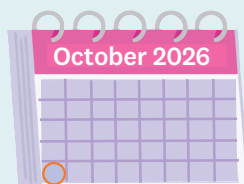
If you are Māori and enrol for the first time between:

- **Friday 7 August 2026**

and

- **midnight on Sunday 25 October 2026**

you can choose what electoral roll you would like to be on but you cannot change it before the election.



You cannot enrol once voting starts on:

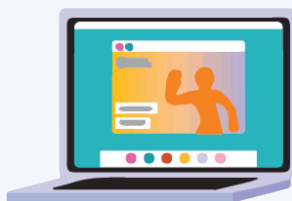
- **Monday 26 October 2026.**

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.



34-42 Manners Street,
PO Box 3220, Wellington 6140.