



Chief Electoral Office, Ministry of Justice

Disability Voters/Non-Voters Survey

15 December 2005



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Appendix

1.0 Executive Summary

TNS was commissioned by the Chief Electoral Office, Ministry of Justice to undertake research on the voting experience of voters with a disability at the 2005 general election.

This research was commissioned in order to evaluate the current performance of the Chief Electoral Office in relation to its service to voters with disabilities, and identify areas in which methods, processes and systems might be made more effective and efficient for the future.

TNS was also commissioned by the Chief Electoral Office to conduct a general survey of voters and non-voters for the general election.

Summary of Findings

Voting Behaviour

- *Most voters with disabilities spent less than ten minutes at the polling place.* Seventy percent cast their vote at a polling place on Election Day and 81 percent spent less than ten minutes in the polling place. The majority of voters sampled for the general survey (93%) also spent less than ten minutes in the polling place.
- *Many voters with a disability voted with either family or friends.* Nearly two-thirds (65%) of voters went to the polling place with either family members (43%) or 'other people' (23%). Over half of those sampled (55%) had help casting their vote from people including polling place staff (29%) and family members (17%).
- *Voters with disabilities are comparatively high users of the advance voting option.* Just over one quarter (28%) of voters with a disability voted in advance in 2005 compared to seven percent of voters sampled for the general survey.

Voting Method Awareness

- *Knowledge of the advance voting option was high among voters with a disability.* Eighty-five percent were aware of advance voting compared to 70 percent of voters sampled for the general survey. Of those that were unaware, nearly one third (31%) said they would have voted in advance had they been aware¹. The main sources of information about advance voting were disability organisations (33%) and the EasyVote Pack (23%).
- *Knowledge of postal voting was lower.* Under half of the respondents (42%) were aware of postal voting, with over a third (35%) saying they would have voted by post had they been aware.

Polling Place Staff

- *The majority of voters with disabilities were satisfied with the service provided by the polling place staff and this is consistent with those sampled for the general survey.*

¹ Caution, small base size.

Staff were considered:

- Pleasant and polite by nearly all voters, with 95 percent rating the staff manner as either excellent (61%) or very good (35%).
- To have the ability to answer questions by most voters, with 89 percent rating this factor as either excellent (50%) or very good (39%).

Information from the Chief Electoral Office

- *In general, information provided to voters with a disability by the Chief Electoral Office was seen as useful.* The most common type of information recalled was supplied by the Chief Electoral Office (34%), followed by articles/information in disability newsletters and magazines (19%), and the Sign Language DVD (16%). The survey suggests that the information provided met most voters' needs, with nearly two-thirds (64%) saying they did not require any further information.

Method

Four-hundred self-completion questionnaires were sent out to a selection of disability organisations prior to the election². The organisations were asked to give the questionnaires to their members after the election. The same survey was also undertaken using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) with members of the Association of Blind Citizens. The sample that was obtained is shown below:

	N=
Voters	115
Non-voters	5
Total	120

Due to the small sample size, non-voters are not included in this report.

Conclusions

The survey suggests that overall the service provided to voters with disabilities by the Chief Electoral Office was effective and efficient. Voters were satisfied with the information received and their experiences in the polling place compare well with the favourable responses of those sampled for the general survey.

² These organisations were selected by the Chief Electoral Office.

2.0 Background

New Zealand has a number of electoral agencies with different responsibilities.

The Chief Electoral Office (CEO) is responsible for the preparation and conduct of New Zealand's general elections, by-elections and referenda. This includes responsibility for providing information and services to candidates, political parties, voters and providing advice to Ministers on electoral issues.³

The CEO is a division of the Ministry of Justice based in Wellington and has 15 permanent staff. The Ministry of Justice contract the Electoral Enrolment Centre (a self-contained business unit of New Zealand Post) to compile and maintain electoral rolls. The Electoral Enrolment Centre also conducts the Māori Electoral Option.

The Electoral Enrolment Centre has a team of Registrars of Electors - one for each electorate. The Registrars are responsible for compiling and maintaining the electoral rolls for their electorate. In addition to this, the Registrars conduct enrolment update campaigns prior to all major electoral events and work with local communities to encourage eligible electors to enrol.

The Electoral Commission registers political parties and party logos and receives registered parties' annual returns of donations and election expenses, and allocates election-broadcasting time and funds to eligible political parties. The Commission also produces public information about electoral matters.

Each parliamentary term, the CEO seeks to improve its service to the voting public and to the political parties and candidates who contest elections. The vision of the CEO is 'widespread public and political confidence in the administration of the parliamentary electoral process'.

Objectives of the CEO with regard to voters and non-voters with disabilities are:

- Provide a better service for voters with disabilities
- Improve communication, especially with regard to advance voting
- Make voting more accessible, e.g. car parking and desktop voting (with and without assistance)
- Improve disability awareness through staff training.

The objective is to *improve access to voting at the next general election for people with disabilities, so that wherever possible they can vote independently and in secret.*

TNS were commissioned to undertake the 2005 Voter and Non-Voter survey with a booster survey of those with a disability to review the electoral experience of the eligible voting population and to ascertain why non-voters did not vote. This report is based on the booster survey of those with a disability.

³ www.elections.org.nz

3.0 Research Objectives

The CEO seeks to provide better access to voting for voters with disabilities. This is in line with the objectives of the New Zealand Disability Strategy, and recognises the difficulties faced by many voters with disabilities in accessing polling places and casting their vote independently and in secret.

The objective of this research is to measure the experience of voters and non-voters with a disability. A comparison will be made with voters and non-voters without a disability.

4.0 Research Methodology

A survey of voters and non-voters with a disability was conducted using a mixed method of both Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI), and self-completion questionnaires. CATI was used to conduct interviews with members of the Association of Blind Citizens (ABC), while self-completion surveys were sent out to respondents through other disability organisations.

The surveys were sent out just before the general election, with instructions to the organisations to pass onto members following the election. The self-completion surveys were accepted up until 13/10/2005 and the CATI survey was run from 30/09/05 to 02/10/05. Details of the research methodology follow.

Research Population

The population of interest for the research was enrolled voters and non-voters belonging to a disability organisation. A voter is an eligible enrolled elector who cast a vote at the 2005 General Election and a non-voter is an eligible enrolled elector who did not cast a vote at the 2005 General Election.

Elections New Zealand defines the *eligible* voting population of New Zealand as:

- Eighteen years or older, and
- a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident, and
- having lived in New Zealand for a year or more without leaving the country.

Those *ineligible* to enrol are:

- New Zealand citizens who have not been in New Zealand at all during the last three years, or
- New Zealand permanent residents who have not been in New Zealand in the last 12 months.

Sample Selection

Four-hundred self-completion questionnaires were sent out to five disability organisations: the Deaf Association (n=100), CCS (n=100), Disabled Persons Association (n=100), IHC (n=50), and People First New Zealand Inc (n=50). ABC provided a database of 53 members who agreed to be telephoned for the CATI survey.

Sample size

The sample obtained for the survey is shown overleaf.

	N=
Voter sample	115
Non-voter sample	5
Total	120

Research Instrument – Questionnaire

The questionnaires used for the 2005 disability voter and non-voter surveys are appended. For both surveys, a screener question was used to confirm eligibility and to ensure the respondent answered the correct survey.

CATI Interviews

TNS contacted respondents between the hours of 9am to 9pm, seven days a week. The average interview duration for the voter survey was 8.3 minutes and 9.9 minutes for the non-voter survey. Forty-five questionnaires were conducted using CATI.

Sample Profile - Voters

The sample profile for the voters is shown below:

	%⁴
Gender	
Male	49
Female	51
Age	
18-24 years	5
25 plus years	95
Ethnicity	
NZ European	78
NZ Māori	11
Pacific	3
Asian	1
Other	5

⁴ Please note, due to rounding not all percentages add up to 100 percent.

Only five non-voter questionnaires were completed, therefore because of this low sample size no analysis was undertaken on the non-voter data.

Throughout the report the base sizes are shown for all questions. Caution is needed when interpreting the data for some questions because of small bases sizes.

5.0 Voting

5.1 Voting Method

Voters were asked how they cast their vote. Seventy percent cast their vote at a polling place on Election Day, while just over a quarter (28%) cast their vote in advance⁵.

	%
At a polling place on Election Day	70
In advance before Election Day	28
Post/Postal vote	2
Total (n=)	111

Voters who cast their vote at a polling place were significantly more likely to be male.

5.2 Advance Voting

Voters who did not vote in advance were asked if they were aware of advance voting. Most voters (85%) were aware of this option.

	%
Yes	85
No	15
Total (n=)	98

⁵ Compared to the main survey (ref: "Voter/Non-Voter Satisfaction Survey, 14 October 2005"), a greater proportion of voters without a disability voted on Election Day (94%).

Voters who were unaware of advance voting were asked if they would have voted in advance had they been aware of the option. Nearly one-third (31%) said they would have voted in advance.

	%
Yes	31
No	69
Total (n=)	51

Source of Advance Voting Information

Voters who had heard of advance voting were asked for their information source. One-third of voters (33%) mentioned 'disability organisation', while other frequently mentioned sources included 'EasyVote Pack' (23%) and 'word of mouth' (20%).

	%
Disability organisation	33
EasyVote Pack	23
Word of mouth	20
Radio	15
TV	10
Previous experience	11
Other ⁶	8
Media	4
Library	3
Flyers/mail out	3
Newspaper	3
Total (n=)	80

⁶ 'Other' consists of answers such as: 'city council', 'community notice-board', 'billboards/posters' and 'internet'.

5.3 Postal Voting

Voters who did not vote by post were asked if they were aware of postal voting. Around two-fifths (42%) said they were aware of this option.

	%
Yes	42
No	58
Total (n=)	112

Voters who did not cast a postal vote were asked if they would have done so had they been aware of this option. Just over one-third (35%) said they would have voted in advance.

	%
Yes	35
No	65
Total (n=)	93

6.0 Electoral Information

6.1 Information Received

Voters were asked whether they received any of the following information. Around a third (34%) recall receiving information from the Chief Electoral Office.

	%
Information provided by the Chief Electoral Office	34
Articles/information in disability newsletters and magazines	19
Sign language DVD	16
www.elections.org.nz	14
Brochure on audio cassette	12
Brochure in large print	11
Captions on advertisements	6
Brochure in Braille	4
None of the above	31
Total (n=)	113

6.2 Usefulness of Information Received

For each type of information they recalled, voters were asked whether they found the information useful or not useful.

Sign Language DVD

Nearly all voters (95%) who recalled the Sign Language DVD found it useful.

	%
Useful	95
Not Useful	5
Total (n=)	19

Brochure in Braille

Three-quarters of voters (75%) who recalled the brochure in Braille found it useful.

	%
Useful	75
Not Useful	25
Total (n=)	8

Brochure in Large Print

Most voters (85%) who recalled the brochure in large print found it useful.

	%
Useful	85
Not Useful	15
Total (n=)	13

Brochure on Audio Cassette

Most voters (83%) who recalled the brochure on audio cassette found it useful.

	%
Useful	83
Not Useful	17
Total (n=)	18

Captions on Advertisements

Nearly all voters (93%) who recalled the captions on advertisements found it useful.

	%
Useful	93
Not Useful	7
Total (n=)	27

Website: www.elections.org.nz

Over three-quarters of voters (78%) who recalled the website 'www.elections.org.nz' found it useful.

	%
Useful	78
Not Useful	22
Total (n=)	23

Articles/Information in Disability Newsletters and Magazines

Most voters (89%) who recalled articles and information in disability newsletters and magazines found it useful.

	%
Useful	89
Not Useful	11
Total (n=)	38

Information Provided by the Chief Electoral Office

Nearly all voters (95%) who recalled the information provided by the Chief Electoral Office found it useful.

	%
Useful	95
Not Useful	5
Total (n=)	59

6.3 Additional Information Sought

Voters were asked if there was any additional information about voting they would have liked. Nearly two-thirds of voters (64%) said they required no further information. Voters who did want more information requested information such as 'more information on the EasyVote Card' (10%) and 'polling place locations' (6%).

	%
More information on the EasyVote Card	10
Polling place locations	6
Explanation of voting system (MMP)	4
Information to be in Braille	4
Information on how polling places' facilities deal with my disability	4
Information to be in large print	2
0800 number for general information	2
More information via TV	2
More information via radio	2
Prefer electronic advice	2
No further information required	63
Total (n=)	51

7.0 Voting Experience

7.1 Time of Day Voted

Voters were asked what time of day they voted. Nearly half of the voters (49%) cast their vote between 10am and 1pm, with one-fifth of the voters (20%) casting their vote between 10am and 11am⁷.

	%
9am – 10am	14
10am – 11am	20
11am – 12pm	15
12pm – 1pm	15
1pm – 2pm	9
2pm – 3pm	10
3pm – 4pm	6
4pm – 5pm	7
5pm – 6pm	4
6pm +	1
Total (n=)	110

⁷ This range is similar to the main survey.

7.2 Length of Time at Polling Place

Voters were asked how long they spent at the polling place. Just over half of the voters (53%) spent between five and ten minutes there, while just under a third (29%) spent less than five minutes⁸.

	%
Up to 5 minutes	29
5 – 10 minutes	53
11 – 15 minutes	8
16 – 20 minutes	4
21 – 25 minutes	1
26 – 30 minutes	4
More than 30 minutes	2
Total (n=)	108

7.3 Accompaniment to Polling Place

Voters were asked whether they went to the polling place by themselves or with other people. Over two-fifths of voters (43%) went to the polling place with family members, around a third (35%) went alone, and 23 percent with other people (not family)⁹.

	%
With family members	43
By myself	35
With other people	23
Total (n=)	110

Those that went to the polling place with **family members** were significantly more likely to be female.

⁸ In the main survey, voters without a disability were significantly more likely to spend less than five minutes at the polling place (73%) than voters with a disability in this survey (29%).

⁹ In the main survey, voters without a disability were significantly more likely to go to the polling place alone (47%).

7.4 Help with Voting

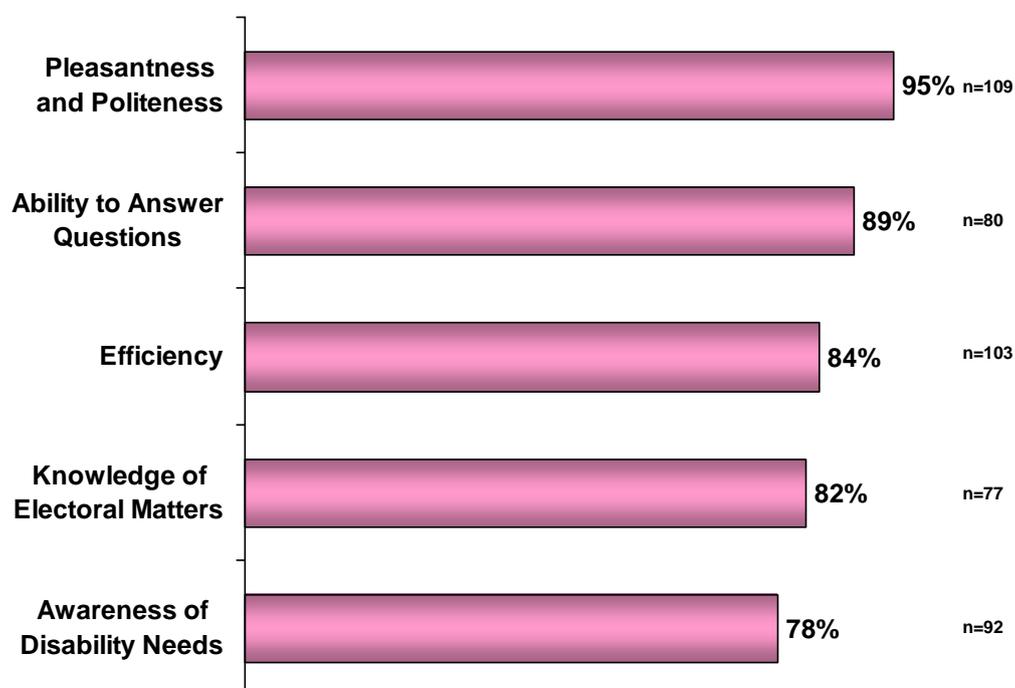
Voters were asked whether they had any help casting their vote. Nearly one-third (29%) had help from polling place staff, while forty-five percent of voters did not have any assistance in casting their vote.

	%
Did not have assistance	45
Polling place staff	29
Family member	17
Friends	5
Other	3
Support worker	2
Neighbour	2
Total (n=)	112

7.5 Overview of Electoral Staff

Voters were asked to rate election staff on aspects of their service delivery. The combined very good and excellent rating for each of the service delivery aspects are shown below.

Electoral Staff Ratings



Pleasantness and Politeness

The election staff were considered pleasant and polite by nearly all voters, with 95 percent¹⁰ rating the staff manner as either excellent (61%) or very good (35%).

	%
Excellent	61
Very Good	35
Neither	3
Poor	2
Very Poor	-
Total (n=)	109

¹⁰ N.B. due to rounding the combined 'excellent' and 'very good' total is 95 percent not 96 percent.

Males were significantly more likely to rate the pleasantness and politeness of electoral staff as **excellent**.

Ability to Answer Questions

The election staff were rated highly on their ability to answer questions by most voters, with 89 percent rating the staff as either excellent (50%) or very good (39%).

	%
Excellent	50
Very Good	39
Neither	8
Poor	4
Very Poor	-
Total (n=)	80

Knowledge of Electoral Matters

The election staff were rated highly on their knowledge of electoral matters by most voters, with 82 percent rating the staff as either excellent (42%) or very good (40%).

	%
Excellent	42
Very Good	40
Neither	12
Poor	4
Very Poor	3
Total (n=)	77

Efficiency

The election staff were rated highly on their efficiency by most voters, with eighty-four percent rating the staff as either excellent (50%) or very good (34%)¹¹.

	%
Excellent	50
Very Good	34
Neither	12
Poor	3
Very Poor	1
Total (n=)	103

Awareness of Disability Needs

The election staff were rated highly on their awareness of disability needs, with seventy-eight percent ¹²rating the staff as either excellent (45%) or very good (34%).

	%
Excellent	45
Very Good	34
Neither	11
Poor	5
Very Poor	5
Total (n=)	92

¹¹ In the main survey, voters without a disability were significantly more likely than voters with a disability in this survey to rate the efficiency of election staff as very good or excellent (96%).

¹² N.B. due to rounding the combined 'excellent' and 'very good' total is 78 percent not 79 percent.

8.0 Polling Place Facilities

8.1 Voting Facilities

Voters were asked if they recalled seeing specific facilities at the polling place where they cast their vote. Over two-thirds of voters (68%) noticed the accessible doorways and corridors, while over half of the voters noticed the ramp for wheelchair access (59%), and the accessible route from the car park to the entrance (57%).

	%
Accessible doorways and corridors	68
Ramp for wheelchair access	59
Accessible route from the car park to the entrance	57
Desk voting facilities	38
Disabled car parking space	37
International symbol of access	24
Accessible with assistance symbol	15
Total (n=)	101

8.2 Satisfaction with Voting Facilities

Voters were asked how satisfied they were with the facilities at the polling place. Most voters (82%)¹³ were either very satisfied (42%) or satisfied (39%).

	%
Very satisfied	42
Satisfied	39
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	15
Dissatisfied	2
Very dissatisfied	2
Total (n=)	109

¹³ N.B. due to rounding the combined 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied' total is 82 percent not 81 percent.

9.0 Overview of Disability Voters/Non-Voters

This section summarises the responses from those that reported having a disability that had lasted longer than six months in the main 2005 Voter/Non-Voter survey.

	Total Voters (%)	Total Non-Voters (%)
Ordinary Vote	87	N/A
Special Vote	13	N/A
Voted same place 2002	48	N/A
Voting time:		
Before 11am	40	N/A
11-1pm	27	N/A
1-3pm	15	N/A
3-5pm	15	N/A
5-7pm	3	N/A
Queued	15	N/A
Didn't queue	85	N/A
Took EasyVote card	85	N/A
Time in polling place:		
Under 5 minutes	68	N/A
5-10 minutes	23	N/A
Reasonable time	99	N/A
Rating of Polling Place (very good to excellent):		
Convenience	96	N/A
Outside Signage	91	N/A
Layout	98	N/A
How well-equipped was booth	99	N/A
Privacy	92	N/A
Staff:		
Pleasantness and politeness	97	N/A
Ability to answer questions	94	N/A
Efficiency	97	N/A

	Total Voters (%)	Total Non-Voters (%)
Timing of decision not to vote:		
Election Day	N/A	47
1 week before	N/A	27
More than 1 month before	N/A	20
Advertising		
Knowledge of nearest polling place	N/A	94
Recall electoral advertising	76	61
Heard advertising on EasyVote card	70	50
Heard advertising on advance voting	77	65
Heard advertising on voting close to home	59	50
EasyVote Pack		
Recall receiving EasyVote Pack	98	100
Read EasyVote Pack	93	72
Found EasyVote Pack useful	90	77
Satisfied/very satisfied with EasyVote Pack	93	77
Election Night Results		
Followed results on Election Night	78	50
Followed results on television	100	78
Satisfied with timeliness of result (satisfied or very satisfied)	76	78

Appendix

Conditions of Use of Material

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Unless otherwise specified, TNS New Zealand shall hold all questionnaires and field records for a period of three months and electronic records for a period of not less than two years

Respondent Confidentiality

To preserve confidentiality of voters, video tapes of the qualitative research process supplied to clients are for internal company use only and must not be exposed to public scrutiny or be used in any way in the public arena. The tape mechanism must be destroyed before disposal.