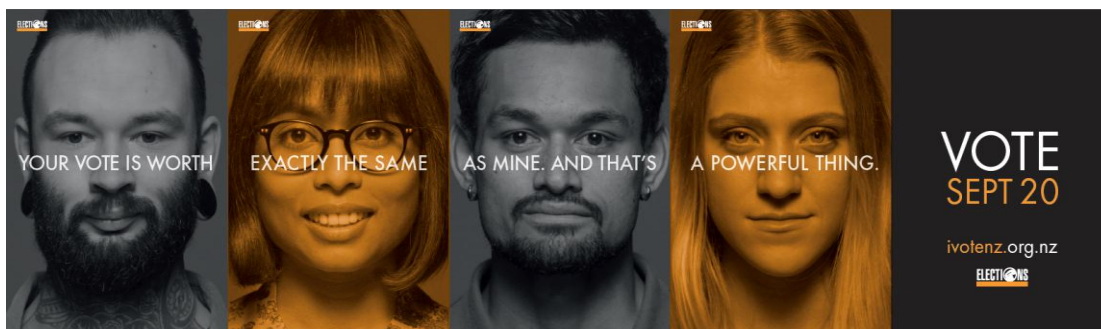

REPORT OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION ON THE 2014 GENERAL ELECTION

PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 8(1)
OF THE ELECTORAL ACT 1993
MARCH 2015



26 March 2015

Hon Amy Adams
Minister of Justice

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MAIN POINTS

Much needs to be done

Administratively, the 2014 general election was a success. The Electoral Commission ('the Commission') met all its performance objectives and voters reported high levels of satisfaction with the services they received. However, notwithstanding this, the Commission is clear that much work is required if New Zealand's democracy is to remain healthy and its electoral administration fit for purpose.

As always, the Commission has identified many lessons, some major, some minor, arising from its review of the election and these are detailed in this report. But, in the Commission's view, there are two critical priorities: (1) promoting voter participation; and (2) finding ways to meet the changing needs and expectations of voters, exemplified in part at this election by the massive increase in the number voting before election day, an increase which has fundamental implications for every aspect of electoral administration.

Promoting voter participation needs to become a whole-of-Government priority

Turnout has been in decline in most developed democracies over the last 30 years, but New Zealand's decline has been particularly steep and persistent. At the 2011 election, turnout as a percentage of those eligible to enrol dropped to 69.57%, the lowest recorded at a New Zealand Parliamentary election since the adoption of universal suffrage in 1893. The 2014 result, 72.14%, is the second lowest. This small increase, while welcome, is no cause for comfort. New Zealand has a serious problem with declining voter participation.

This is the first election at which the Commission has been able to produce turnout statistics by age and Māori and non-Māori descent. What this information and the enrolment statistics show is that: those under the age of 50 are less likely to enrol and vote than the rest of the population; those under the age of 34 are significantly less likely to enrol and vote; those who have identified as being of Māori descent on the general roll are less likely to vote than non-Māori of the same age; those on

the Māori roll are less likely to vote than Māori of the same age on the general roll; and electorates with high populations of Pasifika and Asian New Zealanders have low participation. Low participation is not just confined to the young (18-24 year olds) but is spreading up through the age ranges. The last three general elections have seen enrolment rates fall in all age groups between the ages of 18 and 39. The trend appears to show that enrolment and voting is a habit which needs to be formed young and if it is not non-engagement persists as one ages. This generational effect, with each new generation being less likely than its predecessor to enrol and vote, means that, unless something changes, we can expect participation to worsen.

The turnout result for the 2011 election was a turning point for the Commission. Before then, the Commission saw its role as making voting as accessible as possible. After 2011 it determined that it also needed to be championing participation.

For the 2014 election, the Commission sought to promote public discussion about the importance of participation, promoted research on the subject, and undertook a modest voter motivation campaign. The Commission was pleased with the level of public discussion, particularly in the media, about the importance of taking part in elections and by the generally supportive response to its voter motivation campaign. However, clearly, 2014 was just a beginning and there is much more that needs to be done.

In the Commission's view, maintaining a healthy democracy should be regarded as a matter of strategic national interest. A healthy democracy is in everyone's interest. It is a quintessential public good. However, it is not something New Zealanders can afford to take for granted. The values and culture that underpin it need to be learned and nurtured. Turning the current trend around will not be easy. It certainly is not something the Commission can achieve alone. A co-ordinated and concerted effort will be required across a number of fronts involving a number of agencies. For this reason, the Commission believes that promoting high participation in elections needs to be made a whole-of-Government priority with multi-party support and there needs to be a national strategy for promoting participation in our democracy.

Finding ways to meet the changing needs and expectations of voters

The defining feature of the 2014 election was the growth in advance voting. Overall, 29.3% of those who voted in 2014 did so before election day (compared with 14.7% in 2011). More people voted in the last three days of advance voting than in the entirety of the advance voting period in 2011. The ability to vote early proved popular across all electorates and age groups and we can expect further substantial growth in 2017.

The size of the increase was a surprise to the Commission. Before 2014, the numbers voting in advance had increased significantly (by about 25% on average) from election to election. In 2014 the number increased by 100%. The Commission and its staff were thrilled by this turnout. However, it did place staff and resources under huge pressure. That staff delivered a great service to early voters and that the preliminary count of advance votes was completed on time was a testament to the hard work, resilience, and commitment of those staff. However, things will need to change for 2017.

The numbers voting in advance in 2014 represents a fundamental shift in voter behaviour which has major implications for staffing, training, properties, supplies, enrolment, vote issuing, the preliminary count, advertising and public information about voting places and candidates (in short, all aspects of electoral administration). It has legislative implications not only for the administration of elections but also, of course, for campaign rules.

The Commission believes there is considerable scope to use technology to modernise, integrate and make more relevant the delivery of enrolment and voting services.

Voters' needs and expectations are changing. Voters are leaving it until closer to the election to enrol and many expect to be able to enrol and vote at the same time. They rightly expect from the Commission a simple, coherent enrolment and voting experience with high integrity.

Some voters find aspects of the enrolment and voting process complex. Postal services, while currently a core feature of electoral administration processes, are in decline and voters are increasingly expecting to conduct business through digital channels.

Developing proposals for a programme of reform, including what might be feasibly achieved in time for 2017, is a major piece of work which the Commission is currently undertaking. We aim to be in a position to provide further high level proposals to the Government by the end of July 2015. Detailed programme design work would need to be completed before the end of the year. We are conscious that any reform would almost certainly require legislative change and that legislation affecting the 2017 election should be in place no later than the end of 2016.

Looking forward

As well as the work that the Commission aims to undertake to improve enrolment and voting services for the next election, the Commission will also be assisting the Justice and Electoral Committee with its Inquiry into the 2014 general election, conducting the Northland by-election and two postal referendums on the New Zealand flag.

The Government has indicated that e-voting for parliamentary elections will not be a priority for 2017. The Commission will continue to monitor overseas developments in electronic voting.

The last legal date for the 2017 general election is 18 November 2017.

Structure of the report

The Commission's report on the 2014 general election has three parts. The first part sets out the context and strategy for 2014. The second covers the delivery of the election including information and statistics. Part three sets out the key legislative and administrative issues that have come out of the 2014 general election that have implications for future elections. It also outlines the work that the Commission is doing ahead of the next general election to identify improvements to enrolment and voting services.

A summary of recommendations is attached as **Annex A**.



Hon Sir Hugh Williams QC
Chair



Jane Huria
Deputy Chair



Robert Peden
Chief Electoral Officer

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PART 1: CONTEXT AND STRATEGY FOR 2014

MANDATE

1. The general election, held on 20 September 2014, was the first conducted following the reforms establishing the Electoral Commission as the single electoral agency responsible for all aspects of parliamentary electoral administration (enrolment and voting).
2. In the first phase of reform, the Commission, an independent Crown entity, was formed on 1 October 2010 from its predecessor agencies, the former Chief Electoral Office and Electoral Commission. The second stage of reform was completed on 1 July 2012 with the transfer of responsibility for the enrolment functions to the Commission.
3. The Commission is now responsible for the whole field of administration of parliamentary elections and referendums, the enrolment of electors, the allocation of time and money for the broadcast of election programmes, servicing the work of the Representation Commission, and the provision of advice, reports and public education on electoral matters. The Commission also assists electoral agencies of other countries on a reciprocal basis with their electoral events.
4. The statutory objective of the Commission is:
“to administer the electoral system impartially, efficiently, effectively, and in a way that -
 - (a) facilitates participation in parliamentary democracy; and
 - (b) promotes understanding of the electoral system and associated matters; and
 - (c) maintains confidence in the administration of the electoral system”
(section 4C Electoral Act 1993).
5. The Commission wants New Zealanders to better understand their electoral system, to have confidence in our administration of their electoral laws, to find enrolling and voting easy, and to value and exercise their right to vote. In short, we want New Zealanders to trust, value and take part in parliamentary elections.

CONTEXT AND STRATEGY FOR 2014

6. Planning for the 2014 general election was shaped by key lessons from the 2011 election regarding participation, overseas and advance voting, and services to voters with disabilities. It was also shaped by some key law changes enacted by Parliament and some of the additional electoral events, structural changes and legal challenges that arose during the electoral cycle.
7. Planning for the 2014 election within the Commission began immediately after its completion of the 2011 election.
8. The key planning assumption was that the 2014 general election would be held in the second half of 2014. Our strategy, planning and timetables reflected that assumption (24 January 2015 was the last possible date under the law).
9. Planning and preparations for this election were challenging because of the factors mentioned in paragraph 6 above including:
 - The work necessary to take over statutory responsibility for enrolment from the Chief Registrar of Electors of New Zealand Post from 1 July 2012;

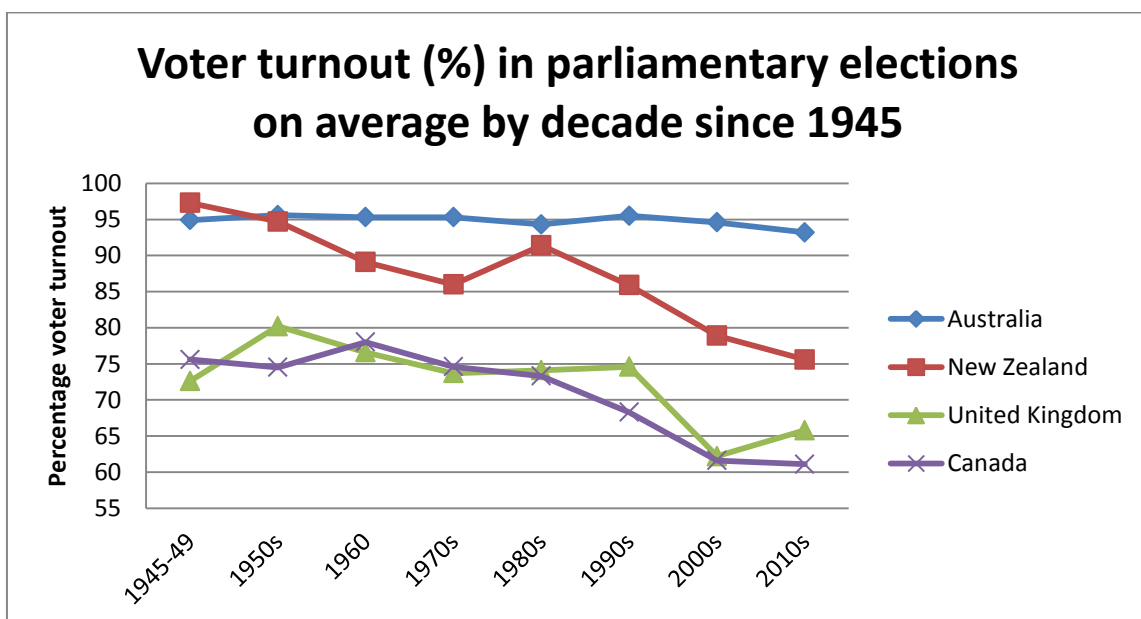
- Conduct of the 2013 Māori Electoral Option (25 March until 24 July 2013);
- Administrative support for the Representation Commission (October 2013 to April 2014) to determine the number and boundaries of electorates for the 2014 and 2017 elections;
- Conducting the Citizens Initiated Postal Referendum on Asset Sales (22 November to 13 December 2013);
- Conducting two by-elections in 2013 in Ikaroa-Rāwhiti (June) and Christchurch East (November);
- Seven sets of litigation undertaken against the Commission regarding election advertising and broadcasting rules, the broadcasting allocation and eligibility of sentenced prisoners to vote; and
- The statutory review of MMP.

Review of MMP

10. The review of MMP commenced immediately following the 2011 election, involved extensive public consultation and resulted in a report to the Minister of Justice in October 2012.
11. The recommendations are yet to be considered by Parliament. The Commission continues to consider that the recommendations for change, for the reasons discussed in the full report (available at www.elections.org.nz), would improve New Zealand's voting system and for convenience repeats the recommendations in **Annex B**.

Participation

12. New Zealand used to be a world leader in electoral participation. Up until the mid-1980's, generally more than 80% of estimated eligible electors voted.
13. As shown in the table below, turnout has been in decline in most developed democracies over the last 30 years, but New Zealand's decline has been particularly steep and consistent.



Source: Data from International IDEA database

14. At the 2011 election, turnout as a percentage of those eligible to enrol dropped to 69.57%, the lowest recorded at a New Zealand Parliamentary election since the adoption of universal suffrage in 1893¹.
15. The turnout result for the 2011 election was a turning point for the Commission. Before then, the Commission saw its role as making voting as accessible as possible. After 2011, it determined that it also needed to champion participation. Even though the Commission does not have control over all the variables which affect turnout, it decided it had to promote voter participation and lead efforts to halt and reverse the decline.
16. In 2012, the Commission decided to make promoting participation a key objective to be achieved over the next 9-12 years.
17. The Commission's aim in facilitating participation in parliamentary elections was for:
 - (a) 90.5 - 92.5% of eligible New Zealanders to be enrolled by election day for the 2014 election;
 - (b) 69.6 - 75% of eligible New Zealanders voting in the 2014 general election.
18. On 15 July 2013, the Commission published its strategy for promoting participation through to the 2014 election focusing on three key streams of work:
 - starting a national discussion on the implications of declining voter participation;
 - providing public information and education resources that facilitate participation; and
 - research on what affects participation.
19. This strategy recognised that, with no additional funding for participation initiatives, the Commission would need to reallocate resources and prioritise carefully.
20. Part 2 of this report outlines some specific initiatives that were undertaken as part of the participation strategy and how the objective of encouraging participation was delivered through the Commission's outreach and communications activities.
21. In Part 3 of this report, the Commission outlines its participation objectives for 2017 and its hope that a broad long-term voter participation strategy will become a whole of Government priority.

Overseas voting

22. In 2011, overseas voting fell by 35% to 21,496 (33,278 in 2008). Overseas voters reported increasing difficulties finding the required fax machines. The Commission wanted to find ways to make it easier for overseas voters to return their voting papers.
23. Following the 2011 election, the Commission recommended regulatory change to enable overseas voters to scan and upload their voting papers to a secure website rather than having to rely on the existing methods of post, fax, or voting at a diplomatic post. In 2013, amendments to the Electoral Regulations 1996 were made to enable the overseas upload of voting papers and the Commission prepared to develop and test the new system and subject

¹ Turnout is best discussed on the basis of estimated age-eligible turnout, rather than enrolled turnout, as this controls for differences in enrolment levels and gives a more accurate picture of public engagement. However, turnout of voters on the Māori roll can only be calculated as a percentage of enrolled voters.

it to a security review, system accreditation and certification prior to going live. We planned on the basis that secure upload would overtake postal and fax delivery as the most preferred method for overseas voters to return their voting papers.

Advance voting

24. Before 2014, the numbers voting in advance had increased by about 25% on average from election to election. In 2011, 14.7% of voters voted in advance. The Commission prepared for the 2014 election anticipating that advance voting would grow to 20% of voters. In 2014, 29.3% voted in advance. The Commission aimed to improve advance voting services and to locate voting places in highly visible and high traffic locations to make advance voting more accessible.
25. As outlined in more detail in Part 3, the growth in demand for advance voting has important implications for future elections.
26. Following the 2011 election, the Commission recommended that candidate scrutineers be allowed at advance voting places and that it would be timely to review the regulation of election advertising in the vicinity of advance voting places. No changes were made to the advertising rules but changes were made to the legislation to enable scrutineers to observe advance voting.

Blind and visually impaired voters

27. Blind and visually impaired voters had been calling for access to a voting method that enabled them to vote independently in secret like other voters, rather than having to rely on someone else to mark their paper according to their instructions.
28. The Commission shared their concerns and recommended legislative change to enable dictation voting for blind and visually impaired voters and voters that have a physical disability that means they are unable to mark their ballot paper without assistance. The regulatory changes were made in 2014 and the Commission developed and tested the service in close collaboration with the blind and vision impaired community. The process is described in detail in paragraphs 283-289.

Security of ballot papers

29. At the Western Australian Senate election in 2013, it was found in the course of a recount that 1,300 ballot papers had disappeared without explanation. The election had to be held again at a cost of \$20m and the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) was subject to severe public and political criticism. The Commission liaised with AEC to determine lessons learned and reviewed its instructions and training to reinforce the importance of security of ballot papers in light of the lessons from the Western Australian Senate contest. There were no breaches of security in 2014.

March 2014 legislative change

30. For the first time since 2002, the Commission was planning major changes to its enrolment and voting processes, all of which required legislative change to proceed. They included:
 - full online enrolment;
 - the EasyVote Express proposal (enabling bar codes on EasyVote cards to record who had voted rather than manually marking rolls); and

- enabling blind and disabled voters to vote in secret through a new telephone dictation voting process.
31. The Commission always recommends that legislation affecting the administration of an election is enacted by the end of November in year two of the election cycle. However, for 2014 we had to prepare on the basis that it would likely be unclear until March 2014 whether proposed legislation would be enacted. Having uncertainty about legislative settings that would have significant implications for the conduct of the election made preparations more difficult.
 32. Although EasyVote Express did not proceed, in 2014 Parliament enacted a new requirement for voters to verbally give or confirm their name prior to being issued with an ordinary voting paper. Considerable time and testing went into the implementation of this new requirement to ensure adequate training for staff on the new process and a good voting experience for voters.
 33. The Commission conducted a series of simulations using members of the public as voters to test various ways in which the new requirement could be delivered. During simulations, several variants were tested. The questions were posed at different points during the issuing process. The clear results from the simulations were that asking voters to state their name gives rise to a range of issues related to people having different names on the electoral roll to those they commonly use. The feedback was also that requiring a person to state their name when they had presented an EasyVote card appeared confrontational and was particularly difficult for persons with English as a second language or a disability.
 34. The process adopted was for the electoral official to say the name of the voter and ask the voter to verbally confirm it prior to marking the roll and issuing the voting paper. This process provided for the additional confirmation from the voter about their identity as well as ensuring the accuracy of the marking of the roll.

Contingency planning

35. Returning Officers were required to develop business continuity and disaster recovery plans for localised events (for example, access being lost to a remote voting place because of a bridge being washed out). Preparations included having key contact details in place for local civil defence authorities, local radio stations, and suppliers of essential services to electorate headquarters.
36. The Commission developed a Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Strategy. Multiple levels of redundancy were incorporated into IT system design to ensure there was no one single point of failure for critical systems. Key IT infrastructure was hosted by Revera at highly resilient data-centres in Auckland and Wellington that had been approved by the Department of Internal Affairs.
37. If the Commission's national office was inaccessible during the critical election period, several back-up sites were available to relocate to, including the National Crisis Management Centre below the Beehive if appropriate.

Adjournment of polling in an emergency

38. Section 195 of the Act provides for the Commission to adjourn voting at a polling place if voting cannot proceed there because of an emergency. The constitutional and political implications of this power, which predates MMP, are significant. Under MMP, because of the single writ and the party vote, if voting has to be adjourned in even a single polling place, the election of all members of Parliament and, therefore, the formation of Government is delayed for the period of the adjournment. Section 195 of the Act only enables adjournment of polling in an emergency on a voting place by voting place basis. It does not allow nationwide adjournment and does not deal with the impact of adjournment in one area on the release of results elsewhere.
39. Before the 2011 election, following consultation with the Minister of Justice, leaders of parliamentary political parties and officials from affected agencies, the Commission prepared a paper that was tabled in Parliament entitled 'Electoral Commission Plans for Managing Adjournment of Polling in an Emergency'. The paper sets out the measures the Commission would take should an emergency occur in the lead-up to or on polling day.
40. After 2011, the Commission recommended further consideration of whether or not the current emergency provisions are adequate.
41. As there were no changes to the provisions in the Act for dealing with emergencies, we proposed the same approach for the 2014. Leaders of parliamentary political parties were advised of the arrangements and a paper outlining the plans was made available at www.elections.org.nz.
42. We understand that some preliminary work has been undertaken lead by the Ministry of Justice and remain of the view that modernisation of the emergency provisions is timely.
43. Provisions for dealing with the impacts of an emergency on the election raise difficult constitutional and political issues that go beyond the mandate of the Commission. The Commission still considers that that there is a need for consideration as to whether the current emergency provisions are adequate.

PART 2: THE DELIVERY OF THE ELECTION

Announcement and election timetable

44. The Prime Minister announced the date of the 2014 general election (20 September) on Monday 10 March 2014. The early announcement of the date for the election was welcome as it enabled the Commission to plan with certainty. This was particularly advantageous in terms of the employment of electoral staff, the booking of voting places and the distribution of equipment and supplies.
45. A list of the key dates for the general election is attached at **Annex C**.

ESTABLISHING TEMPORARY FIELD STRUCTURE

46. One of the challenges with administering parliamentary elections is the absence of a permanent field structure for the delivery of the election. For each election, alongside complying with the statutory timelines and processes required to deliver the election, it is necessary to recruit and train a very large number of staff, find Returning Officers' headquarters, and roll out the information and communication systems.

Wider public sector support

47. The Electoral Act requires state sector Chief Executives to take account of the Government's interest in a whole-of-Government approach to electoral administration when considering requests from the Commission for assistance.
48. Senior management roles for the general election offer opportunities for state sector employees to gain valuable experience of benefit to them and their organisation. In 2014 the Commission succeeded in providing the training and development opportunities these highly operational roles offer, to 19 secondees, including 11 public servants on secondment to senior management roles from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Development including Child, Youth and Family Services, the Department of Corrections and Statistics New Zealand. The secondees performed very well and proved the benefits of drawing upon the skills, experience and culture within the public service to find senior electoral officials.
49. The Commission will again present the opportunities to public service agencies in 2017 but recognises the need to ensure that the rates of pay are sufficiently attractive.
50. Five of the 34 electorate headquarters buildings were provided from within the public sector at rentals below commercial rates (10 of 33 buildings in 2011). The Ministry of Justice also provided valuable assistance in the area of property procurement and staff to assist the Commission's legal/policy team.

Recruitment of field staff

51. Field recruitment processes seek to meet public service recruitment protocols while taking account of the exigencies of recruiting large numbers of temporary staff, the majority of whom are employed for one day. The more senior the position being filled, the more rigorous the process used. All positions were advertised and all applicants had to make a formal application.

52. Regional Managers were appointed by August 2013 and Returning Officers were recruited in late 2013 and trained in April and June/July 2014. While Returning Officers were appointed to the role by the end of 2013, the electorate to which they were officially designated was unknown until the conclusion of the Representation Commission's redistribution of the electorate boundaries on 17 April 2014.
53. Operations and Human Resources Managers were recruited by the end of May 2014 and received training in June/July 2014. Other electorate headquarters staff and election day staff were recruited from 6 June 2014.
54. The Commission recruited nearly 17,000 people, with 14,854 people across the country employed to work in voting places on election day. Some of these people also worked in advance voting places or in electorate headquarters before and after election day. In total there were 4,433 staff who worked on a casual basis either in electorate headquarters or in advance voting places.
55. An online application system which was introduced for the first time in 2011 managed 94% of the 26,658 applications that were received and enabled the 14,854 election day staff to be paid within five days of election day.
56. There has been no increase in election day staff pay rates since 2008 despite the Commission requiring more self-study and training time to be applied by each staff member. Staff working in each electorate headquarters have also had very little increase in pay rates since 2008. While we were able to attract good calibre staff, the feedback we got was that although many see the work in terms of public and community service, pay rates especially in some parts of the country such as Auckland and Wellington, seem to be too low for the effort and responsibility required.
57. The Commission will need to review the rates of pay for the 2017 general election to ensure staff are appropriately remunerated for what are very important and complex roles. Given the high number of staff the Commission employs, even a small increase will have a significant financial impact.

Returning Officers' electorate headquarters

58. Returning Officers were housed in 34 sites around the country. There are administrative advantages in Returning Officers sharing headquarters even though this means some Returning Officers are located outside their electorates. Each Returning Officer required about 500 square metres of floor space for a period of nine months.
59. Finding suitable properties to house the seven Christchurch electorate headquarters remained challenging. After contacting a number of government agencies, we managed to obtain an empty school to house six electorates through the Ministry of Education, and the remaining electorate was accommodated in a temporarily vacant Ministry of Justice property.

General Election Technology Programme

60. Returning Officers' headquarters were connected to a secure network which allowed them to access the Commission's Election Management System ("EMS"), Electronic Roll Scrutiny Application ("ERSA") and intranet. The speed of these network connections was significantly increased for this election to allow for the transmission of scanned roll data. Setting up Returning Officers' headquarters and connecting them to the network was a major exercise taking over six weeks to complete.

61. EMS is the Commission's core business application. As well as managing the recording of election results, the nomination process and data for ballot papers and the EasyVote pack, it captures information about voting places, special votes, staff and supplies. It is used to generate ballot papers for printing, determine voting place staff structures, allocate staff to voting places, provide payroll information, and determine the distribution of hundreds of tonnes of field supplies.
62. EMS is a legacy system that is increasingly vulnerable to security and maintenance risks. The Commission's intention is to replace the election management system in time for the 2017 general election. The development of a replacement system is now underway.
63. ERSA was a new system built for the 2014 election to record the distribution of certified electoral rolls to and from voting places and to conduct the scrutiny of the rolls electronically. Certified rolls used in voting places were scanned and loaded into the ERSA system. The system used optical mark recognition to identify which names had been marked off and record them on an electronic master roll. The system was also used to record special voters on the master roll, to identify apparent dual voters and to produce the printed master rolls which are made available for inspection at Registrars of Electors' offices. ERSA was subject to a number of operational tests and dress rehearsals prior to being deployed for the general election – including deployment alongside the manual process during the 2013 Christchurch East by-election. ERSA operated very successfully at the election.
64. Six operational tests and dress rehearsals for election night and the official count were held between May and August 2014.
65. The Commission also reviewed and improved its cyber security and privacy policies and practices, and independent security reviews of all public-facing systems were carried out.

Training for Returning Officers, Operations Managers and Human Resource Managers

66. A centralised model for training Returning Officers and their Operations and Human Resources Managers was implemented for the 2014 election, as it was in 2008 and 2011. Returning Officers attended three days of induction training in April 2014. Returning Officers and their Managers attended training for four days in June/July 2014. The April and June training were delivered nationally at a model electorate headquarters, which was then used as the headquarters for the Wellington Central and Rongotai electorates. This enabled a realistic hands-on training experience.
67. The early announcement of the date of the election enabled Returning Officer training to be scheduled closer to the election. The training was developed and delivered with considerable assistance from more than 20 experienced field staff. Film footage obtained during the 2011 election and through simulations was a key element in delivering training to staff performing many different roles. 85% of staff agreed in the post-election survey that the training was effective preparation for their role.
68. Each Regional Manager conducted follow-up training sessions at regional meetings with their teams during August and September 2014. This is an area in which significant opportunity lies. We will expand the regional training programme in the future with an emphasis on targeting services to the local community (e.g. through recruitment and voting place selection) and on post-election tasks.

69. The series of operational tests and dress rehearsals conducted between May and August provided further opportunities for Returning Officers, Managers and key headquarters personnel to upskill on complex or high-risk systems and processes.

Training for election day staff

70. Election day staff training is critical to the success of a parliamentary election and is a major logistical exercise.
71. Over 16,000 staff were trained in the two and a half weeks before election day. Their role, as well as being constitutionally important, is complex and demanding. The election happens once every three years and there is only one chance to get the day right. Because many election day staff work during the week, training is generally delivered in the evenings or weekends.
72. Training for issuing staff and managers is comprehensive. In 2014, staff were required to watch a DVD, read an instruction manual and complete a study guide prior to attending a face-to-face training session. Ordinary Issuing Officers received 2 hours, Special Issuing Officers 3.25 hours and Voting Place Managers almost 5 hours of training.
73. The Commission required each electorate to hire at least three trainers and to make use of an assistant to support the practical elements of the training delivery. Some rural electorates had as many as ten trainers to cover the geographic spread of staff requiring training. In these instances, training was delivered within the local community.
74. A wide variety of content was covered across the various training mediums. The primary aims were for staff to:
- understand the responsibilities, expectations and importance of their role;
 - understand how their role fits into wider voting services being delivered;
 - practice the key tasks they will undertake in accordance with legislative and operational requirements; and
 - have an awareness of safety, privacy and security issues - for both people and voting materials.
75. An online survey was completed by close to 7,500 advance voting and election day staff. 90% agreed the training adequately prepared them for their role and 98% agreed they felt able to provide a high level of service to voters.
76. Training remains a key area of attention for 2017, in particular, continuing to find opportunities for staff to practice the main components of their role and increasing understanding of enrolment matters.

FINANCE

77. The costs in the 2014/15 financial year for enrolment and the conduct of the 2014 general election are expected to be \$35.117m. This compares to \$32.774m in 2011/12 for the 2011 general election (excluding the costs attributable to the MMP referendum held with the 2011 general election), and to \$30.333m in the 2009 financial year for the 2008 general election.

BOUNDARIES

78. The Representation Commission convened in October 2013 and declared new boundaries for the 2014 and 2017 elections on 17 April 2014. Continued population growth in the Auckland region meant the creation of the Upper Harbour and Kelston electorates and the absorption of the Waitakere electorate in the west of Auckland. There was also a significant redraw of the electorate boundaries in the Christchurch region due to population movement following the Canterbury earthquakes.
79. There are now a total of 71 electorates - 64 general electorates and seven Māori electorates.
80. The Chief Electoral Officer is an ex officio member of the Representation Commission and the Electoral Commission provides the Commission's secretariat and administrative support.
81. Before the boundaries can be fixed the Act prescribes that proposed boundaries must be available for public inspection and submissions may be made on the proposed boundaries by way of objections and counter-objections. There is also a requirement for the objections to be summarised and made available for public inspection. 2,000 individuals participated in the submission process by way of objections, counter-objections, form submissions or petitions.
82. Instead of the current requirement to summarise the objections to proposed electoral boundaries, the Commission recommends amendment to enable all submissions to be made publicly available online. This would provide greater transparency and the submissions could be made available to the public within a shorter timeframe as there would be no need to complete a summary of each objection. Replacing printed summaries of objections with the online publication of objections would require changes to section 38 of the Act.
83. The 2013/14 boundary review was about 12 months later than scheduled due to the postponement of the 2011 census of population and dwellings. When the boundaries are finalised in an election year there is an increased risk of confusion for voters if they are not aware their electorate boundaries have changed. 387,000 people (approximately 9% of the total electoral population) changed electorates as a result of the boundary review. The Electoral notified those electors whose electorate had changed in the enrolment update pack, sent to all electors in June, and in the EasyVote pack, sent to electors prior to the election.
84. A further recommendation that would affect the timing of the boundary review is contained in the section on service to Māori voters at paragraphs 173-180 on page 21.

PROMOTING PARTICIPATION

85. As outlined in Part 1, in July 2013 the Commission published its strategy for promoting participation through to the 2014 election focusing on three key streams of work:
 - starting a national discussion on the implications of declining voter participation;
 - providing public information and education resources that facilitate participation; and
 - research on what affects participation.

Promoting a national discussion

86. In May 2014, the Commission convened a Valuing Our Vote conference and Rock the Vote workshops.

87. Over 140 people, from New Zealand and overseas, representing Parliament, political parties, universities, media outlets, third parties, youth organisations and public sector agencies attended. The purpose of the conference and workshops was to begin a national discussion about the implications of declining voter participation and to set a foundation for a longer term strategy that involves politicians, the media, academics, teachers, opinion leaders and ultimately society in general.
88. A number of other non-partisan groups attended the conference and workshops, and subsequently ran their own campaigns to encourage participation, particularly amongst young and Māori voters. Strengthened relationships with public sector agencies as a result of these programmes (including Inland Revenue Department, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education and Corrections) contributed to the development of a number of new resources and led to innovative initiatives and new opportunities to reach voters including the dissemination of information through their internal and external channels.
89. There were 254 voter participation stories published in the media between 1 February 2014 and the return of the writ on 10 October. For example, the New Zealand Herald ran a major series of opinion pieces on the topic of voter participation mid-year (including a piece by the Chief Electoral Officer).

Public information and education

90. Providing public information and education resources that facilitate participation was the second objective. As outlined below, our communications strategy for this election included motivational messages as well as the traditional transactional messages around how to enrol and vote. This represented a clear shift in our communication, education and outreach activities. We wanted to increase our outreach efforts to engage with hard to reach voters. We also expanded our information and resources to reduce the barriers for those with disabilities, literacy or language challenges, as well as laying the foundation for future voters through the Commission's motivational work and education projects.

Research

91. Our third aim was to seek to work with academics and other researchers with expertise in voter participation to share information about current research and to champion more research to better understand voter participation and what works to improve voter participation.
92. In August 2013, the Commission brought together leading academics, researchers and interested government agencies for a one-day workshop on voter participation and electoral research in New Zealand. It was an opportunity to share information about current research and to explore opportunities for further collaboration and co-ordination to make best use of research resources.
93. To help encourage research on voter participation, in 2013 the Commission established annual suffrage scholarships to enable promising students to complete post-graduate research in these areas. Two scholarships were awarded at the end of both 2013 and 2014.
94. The Commission has also been working with Statistics New Zealand to ensure that voter participation issues can be included in the General Social Survey for 2016. For 2014, the focus of the Commission's own research into the effectiveness of enrolment and voting services and public awareness of our electoral system has been broadened to ensure that we can get a

better understanding of both those who are enrolled and those who are not. The results of this research are included in the Commission's Voter and Non-Voter survey which is available at www.elections.org.nz, is referred to throughout this report, and summarized at **Annex D**.

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

95. As well as specific initiatives that flowed from the participation strategy, the focus on increasing participation had a major impact on the Commission's communications and outreach activities. 2014 was the first general election with all elements of electoral participation – enrolment, voter education and voting – within the statutory responsibility of the Commission. As such, a new and more integrated approach to engaging and educating New Zealanders was taken.
96. There are some segments of New Zealand society who are harder to reach and engage in electoral processes. Research shows that enrolling and voting has less relevance in the lives of these groups, motivation to enrol and vote is low, and other things in their lives take priority. Specific approaches, work programmes and activities needed to be created to reach these groups.
97. The Commission's Communications Strategy therefore focused on three core message-based communication streams:
 - inspire and motivate;
 - facilitate and educate; and
 - inform and remind.

Inspire and motivate

98. The inspire and motivate stream was a new approach for the Commission, and one undertaken in response to research showing that motivation to participate was a significant barrier. A number of new initiatives and programmes were carried out to inspire and motivate.

'Your Vote is a Powerful Thing' campaign

99. This campaign was a new initiative for the Commission specifically developed for harder-to-reach audiences, in particular younger and more culturally diverse audiences.
100. Real New Zealanders, not actors, used their own words to create a series of television, online and outdoor advertisements promoting the value of voting.
101. The campaign tagline "your vote is a powerful thing" expanded beyond the Commission's paid advertising and into the public domain. Nearly half of all news and social media mentions of this message were entirely generated by others, indicating that the message was adopted by the public and third parties as part of popular discourse about the election.
102. While unprompted recall of motivational advertising online was low, this is not necessarily reflected in the physical result statistics:
 - the 45-second version of the television commercial ("tvc") was viewed 350,000 times via YouTube – while people may not have seen it on television, they were clicking play on online ads, on Facebook, and on partner sites;
 - the 15-second version of the tvc was viewed 15,000 times on YouTube;

- 60,000 people who watched one of the motivational tvcs online subsequently visited the www.elections.org.nz website;
- there were 69,537 visits to the dedicated IVoteNZ.co.nz website; and
- the [IVoteNZ](http://IVoteNZ.co.nz) website directly generated 892 enrolment form requests and 1913 online enrolment form completion processes.

103. The motivational campaign was a social marketing campaign and, as such, its deliverables are intent and behavior change rather than direct action. While this makes it more challenging to provide specific action-based results, a number of key indicators can be measured:

- the percentage of non-voters who gave ‘my vote doesn’t make any difference’ dropped from 8% (2011) to 2% (2014); and
- the percentage of non-voters who gave ‘can’t be bothered voting’ as a reason dropped from 14% (2011) to 11% (2014).

Community Engagement Pilot Programme

104. To support and enhance the outreach and advertising programmes already in place, the Commission piloted a new community engagement model in 2014 to engage with specific under-represented groups. The priority groups over-represented in the non-voting cohort are Māori, Pasifika and ethnic communities. As a pilot programme, it took a targeted approach, focusing on geographical areas/communities with high concentration of those who are ‘hardest to reach’ with electoral information - Māori, Pasifika and ethnic communities.

105. The intent of the community engagement pilot programme was to engage and inspire community influencers, to connect them with the resources and services offered by the Commission, and to encourage community participation in voting.

106. It was delivered by a team of local advisers, recruited specifically because of their connections into the target audiences.

107. The community engagement pilot programme supported the outreach work delivered by Registrars of Electors and their teams, facilitating access and helping make new connections within local communities.

108. The objective of this programme was to increase awareness and engagement with the value of enrolment and voting, so, for this element of the overall campaign, reach rather than direct enrolment or voting results, was the measure. The results were:

- 385 influencer relationships established;
- 378 influencer agreements established to promote the 2014 election;
- influencers reached 377,000 members of the target population;
- 63 media engagements to promote the 2014 election; and
- media engagements reached 506,000 members of the target populations.

Vote Compass

109. One of the main reasons non-voters give for not participating is that they could not decide who to vote for. While the Commission cannot provide that information direct to voters, helping people access information in a way that enables them to come to their own conclusions and make their own decisions supports the Commission’s statutory obligation to facilitate participation and promote understanding of our electoral system.

110. TVNZ approached the Commission in February 2014 to join with them to bring Vote Compass to New Zealand.
111. Vote Compass is a voter education tool developed by the University of Toronto to enable voters, through a series of policy and values questions, to place themselves on a spectrum of alignment with the various political parties. As one of a number of initiatives aimed at addressing barriers to participation, the Commission saw Vote Compass as a valuable tool to address the barrier of not being able to decide who to vote for.
112. Vote Compass has now been used in Canada, the United States, and Australia. It has been well received by voters in all the jurisdictions where it has been used. The academic integrity and international experience behind Vote Compass gave the Commission the confidence that this programme would enable New Zealanders to find out more about parties and policies in an impartial, straightforward, and academically robust way.
113. Vote Compass launched on August 14, five weeks out from election day, and was used by over 330,000 New Zealanders – almost 10% of eligible voters.
114. Over previous elections, a key barrier to participation reported by non-voters has been ‘I could not work out who to vote for’. In 2014, that proportion dropped from 11% of all non-voters to 5%. While survey respondents did not specifically recall Vote Compass as a source of electoral information, over 13,600 people clicked through direct from the Vote Compass site to the Check, Update, Enrol page on www.elections.org.nz. From launch, it was the second biggest source of web referrals to the main elections site after Facebook.

Facilitate and educate

Kids Voting

115. Kids Voting is a programme for young New Zealanders that encourages them to experience and understand an authentic electoral event. Students learn about, and ‘vote’ for, real candidates and real parties, taking part in the programme at the same time as the actual election campaigns are underway. It is designed to raise awareness among young people about New Zealand's electoral processes. Building first-hand experience of active participation by young people increases their personal understanding, belief and confidence in electoral participation.
116. The Commission in 2014 also developed new teaching units that are aligned to both the New Zealand Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa, which support the Kids Voting programme but also operate independently of a specific electoral event.
117. In 2014, over 78,000 students from 556 schools registered to take part in Kids Voting. This compares with 43,000 students and 344 schools in 2011. Teacher evaluation shows that 96% of teachers thought the programme met its objectives, and 95% would definitely participate again. All teachers agreed the programme improved their students’ knowledge somewhat and 91% rated their student improvement either four or five out of five.
118. The Commission will be looking to expand Kids Voting and continue to provide and develop curriculum linked resources.

Inform and remind

119. The majority of New Zealanders keep their enrolment up to date and take part in electoral events. Mainstream education and public information campaigns are a way of reaching and reminding them about their rights and responsibilities.
120. While the Commission's wider public information, outreach and community engagement aims to reach all eligible voters, specific approaches were developed to target audiences with a lower level of participation.

Information for all voters

121. The Commission carried out a public information and education campaign across television, radio, press and online. As well as the traditional enrolling and voting messages, the new motivational campaign was initiated to address the question of why people should participate. This campaign was delivered from within the existing budget, which meant a decrease in the comparative allocations to enrolling and voting messages.
122. As the overall budget available for the three-pronged campaign was broadly the same as for the last three elections, this meant a significant decrease in real terms because of increasing advertising costs and channel fragmentation.
123. Despite the reduction in overall placement budget, the Commission's advertising messaging reached 95% of the population, similar to 2011. However, unprompted recall of voting-specific messages was lower (58%) in comparison with 2011 (63%). Among those who recalled television advertising, the key messages being taken from the advertising in 2014 were: don't forget to enrol to vote (51%), there's an election coming up (13%) and how to vote (10%). Most voters reported having the information they needed, but there was an important minority of voters who did not. The decrease in the advertising awareness about the voting process was seen primarily across those of Pasifika and Asian ethnicity, whose awareness was significantly lower than other groups.

Information for Māori

124. Core information brochures and media releases were translated into Te Reo Māori, and these were available through Commission staff and online, and provided to communities via a stakeholder mailout to over 1,000 organisations and networks.
125. Through the community engagement pilot programme, dedicated Māori engagement advisers worked directly in target locations to build community engagement and understanding of the importance of enrolling and voting.
126. Media spokespeople were available in both Te Reo Māori and English, and carried out over fifty interviews and announcements on iwi radio nationwide.

Information for voters with a disability

127. An updated version of the DVD and facilitation guide was developed for people with intellectual disabilities to enable their caregivers to deliver information on voting, how to enrol and how to vote. These were developed in consultation with sector organisations, and distributed nationwide. A non-facilitated version was also developed for those who are not part of group programmes or activities; these were also available online. Feedback from sector organisations and users was very positive.

128. Plain English booklet and poster resources 'The Easy Guide to Voting' were developed for persons with learning difficulties and low literacy, and distributed widely.
129. The Commission partnered with Attitude TV to create and deliver targeted content to voters with disabilities.
130. Key publications were made available in accessible formats for the vision-impaired, in consultation with the Blind Foundation. Information about voting was produced in a variety of formats including Braille, audio tape, screen-reader and large print, as well as on the Foundation's Telephone Information Service.
131. A DVD to educate about the new dictation voting service (described more fully at paragraphs 283-289 on page 34) was also produced and distributed through the Blind Foundation and Blind Citizens New Zealand. Brochures and information on enrolling, voting and services for voters with disabilities were distributed to disability groups throughout the country and articles were provided for newsletters and publications to reinforce the advance voting message.
132. All information was made available online in New Zealand Sign Language, and all advertisements and video content were both signed and captioned.
133. The Commission was awarded the Zero Projects 'Innovation Policy 2015: Independent Living and Political Participation' for its disability strategy. The Europe-based Zero Project received 231 nominations from 58 countries for the award. The Zero Project is an ESSL Foundation initiative that seeks to share models that improve the daily lives and legal rights of people with disabilities.

Information for ethnic communities

134. Enrolment and voting brochures were redesigned and available in 24 languages (as well as New Zealand's three official languages) through Commission staff, community organisations and other outreach contacts and from www.elections.org.nz.
135. As part of the community engagement pilot programme, contracts were established with the Chinese New Settlers Services Trust, NZ Federation of Multi-Cultural Councils Inc., Auckland Regional and Migrant Services Trust, and Christchurch Migrant Centre to deliver enrolment, voting and motivational messages direct to their communities.
136. Advertising with tailored messages was placed in targeted ethnic media including print publications, television, radio and online in Chinese, Tongan, Korean and Samoan.

Information for young voters

137. Young voters, who are less likely to engage with mainstream media such as television or newspapers, were targeted through social media and a partnership with The Radio Bureau.
138. Facebook remains a primary source of information, particularly for younger voters and those seeking direct answers to questions. Paid promoted posts (effectively advertising) have increased the reach of our Facebook messaging dramatically, and there has been a corresponding increase in the number of people liking the IVoteNZ page, from 14,000 in 2011 to over 30,000 in 2014. The bulk of IVoteNZ followers are in the target 18-34 year old demographic.

139. During the campaign, via a mix of paid and organic posts, IVoteNZ Facebook posts appeared in timelines over five million times, actively reaching over 1.67 million people, with the widest reach taking place on 10 September 2014 with a post that reached over 1.28 million people. The enrolment application situated within the Facebook page directly generated 8,881 enrolment form requests and 22,599 online enrolment form completion processes.
140. A partnership with The Radio Bureau and their youth-focused radio stations provided the opportunity to promote the importance of enrolling and voting using station personalities and talent. For reaching audiences less willing to listen to 'official' messaging, this partnership was an effective investment, exposing our messages over two million times. The engagement and click-through rates for online links were higher on average than those for Commission messages on the same platforms.
141. Online videos and DVDs were developed featuring young New Zealanders to promote the importance of enrolling and voting, as well as information about the processes. These were positively received.

Information for the media

142. The Commission provided media kits to all media and made them available on the elections website.
143. Eighteen national media releases were sent to the media between the announcement of the election date (10 March 2014) and the return of the writ to the Governor-General (10 October 2014).
144. There were 738 media enquiries received between the beginning of May and the return of the writ.
145. Media were given direct access on election night to real-time results data from EMS.
146. Media were provided with an online version of the 2014 General Election Media Handbook and a briefing on:
 - the election advertising rules;
 - the rules for broadcasting election programmes on radio and television;
 - the restrictions which apply on election day; and
 - filming and photography inside voting places.
147. The Commission's national office co-ordinated and confirmed media requests to film and take photos inside voting places to ensure a streamlined service for both voters and media.

ENROLMENT AND VOTING SERVICES

Enrolment update campaign

148. On 23 June 2014 an enrolment inquiry commenced with the mailout of a personalised enrolment update pack to all registered electors. Each registered elector was requested to check their enrolment details, amend them if necessary, and return their enrolment inquiry form only if any of their details needed changing. Any pack returned as undeliverable because

the elector no longer resided at the address resulted in the elector being removed from the main roll and placed on the dormant roll.

149. Registrars of Electors and their staff undertook outreach enrolment encouragement and voter participation work from the beginning of the campaign to the day before election day. This included face-to-face and door knocking activities. In total, 65,827 valid enrolment applications were obtained as part of this activity: 52,443 of the applications were from fieldworkers (expos and general enrolment); and the balance, 13,384, were from door knocking at residences where there was no one enrolled.
150. Training materials for fieldworkers were redeveloped in 2014 to incorporate an increased level of information around participation and voting messages. These were well received by field teams. New partnerships and strengthened relationships resulted in high-profile outreach opportunities, including enrolment form stands in all Warehouse stores and a stronger presence in Westfield malls.
151. Registrars of Electors delivered community education and information to a wide range of community and ethnic groups.

Writ day roll closure

152. The rolls used on election day closed for printing on 20 August 2014. The printed rolls were placed on display nationwide from 5 September 2014 to allow people to check their enrolment status.
153. Certified rolls were produced at the same time and provided to Returning Officers for use in the election.
154. The writ day roll included 3,060,957 electors or 90.3% of the estimated eligible voting age population, which was lower than comparative figures from the previous three general elections. There was an increase in the number of electors on the dormant roll. Enrolment tables showing enrolment comparisons as at writ day against comparative figures for the three previous elections are attached as **Annex E**.
155. An independent enrolment accuracy survey estimated that as at writ day 96.9% (96.4% in 2011 and 95.9% in 2008) of enrolled electors were correctly registered at the address at which they were living.

Enrolment after writ day

156. After the rolls closed for printing, people were still able to enrol to vote in the general election through to the day before election day.
157. Between writ day and election day, Registrars of Electors processed 166,740 enrolment documents. The roll increased by a net 79,460 electors giving a final campaign result of 3.140 million (92.6% of estimated eligible) electors enrolled. Enrolment statistics show that more people are leaving it until the last minute to enrol. Detailed tables showing the number of enrolments processed and the net roll increase for the 4-week periods prior to and post-writ day and the net enrolment increase from writ day to election day for 2014 compared with the three previous elections are attached as **Annex F**.

EasyVote

158. EasyVote information packs were produced and sent to all registered electors, apart from those with an overseas postal address. Each pack included the voter's personalised EasyVote card, electorate candidates and voting places information, the party lists and a flyer on the MMP voting system.
159. Some 3.013 million EasyVote information packs were delivered by New Zealand Post over three days commencing 11 September to those who enrolled by writ day. 77,300 supplementary run packs were produced for people enrolling after writ day and mailed to reach electors by election day, 20 September. Packs mailed in the week prior to election day were sent 'FastPost'.
160. Of the total 3.09 million EasyVote information packs posted only 13,815 (0.4%) were returned as undeliverable reinforcing the accuracy of the electoral roll.

Service to electors

161. Voter survey results showed 92% of voters were satisfied or very satisfied with their voting experience. The vast majority of voters considered the location of voting places convenient (98%), time spent in the voting place reasonable (97%), the voting paper straightforward (97%), and were satisfied with the privacy of the voting booth (90%). Voters were very positive about the politeness, efficiency and knowledge of electoral staff (97%+). Satisfaction with the entire voting process improved compared with the 2011 general election across all groups.
162. Overall, 92% of electors said they had either a good or excellent understanding of how to enrol. Electors said they would use a range of channels to enrol or change enrolment details – most commonly the Commission's website (39%), going to a PostShop (23%) or general online search (12%).
163. Overall, 95% reported having a good or excellent understanding of how to vote. 97% had good or excellent understanding of where they could vote. Understanding of the MMP system was high, with satisfaction with the instructions on the voting paper and the ease of finding the person and party they wished to vote for exceeding 96%. Relatively low rates of informality (0.45% party votes and 1.17% candidate votes) and high rates of vote splitting (31.64%) demonstrate that voters have a good understanding of how voting works in the MMP system. A nationwide summary of the split voting analysis is at **Annex G**. A more detailed analysis is available in the E9 available at www.electionresults.govt.nz.
164. Feedback from staff suggests that the requirement for voters to verbally give or verbally confirm their names did prompt queries from voters but largely proceeded smoothly. The electoral official said the name of the voter and asked the voter to verbally confirm it prior to marking the roll and issuing the voting paper. This process provided for the additional confirmation from the voter about their identity as well as ensuring the accuracy of the marking of the roll.
165. Feedback from staff indicated that more voters appeared to believe that they would need to produce identification to vote in 2014, especially if they did not have their EasyVote card. There were more questions than at previous elections about identification, particularly from young voters who are used to having to provide identification to access other services.

166. The rates of informal voting in 2014 returned to 2008 levels. Rates of informal voting doubled at the 2011 election (0.88% of party votes and 2.4% of candidate votes compared with 0.51% and 1.09% respectively in 2008), which seems to confirm that the increase in informal votes in 2011 was as a result of holding the referendum with the election in 2011.
167. An analysis of informal votes undertaken by the Commission during the official count showed that most voters (75.7%) who cast informal votes appeared to do so purposely and not by mistake. See **Annex H** for results of this analysis.
168. A summary of the results of the Voter and Non-Voter Satisfaction Survey are attached at **Annex D**. The full report is available on the Commission's website.

Service to electors with disabilities

169. Most voters with a disability (88%) were either 'happy' or 'very happy' with the overall voting process and 98% said they encountered no issues while voting. There was an overall improvement in satisfaction levels from 2011, and this could be in part due to the convenience of advance voting. 35% of disabled voters voted in advance, compared with 18% in 2011. The most common reason for voting in advance was to avoid delays on election day. 65% of voters with a disability went to a voting place on election day, 4% voted from a hospital or care home or by postal vote.
170. There was a significant improvement in positive ratings of staff pleasantness and politeness and efficiency from disabled voters (97-98% up from 81-87% in 2011).
171. 94% of electors with a disability said they had a good or excellent understanding of the process for voting in general elections, including enrolling, changing details and voting. Voters with a disability reported higher levels of understanding than other voters about where they could vote with 100% reporting good or excellent understanding. Electors with a disability said they would use a range of channels to enrol or change enrolment details including the Commission's website (29%), but were more likely to go to a PostShop (30%) or call the Commission's 0800 number (10%) than other electors.
172. The new dictation voting service was well received. See paragraphs 283-289 on page 34 for further information about the new service.

Service to Māori voters

173. Voting facilities for electors on the Māori roll were made available at all voting places. Some bilingual voting place signage was introduced. 29% of Māori voters voted in advance, compared with 12% in 2011. The main reason for voting in advance for Māori voters was 'I had something else to do on election day'.
174. Māori reported a very high level of overall satisfaction with the voting process (86%). 96% said the amount of time they spent in the voting place was reasonable. 97% rated the convenience of voting places as good or excellent and 97% rated the polling day staff's service as good or excellent. 98% of Māori voters rating of the ballot paper overall was four or five out of five.
175. 89% of Māori electors said they had a good or excellent understanding of the process for voting in general elections, including enrolling, changing details and voting. Māori electors reported higher levels of understanding than other voters about how and where they could vote with 97% and 99% reporting good or excellent understanding.

176. 1,717 or 9.5% of staff appointed to work at the 2014 election were of Māori descent. 650 staff said they could speak Te Reo Māori.

177. The Commission wants to do more to ensure that Commission staff reflect the communities that they are serving and to increase the number of staff who can speak Te Reo Māori. The Commission plans to use outreach activities not just to encourage enrolment and voting but also to increase the diversity of the Commission's workforce.

178. The Act requires the boundary review to commence as soon as possible after each periodical census and the four month Māori Electoral Option period. Census currently takes place every five years. When the census is held in an election year the Māori Electoral Option is held the following year (section 77 of the Act). This means there is either four, five or six years between each boundary review and Māori Electoral Option.

179. Concerns are regularly raised in the run-up to an election from voters of Māori descent who want to change their roll type and are disappointed to learn they cannot do so except during the Māori Electoral Option period.

180. To replace the Māori Electoral Option, the Commission proposes for consideration a change to allow voters of Māori descent to change roll types once each electoral cycle. The ability to change roll type could then become part of general enrolment communications including the electoral update campaigns run prior to electoral events and would better meet the needs of Māori voters. The Commission could provide Māori electoral population information to the Government Statistician at the same time as the census is held. These changes would require amendment to Part 5 of the Act including sections 76-79 and section 35 (an entrenched provision under section 268 of the Act).

Service to Asian, Pasifika and young voters

181. Asian, Pasifika and young voters reported high levels of overall satisfaction with the voting process (96%, 98% and 90% respectively). 98%, 97% and 97% respectively rated the ease of placing their vote as good or excellent. 96%, 98% and 97% respectively rated the voting place staff service as good or excellent. Although understanding of the voting process is high overall (93%), voters of Asian and Pasifika ethnicity and voters aged 18-29 were more likely than other voters to report having a poor or very poor understanding about the electoral process and Asian and young voters were more likely to report poorer understanding of how and where to vote and what to do if they could not get to a voting place.

182. The Commission will be looking at ways to improve outreach and information for Asian, Pasifika and young voters.

SERVICE TO PARTIES, CANDIDATES, AND THIRD PARTIES

Registration of political parties and logos

183. The Commission is responsible for the registration of political parties and logos under Part 4 of the Act.

184. Prior to the 2014 election the Commission registered the following political parties: United Future New Zealand (de-registered at its request on 31 May 2013 and re-registered on 13 August 2013); Focus New Zealand (29 January 2014); Internet Party (13 May 2014); 1Law4All (24 July 2014); New Zealand Independent Coalition (24 July 2014); Internet Party and

MANA Movement (24 July 2014); Ban1080 (8 August 2014); and The Civilian Party (11 August 2014).

185. The Act provides that at no time in the period commencing on writ day and ending with the day appointed as the latest day for the return of the writ shall action be taken by the Commission in relation to any application for the registration of a political party or logo.
186. The Commission received two further applications to register a political party from Money Free Party (application received on 9 June 2014) and the Expatriate Party of New Zealand (application received on 21 July 2014). However, these applications could not be completed before 20 August 2014 (writ day).
187. Two registered parties changed their names as follows: The Conservative Party of New Zealand changed its abbreviated name to "Conservative" (24 July 2014); and Mana changed its party name to MANA Movement (24 July 2014).
188. On 29 January 2012, the Commission de-registered the Libertarianz Party at its request.
189. On 18 December 2014 the Commission de-registered the Internet Party and MANA Movement at its request.
190. There are currently 18 registered parties.

Logo registrations and cancellations

191. From 25 March 2014 only registered political parties could have a registered logo as a result of the enactment of the Electoral Amendment Act 2014.
192. Accordingly, on 2 April 2014, 38 logos of unregistered parties were cancelled. Where practicable the party secretaries of affected unregistered parties were notified. Contacting some party secretaries was difficult as some of the parties had ceased operating.
193. The law change has successfully addressed the problem of the proliferation of old logos and has simplified the information provided to voters on the ballot paper. Candidates who stand on behalf of an unregistered party can still have the party name underneath their name on the ballot paper but no party logo.
194. Prior to the 2014 general election the Commission registered or substituted the following logos: Internet Party (new logo, 13 May 2014); ACT New Zealand (substitute logo, 29 April 2014); 1Law4All (new logo, 24 July 2014); New Zealand Independent Coalition (new logo, 24 July 2014); Internet Party and MANA Movement (new logo, 24 July 2014); MANA Movement (substitute logo, 24 July 2014); Ban1080 (new logo, 8 August 2014); and The Civilian Party (new logo, 11 August 2014).
195. On 24 July 2014, the Commission resolved to refuse the application from the Conservative Party of New Zealand to substitute its logo on the ground that the appearance of the proposed logo on the ballot paper would be likely to cause confusion or mislead electors (section 71D of the Act).

Ongoing compliance obligations of parties

196. Any party applying to be registered as a political party with the Commission must have a party secretary. The name and address of the party secretary must be included on the register of political parties. The party secretary is the key officeholder who is responsible under the Act for discharging the party's legal obligations.
197. A party secretary must notify the Commission whenever a new secretary of the party is appointed. However, if a party secretary resigns, there is no prescribed period in which a new party secretary needs to be appointed and the Commission advised.
198. If a party is able to continue without a party secretary for extended periods, enforcing compliance with the party's legal obligations becomes very difficult. The Commission recommends that provision is made in the Act that if a party secretary resigns, a new party secretary must be appointed and the Commission advised within twenty working days or the party's registration may be cancelled by the Electoral Commission in accordance with section 70.
199. During the electoral cycle, each political party must lodge: annual returns of party donations and loans, a return of party election expenses following the election, and disclosure within 10 working days of any loans or donations exceeding \$30,000. The annual returns of donations and loans and the return of party expenses must be audited.
200. A person carrying out the audit must be a Chartered Accountant within the meaning of section 19 of the New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants (NZICA) Act 1996.
201. There has been significant revision to auditing standards since the audit requirements were included in the Act. The Commission has been advised that the statutory language is not as clear as it could be about the objective of the audit requirements, the applicable standard that is to be applied, and whether the engagement required is reasonable assurance audit or limited assurance review.
202. The Commission believes that it is timely that the audit requirements in the Electoral Act are reviewed in consultation with Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, the New Zealand Auditing and Assurance Standards Board, and party auditors. The review should determine what level of assurance is appropriate to ensure effective accountability of the party expenses, donations, and loans requirements and consider whether the current audit provisions in the Electoral Act continue to be fit for purpose.

Registration of third parties

203. From 6 May 2014, the Commission registered 22 third parties as registered promoters for the election.
204. Survey feedback from third parties indicates that they had sufficient information to complete the registration process and found it timely.

Election advertising rules: Guidance

205. For the 2014 election the Commission released the following comprehensive guidance on the rules that apply to candidates, parties and third parties:
 - Candidate Handbook – General Elections

- Guidance for MPs – election advertising rules
 - Party Secretary Handbook – General Elections
 - Third Party Handbook – Parliamentary Elections
 - Media Handbook (for broadcasters and publishers) – Parliamentary Elections.
206. The publications covered matters such as nominations, enrolment, ways to vote, election campaigning, election expenses and donations, election day and election results.
207. The following briefings were also held:
- Briefing for party secretaries and their teams – 20 March 2014
 - Briefings for Members of Parliament – April 2014
 - Briefing for third parties – 16 May 2014
 - Briefing for Broadcasters – 25 June 2014
 - Returning Officer briefings for candidates – first week of September 2014.
208. Candidates, party secretaries and registered promoters agreed or strongly agreed that:
- the briefings were easy to follow and provided at the right time;
 - the handbooks were a useful tool referred to often during the campaign; and
 - the Commission’s response to questions or information requests was professional, timely and adequately addressed their question or request.

Election advertising rules: Advisory opinions

209. The Commission is required to provide advisory opinions on whether any particular advertisement is an ‘election advertisement’ for the purposes of the Act. The Commission received 544 requests for advisory opinions between January 2014 and the 2014 general election. These covered 849 separate advertisements.
210. Requests were answered within an average of three working days. The peak period for requests was just prior to the start of the regulated period on 20 June 2014 until the end of June. Parliamentary Services does not fund any MP’s publicity during the regulated period that is an election advertisement for the purposes of the Act. As a result most requests for advisory opinions were from MPs or their staff seeking clarity as to whether advertising could be funded by the Parliamentary Service during the regulated period.

Guidance on election day

211. On 17 September 2014, the Commission issued a special advisory to candidates, party secretaries and registered promoters on the election day rules including advice concerning the rules about:
- hoardings
 - the display or delivery of election material
 - posting material online (including social media)
 - processions or demonstrations
 - contacting voters
 - voting places.

212. The same advice was also published on the Commission's website.

BROADCASTING ALLOCATION

213. The amount of money appropriated by Parliament to enable political parties to fund their broadcasting of election programmes for the 2014 election was \$3,283,250 (including GST). This was the same amount as was available at the 2005, 2008 and 2011 general elections. In addition, the Commission had to decide the amount of free time each party should be allocated and the order of opening and closing addresses on Television New Zealand (TVNZ) and Radio New Zealand (RNZ).
214. In February 2014, the Commission asked TVNZ and RNZ to confirm the amount of time that would be available for opening and closing addresses.
215. On 17 March 2014, TVNZ and RNZ advised that the following amounts of time would be made available, free of charge, for the broadcasting of the opening addresses and closing addresses of political parties:
- 60 minutes on the Friday or Saturday night (22 or 23 August 2014) of the opening week of the election campaign; and
 - 60 minutes on the evening before election day (Friday 19 September 2014).
216. The Commission wrote to TVNZ and RNZ requesting an increase in the amount of time for opening addresses given that there was less time and more parties than 2011. The broadcasters declined.
217. The Commission made its initial broadcasting allocation decision on 6 June 2014.
218. On 20 August 2014, the Commission varied its allocation after the dissolution of Parliament to take account of the fact that the Expatriate Party of New Zealand and Truth, Freedom, Justice were not registered political parties by that point.
219. On 29 August 2014, the Commission varied its allocation again to take into account that The Alliance had not submitted a party list for the 2014 general election. See **Annex I** for the final allocation.

The broadcasting regime

220. Whether there should be public funding of political advertising and whether it should be restricted to broadcasting are matters regularly raised with the Commission, but the Commission accepts that these are issues of policy beyond the Commission's mandate.
221. If a public funding regime for political advertising is to remain and if it continues to be restricted to broadcasting, the Commission's view is that the current statutory scheme in Part 6 of the Broadcasting Act contains serious anomalies which should be addressed.
222. The broadcasting allocation and the ban on parties spending their own money have largely remained unchanged since its introduction in 1990.
223. The statutory scheme in Part 6 of the Broadcasting Act places strict restrictions on the broadcast of election programmes because of the supposed power and influence of broadcasting compared with other media given its immediate and powerful impact and its wide and long reach.

224. The objective is first, to provide candidates and parties with a fair opportunity to present themselves to electors. It provides all eligible parties with access to an important and effective means of election advertising. The current regime limits the advantages of the better resourced parties by restricting their ability to conduct extensive broadcast advertising. It also allows parties that are not as well-resourced access to broadcasting that they may not otherwise be able to afford. Media freedom is protected through an exemption for news, comment and current affairs broadcasts relating to an election.
225. On the other hand, the current regime reduces parties' ability to choose how they will advertise and it restricts freedom of speech, particularly for parties who get small allocations. It is also very restrictive when it comes to what third parties can do.
226. The broadcasting allocation and the restrictions on the broadcasting of election programmes have been a regular topic of submission to and consideration by the Justice and Electoral Committee inquiries that followed each general election since the 1996 election.
227. Although technical amendments have been made over the years, the fundamentals of the broadcasting regime, including the prohibition on third party broadcasting of an election programme, have remained in place.
228. Section 75(2) of the Broadcasting Act sets out the criteria that the Commission has to consider when determining the broadcasting allocation. These criteria ensure that the allocation is a very difficult exercise because they require consideration of both specific matters, for example numbers of MPs, polling, and election results, under the criteria required in section 75(2)(a) to (e), but also the exercise of a wider discretion to consider "fairness" under section 75(2)(f). The outcome of the allocation is almost always universally unpopular as parties have different views about how fairness is to be achieved.
229. With the rise of online and digital platforms, such as on demand television and social media, the focus on restricting access to broadcasting and the inability to use the broadcasting allocation in other mediums is increasingly raising questions about the need for a fundamental review of the broadcasting regime and reconsideration of whether it remains the best means of funding political parties.

Recommendations from 2011

230. In the absence of a fundamental review, there are aspects of the provisions that were previously identified by the Commission in its report on the 2011 general election and recommended by the Justice and Electoral Committee in its Inquiry into the 2011 general election that remain an issue.
231. The Commission recommends further consideration of the differences between the statutory tests of 'election programme' in section 69 of the Broadcasting Act 1989 and 'election advertisement' in section 3A of the Electoral Act 1993 including the scope and nature of the exemptions. The application of the contrasting statutory tests to the same programme can yield different results.² The Commission also recommends aligning the liability for breaching Part 6 of the Broadcasting Act 1989 so that provisions would apply to the broadcaster and any

² Inquiry into the 2011 general election, Report of the Justice and Electoral Committee Fiftieth Parliament (Scott Simpson, Chairperson) April 2013, page 39.

person who arranged for the broadcast of an election programme in contravention of the Act, whether within or outside an election period.³

Amount of funding voted

232. The Commission draws attention to the fact that the current funding of \$2.855m (excl GST) has not altered since the 2005 election. Section 74(2) provides that the same amount of funding will be available without further appropriation unless it is changed by an Act of Parliament.
233. The amount funded has declined significantly in purchasing power in that time so the amount of political broadcast advertising funded has correspondingly declined. This increases the difficulty for the Commission in applying the statutory criteria for the allocation of funding, especially as regards 'fairness'.

Opening and closing addresses

234. Post-election feedback from some party secretaries has indicated that the allocation of the free time for opening and closing addresses on RNZ and TVNZ no longer meets the needs of parties and voters because the process is inflexible, and the addresses are time consuming and expensive to produce and not effective at engaging with voters.
235. The dates and timing of the opening and closing addresses are determined by the broadcasters, RNZ and TVNZ (see sections 71 and 77A). TVNZ chose to broadcast the opening addresses between 7:30 and 8:30pm on 23 August 2014, which happened to clash with an All Blacks test match. The closing addresses aired from 7:30 to 8:30pm on 19 September by which time 29.3% of voters had already voted.
236. The addresses of all parties have to be aired sequentially. All parties must receive time. In this allocation all parties received at least 1 minute with National, Labour and Greens getting 15.5, 13.5 and 7.5 minutes each respectively. Addresses of this length, particularly the longer addresses, are very resource intensive and costly to produce. They are much longer than the paid broadcast advertising parties chose to engage voters during the campaign which tended to be 15 to 30 seconds in length.
237. The opening addresses attracted an average audience of 239,000 New Zealanders aged 5+. The opening addresses attracted 146,000 fewer viewers than what Channel ONE usually averages in this time slot.

Opening Address comparison	Previous 6 week average	7.30-8.30pm, 23rd August	Audience drop off
Average Audience (In 000s)	385	239	-146
Ratings	9.2	5.7	-38%

Source: Nielsen TAM, Consolidated (Includes TV One Plus 1 ratings), Previous 6 weeks – 12th Jul - 16th Aug, 1930-2030 Saturdays only

³ Inquiry into the 2011 general election, Report of the Justice and Electoral Committee Fiftieth Parliament (Scott Simpson, Chairperson) April 2013, page 40.

238. The closing addresses attracted an average audience of 279,000 viewers which was also 25% lower than ONE's usual audience in that time slot.

Closing Address comparison	Previous 6 week average	7.30-8.30pm, 19th September	Audience drop off
Average Audience (In 000s)	369	279	-90
Ratings	8.9	6.7	-25%

Source: Nielsen TAM, Consolidated (Includes TV One Plus 1 ratings), Previous 6 weeks – 8th Aug – 12th Sep, 1930-2030 Fridays only

239. The Commission recommends consideration be given to removing the allocation of time for opening and closing addresses and giving parties greater flexibility to decide how they want to use their allocation to buy broadcasting time and pay for costs of producing broadcasts during the election period. Consultation with registered parties would be advisable. Removing free time for opening and closing addresses may also raise the issue of whether there would need to be an increase in the overall amount of money available to be allocated to ensure that parties continue to have a fair opportunity to conduct election broadcasting.

Entertainment

240. Important public interest exemptions for news, comment, and current affairs, protect media freedom from the restrictions in Part 6. However, there is no express exemption for satirical, humorous, and creative programmes broadcast by third parties. If such programmes meet the statutory test of 'election programme' they cannot be broadcast at any time. This has raised concerns that the restrictions unduly curtail freedom of expression. In 2014, court proceedings were taken against the Commission and a declaratory judgment sought about the application of the provisions to the Planet Key song. At the time of writing, a decision of the High Court is still awaited. In 2012, the Commission determined that a segment of a comedy show, the Jono Project, breached the election broadcasting rules.
241. The application of these provisions raises difficult issues regarding freedom of expression and the express restrictions enacted by Parliament to ensure fairness in elections.
242. The Commission considers it may be timely for policy makers to consider whether any clarification of, or additional exemptions to, the restrictions on the broadcasting of "election programmes" in section 70 of the Broadcasting Act are needed to address satirical, humorous, and creative programmes.

Power to vary an allocation

243. In 2014, just prior to the initial allocation on 6 June, three parties that had applied for individual allocations indicated that one of the three was the umbrella party of which the other two were component parties. Two variations of the allocation were required due to parties failing to register or failing to submit a party list. One party that had received an initial allocation in part based on it having one MP, had that one MP resign from Parliament.
244. These events brought to light some deficiencies in the clarity of current provisions of the Broadcasting Act relating to the Commission's power to vary broadcasting allocations under section 76A and were the subject of High Court proceedings filed by one of the parties that were later withdrawn.

245. In the Commission's view, the following matters relating to the power to vary broadcasting allocations require legislative review:

- the distinction between ceasing to be registered and failing to achieve registration;
- eligibility to apply for allocations versus final eligibility for allocations;
- the scheme anticipates variation by way of reallocation yet prohibits variation in circumstances in which a party or parties have given effect to an allocation in whole or in part. What amounts to 'giving effect to' is unclear;
- distinctions between criteria for the allocations and the criteria that trigger a power to vary;
- what circumstances constitute a change in relationships between political parties 'to a significant extent; and
- whether the power to vary includes a power to reduce allocations in circumstances not covered in section 76A(4).

NOMINATIONS

246. In 2014, 483 electorate candidates and 440 list candidates were nominated with 15 parties contesting the party vote. In 2011, there were 453 electorate candidates, 471 list candidates and 13 parties contesting the party vote. 38 electorate candidates stood as independents or represented unregistered parties. Statistics on nominations are set out at **Annex J**.

Bulk nominations and party lists

247. Party secretaries of registered parties can lodge nominations of all their electorate candidates in a single schedule to the Commission. Party secretaries can also use the system to nominate their list candidates. The Commission provided party administrators with training and a manual on using its secure on-line nomination system two weeks before nominations opened. 15 of the registered parties opted to bulk nominate their electorate candidates. Of those, all used the Commission's online facility and all chose to pay the nomination deposit electronically into the Commission's trust account. This process worked well.

Deadlines

248. Bulk nominations closed at noon on 25 August 2014. Individual nominations closed at noon on 26 August 2014. The deadline for submitting party list candidates was noon on 26 August 2014. The Commission completed the crucial preparation of ballot papers that evening and the printing of ballot papers began immediately so that advance and overseas voting could begin the following week.

249. The differing deadlines for party list and bulk nominations are confusing. The deadline for bulk nominations is noon on the day before nomination day. The deadline for party lists is nomination day. Given that most parties have dual candidates contesting both the party vote and an electorate, parties need to submit the party list and bulk nomination together. The Commission recommends legislative amendment to make the deadlines for both the party list and bulk nominations noon on the day before nomination day.

ADVANCE VOTING

250. In line with the Commission's objective to make advance voting more accessible, wherever possible Returning Officers placed advance voting places in highly visible and high traffic areas, in places like shopping centres, libraries and community centres. There were 295 advance voting places in 2014 compared with 254 in 2011.
251. The headline story from the conduct of the 2014 general election was the massive increase in advance voting. 717,579 (29.3%) of those who voted in 2014 did so before election day (compared with 14.7% in 2011).
252. The ability to vote early proved popular across all electorates and age groups with 29.3% of people voting in advance overall. 27 advance voting places took over 5,000 votes each. The busiest advance voting places were spread in both rural and urban electorates, including places like Timaru, Porirua City, Upper Hutt, Palmerston North, Orewa and Rangiora. Based on survey data, advance voting proved popular with Pasifika (41%), Asian (27%), and disabled voters (35%), with voters aged 50 plus being the most likely to vote in advance.
253. With advance voting starting during a university semester, advance voting places on university campuses at Auckland, Dunedin, Palmerston North and Wellington took large numbers of advance special votes from students away from home. For example, the advance voting place at the University of Otago took 7,802 votes, a 300% increase from 2011.
254. With an election during the peak overseas holiday period, advance voting services provided at the departure lounges at Auckland, Christchurch, and Wellington international airports provided for 2,249 voters.
255. Diagrams showing daily rates of advance voting, the growth for all electorates, and how it compares to advance voting at previous elections are available at **Annexes K, L and M**.
256. Why did it grow so much? Media coverage appeared to suggest, incorrectly, that the ability to vote in advance was new in 2014. However, advance voting has been available for many elections and advance voters have been able to vote in advance without having a special reason since 2011. Some political parties and third parties also actively promoted advance voting and many high profile candidates chose to vote in advance rather than on election day.
257. The Commission asked voters why they voted in advance and they said it was about convenience. 77% of voters who voted in advance said they did so because it was easier, they wanted to get it over with early, they were going to be away, or had to work or do something else on election day.
258. The Commission discusses the implications of the growth of advance voting in more detail in Part 3.

SPECIAL VOTING

259. There were 331,005 special votes cast in 2014 compared with 263,469 in 2011. This represents 12.7% of the total vote (compared with 11.6% in 2011).
260. Unlike most jurisdictions, New Zealanders can vote at any voting place in the country. A person can cast a special vote if they are voting from overseas, voting outside their electorate, voting remotely away from the supervision of an electoral official (for example, a takeaway vote or dictation vote), or they are not on the printed roll for their electorate (because they

enrolled after writ day, or are on the unpublished roll). Special voters must complete a statutory declaration at the time they vote establishing the grounds upon which they claim a special vote.

261. Special voting significantly increases the accessibility of New Zealand's electoral system. However, special votes are more complex for the voter to complete and there is more potential for an error which results in the vote being disallowed.
262. 69,797 (21%) candidate special votes were disallowed (20% in 2011). Of these, 40,986 voters had their party votes only allowed (31,570 in 2011) because they had voted in the wrong electorate and 28,811 (8.7%) party special votes were disallowed (8.1% in 2011). The vast majority (95.3%) of disallowed special votes were disallowed because the voter was not on any roll (92.6% in 2011).
263. Part 3 of this report sets out further information about how improving enrolment and voting services could reduce the number of voters who have to cast special votes and reduce the number of votes that have to be disallowed.

OVERSEAS VOTING

264. Overseas voters could download their voting papers from the Commission's website, apply to the Commission for postal voting papers, or vote in person at an overseas post. Voters were able to return their voting papers by fax, post, by posting or delivering them to an overseas post, and for the first time in 2014, by uploading them to the Commission's website.
265. Provision for an upload service was made to address the increasing difficulties for voters having to rely on fax and postal services.
266. Voters who were not able to access the services above due to their remote locations were able to apply to the Commission to obtain their voting papers by email, fax, post or dictation.
267. In 2014, the numbers of overseas votes increased by 86.7% to 40,132 (21,496 in 2011). This may be due to the timing of the election during the peak travel period and the success of the upload system which enabled overseas voters to return their papers much more easily.
268. Most overseas votes came from Australia, United Kingdom, United States, and Canada.
269. Overseas posts remained important with 13,170 votes being returned from the 80 overseas posts at New Zealand High Commissions, Embassies, Consulates-General, Trade and Enterprise offices and at Australian Federal and State Electoral Commission offices.
270. The Commission received 22,333 uploads from overseas electors who elected to use the upload voting paper (UVP) service to return their voting papers. Voters who were travelling were advised to access an internet café, library or tourist centre, as a way to download, print and upload their voting papers. Voters were advised they could take a photograph of the voting papers if it would be easier than scanning.
271. The new upload system performed well. There were no security breaches identified with the system. The number of voters who reported issues with uploading their voting papers was relatively small. It appears that the majority of issues that were reported were able to be resolved by asking voters to try to upload again using a different browser.

272. There were 52,226 enrolled voters with an overseas address on election day. About 40% of these electors voted. A personalised letter was sent to all electors with an overseas postal address on 21 August 2014. The letter included information about how, when and where to vote from overseas. Relying on overseas postal services is becoming increasingly unreliable. The Commission will be exploring the opportunities to use better and faster ways to contact overseas voters within the current rules. Contacting overseas electors electronically would be much more effective.
273. The Commission has identified some minor improvements that could be made to clarify the address details that overseas voters need to provide on the declaration form prescribed in the Electoral Regulations 1996.
274. The Commission also recommends that the existing regulations for remote dictation voting be changed to enable applications to be made until 4pm Thursday before election day and dictation votes to be cast up until close of polls at 7pm on election day. The current 4pm Thursday close-off for casting remote dictation votes appears unnecessarily restrictive and may hinder voting for people in remote locations.
275. Further statistics on the rates of overseas voting, the methods used by overseas votes and the countries that most votes came from are at **Annexes N, O and P**.

VOTERS IN REMOTE LOCATIONS IN NEW ZEALAND

276. For 2014, provision was made for overseas voters and voters on fishing vessels to be able to receive and return their voting papers electronically. However, significant barriers remain for a small number of persons located in remote locations in New Zealand during the period between nomination day and polling day. A person in one of these remote locations is one who cannot access a voting place, postal services to and from their location may be limited or non-existent, and they are not currently permitted to use electronic or telephone dictation services as these are restricted to voters overseas or on a fishing vessel.
277. The Commission recommends consideration be given to enabling voters in the following remote locations during the period between nomination day and polling day, and who by reason of their remote location have had no access to other voting services, to receive and return voting papers electronically or by phone dictation: people on vessels (of all kinds not just fishing vessels) and offshore installations; and people authorised to be on remote offshore islands administered by the Department of Conservation.

HOSPITAL VOTING

278. Voting teams went through all hospitals and rest homes issuing votes to patients and residents in the two weeks leading up to election day. The number of hospital and resthome votes before election day went up by 26% to approximately 36,500 versus 29,000 in 2011.
279. In addition, 18 hospitals had election day voting places for staff, visitors, mobile patients and members of the public. These voting places were well-used, with over 8,300 votes being cast in them on election day. A table outlining numbers of votes at hospitals on election day is attached at **Annex Q**.

PRISONER VOTING

280. Prisoners on remand (including those awaiting trial, or awaiting sentence after conviction) remain eligible to enrol and vote. The Commission worked with the Department of Corrections and New Zealand Police to provide enrolment and voting information and services to eligible prisoners.
281. Prior to the election, Registrars of Electors visited or contacted managers of all prisons with remand prisoners, to ensure eligible electors were provided with information and an opportunity to enrol on the applicable general or Māori electoral roll.
282. Returning Officers liaised with prison managers to arrange for vote issuing teams to visit prisons with remand prisoners during the advance voting period. Returning Officers also arranged for vote issuing teams to visit police stations within their electorate shortly before noon on election day to give remand prisoners held in police cells the opportunity to vote.

DICTATION VOTING

283. For the first time at the 2014 election, the Commission provided a telephone dictation voting service for electors who are blind, partially blind or have a physical disability that means they are unable to mark their ballot paper without assistance. The purpose of the service was to enable electors meeting the eligibility criteria to vote anonymously and independently, giving them the opportunity to cast a secret vote for the first time.
284. The service was delivered centrally through the Commission's national office. Electors were required to make two inbound telephone calls to use the service:
 - the first call to register to use the service, which they were able to do from the day after writ day up until two days before election day; and
 - the second call to record their vote, which they could do from the start of the advance voting period (17 days prior to election day) through to the close of voting at 7pm on election day.
285. During the first call the elector arranged to receive a unique 6-digit registration number (by the method most useful to them) and provided an answer to an 'identification question' to which only they knew the answer. The elector then used these two pieces of information to establish their eligibility when they rang the second time to vote - enabling them to remain anonymous to the operator.
286. To provide assurance to the voter that their votes had been recorded correctly during the voting process, two operators listened to the call. The first operator went through all of the options on the ballot paper and marked it according to the voter's direction. The second operator then confirmed to the voter how the ballot paper had been marked.
287. 753 people registered to use the dictation service, with 714 people (95%) actually using it to record their vote (675 during the advance voting period and 39 on election day before 7pm).
288. The Commission was presented with the Extra Touch Award by the Association of Blind Citizens in recognition of its successful implementation of dictation voting and enthusiasm to "receive and act on all feedback from blind and vision impaired people".
289. Dictation voting is now part of our core voting services and the Commission aims to provide dictation voting services at all future elections, by-elections and referendums.

ELECTION DAY

290. There were 2,568 election day voting places. 14,854 people were employed to work in voting places on election day. The Commission's national office team provided support for the field, managed media and public enquiries and complaints, monitored election management system and did reasonableness checks on incoming results.

PRELIMINARY COUNT

291. Electoral officials counted 2,112,522 votes as part of the preliminary count on election day.
292. The growth in advance voting meant progress of the count seemed faster than in previous elections because the advance vote results that were in by 8:30pm represented a much greater proportion of total votes to be counted. It is a credit to the Returning Officers and their teams that they were able to complete the much larger advance vote counts within the target times.
293. 98% of all advance votes were reported by 8.30pm, 86% of voting places reported by 10.00pm and 99.84% by 11.30pm.
294. The progress of the preliminary count is set out at **Annex R**, the advance vote results at **Annex S**, and the preliminary election night results at **Annex T**.

POST ELECTION DAY PROCESSES

295. The post-election day processes prescribed by legislation are in place to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the election. Returning Officers undertake these statutory requirements, which take two weeks to complete, in the presence of Justices of the Peace and candidate or party scrutineers. The three inter-related steps to compiling the official results follow below.

Scrutiny of the rolls and dual vote investigations

296. During the scrutiny, the Returning Officer compares all the electoral rolls used to issue votes for their electorate to create the master roll, a complete record of people who voted and to identify dual votes.
297. The end result is a marked up copy of the roll for each district (including the main roll and the supplementary rolls) and a list of people who voted whose names were not on the roll. The absence of a mark indicates that an enrolled elector has not voted. Names of persons on the unpublished roll are not recorded on the master roll. At the conclusion of the official count each master roll is available for public inspection at the office of the Registrar of Electors for the relevant electorate.
298. As outlined in paragraph 63 on page 9, for 2014, the Commission developed an Electronic Roll Scrutiny Application (ERSA) to conduct the scrutiny process. During the election, the 14,000 certified rolls that were used in voting places were scanned and uploaded into ERSA. ERSA processed nearly three million roll pages. Analysis from both the Christchurch East by-election and the general election show that ERSA is significantly more accurate and cost effective than the manual scrutiny process used in previous elections. The Commission plans to continue to use the ERSA system for all future electoral events.
299. The scrutiny process identifies any voters who appear to have voted more than once. These voters are contacted directly to establish whether someone else voted in their name, or

whether there was intent to vote more than once. Dual votes have to be found and extracted from the official count - a time consuming process.

300. It is an offence to vote more than once and where it appears that a voter has intentionally voted more than once, the Commission refers the matter to the Police. For the 2014 election the Commission has referred 126 cases of personation to the Police under section 215 of the Electoral Act, compared with 63 cases in 2011. Almost 70% of cases involved a situation where a voter voted in advance and then voted again on election day, including cases where they did not understand the process or were confused by the arrival of the EasyVote card.

Special vote processing

301. The deadline for special votes to be received by Returning Officers is ten days after election day. This period is to allow time for special votes to be returned through postal services and overseas consulates. Special votes delivered after the deadline must be disallowed.
302. The declarations of all special voters must be checked to ensure they are eligible to make a special vote. This includes checking if they are enrolled. Where Returning Officers cannot find a special voter's name on the electoral roll, their declaration is forwarded to the Registrar of Electors who carries out more extensive checks. The Registrar of Electors advises whether the voter is enrolled. All special votes are marked off the master roll or added to the list of voters not on the roll. The Returning Officer allows only the party vote where the voter has used the wrong ballot paper.
303. Valid special votes are admitted to the official count. Registrars of Electors write to special voters who were not enrolled to advise them their vote did not count and that they need to enrol.

Official count

304. All ballot papers counted on election night are checked again to ensure voters' intentions are clear and then recounted. All valid special votes are counted.
305. The Commission declared the official results for the general election in the Gazette on 4 October 2014 (see **Annex U** for official results).
306. On 10 October the Commission returned the writ (following completion of the judicial recount discussed below), formally allocated the list seats, and declared elected the list members by publishing a notice in the Gazette.
307. Candidate scrutineers present at the official count or at any judicial recount are subject to a secrecy declaration. The scrutineer is there to observe the process and to keep the candidate updated. Candidates are not able to be present. The presence of scrutineers is an important way of ensuring the integrity of the electoral process. However, it undermines the public trust and confidence in the system if candidates or other persons leak the result before the official results are declared. This was an issue at the Waitakere recount in 2011 and at the official count in Hutt South in 2014.
308. The Commission will strengthen its messaging to scrutineers and candidates about the importance of observing the correct protocols during the official count and any recount and maintaining the confidentiality of results until they are officially released.

JUDICIAL RECOUNT

309. After the declaration of results, candidates and parties have three working days to apply for a judicial recount of the votes should they wish.
310. An application for a judicial recount of electorate votes in the Te Tai Tokerau electoral district was filed by Hone Harawira on 7 October 2014. The recount was conducted by District Court Judge T J Broadmore at the Returning Officer's headquarters in the presence of candidate scrutineers. The recount was completed on 9 October with Kelvin Davis winning the seat by 739 votes over Hone Harawira. An amended official result was declared on 10 October. A copy of the amended result is available on the Commission's website.

ELECTION PETITION

311. In October 2014 two election petitions were filed in the High Court - a petition by Arthur Taylor regarding the Helensville Electorate and a petition by Arthur Taylor and others regarding the Te Tai Tokerau electorate. Both petitions relate to the statutory removal of the right of sentenced prisoners to vote and prison services for remand prisoners. A full bench of the High Court decision on the first petition is currently awaited. The second petition was dismissed for the plaintiff's failure to comply with the Act's procedural requirements.

RETURNS OF ELECTION EXPENSES AND DONATIONS

312. The Commission has received returns from three registered promoters who spent more than \$100,000 on election advertisements published during the regulated period for the election. Copies of these returns are available on the Commission's website.
313. 19 parties were required to lodge returns of party expenses by 18 February 2015, including Internet Party, MANA Movement and The Alliance, all parties that stood electorate candidates but did not contest the party vote, and 1Law4All which did not contest the election. Copies of party election expense returns and accompanying audit reports are available on the Commission's website. The Commission referred two parties to the Police for failing to file returns by the statutory deadline.
314. A total of 483 electorate candidates were required to lodge returns of election expenses and donations for the 2014 election by 20 January 2015. The Commission referred 10 candidates to the Police for failing to file a return by the deadline. Several of these candidates have subsequently filed. Candidate returns are available on the Commission's website.
315. If a party's electorate candidates are nominated through the bulk nomination process, the candidate nomination deposit of \$300 can only be refunded to candidates that received more than 5% of the total number of the candidate votes in the electorate contested, if every candidate in the party's bulk nomination schedule has filed a return of election expenses and donations.
316. If one candidate in the bulk nomination refuses to file a return, and the party has done everything it can to try and encourage compliance, provision needs to be made to enable the Commission to refund the nomination deposits. For example, if a party that contested all 71 electorates was due a refund of \$21,300, it seems unduly punitive to withhold all the money if one candidate refuses to file.

317. The Commission recommends an amendment to section 146F of the Electoral Act to provide discretion to refund the bulk nomination deposits in certain circumstances if one candidate in the bulk nomination refuses to file a return of expenses and donations.

ENQUIRIES AND COMPLAINTS

Enquiries

318. In 2014, the Commission and its 0800 voter information service handled over 144,000 enquiries. This is more than double those handled in 2011 and is likely a result of the Commission taking on responsibility for enrolment functions and now including the number of enquiries related to this topic. Over half of these enquiries were received in September 2014. A breakdown of the categories of requests is at **Annex V**.
319. Most enquiries were about enrolment (47%) and general voting (34%).
320. Returning Officer headquarters dealt with about 11,600 enquiries: 33% were about working on the election, 23% about advance voting, 11% were general voting enquiries, 8% were about enrolment, 6% were about overseas voting and 6% were enquiries or complaints made by candidates.
321. Most enquiries to the 0800 service or Returning Officer headquarters were resolved immediately, with more complex enquiries and complaints being referred to the Commission's national office.
322. The Commission's national office handled approximately 9,250 enquiries and complaints in the run up to the 2014 election.

Complaints prior to election day

323. 73 complaints received by the Commission prior to election day required follow-up investigation on the following matters:
- failure to include a promoter statement on advertising (54 separate complaints)
 - alleged broadcasting breaches (5)
 - treating (7)
 - false or misleading statements in the three days prior to the election (2)
 - selling a vote online (1)
 - personation (1)
 - photography in an advance voting place (1)
 - use of the colour orange on a party billboard(1) - there were 36 individuals who complained about this matter.
324. Five of those complaints were subsequently referred to Police including one broadcasting breach and four breaches for failure to include a promoter statement on election advertising. This compares to 92 investigations and 14 referrals prior to election day in 2011.

Treating complaints

325. In 2014, the Commission received more complaints about giveaways and entertainment being provided by parties to members and to attract members. Treating is defined as giving food, drink, entertainment or provision to a person with the intention of corruptly influencing their vote (section 217 of the Act). As well as the complaints about treating, the Commission also

received a number of enquiries about whether refreshments or items could be given to the public at campaign events without contravening the offence of treating. A 'light supper after an election meeting' is the only exemption permitted by the Act.

326. Our understanding, based on recent legal advice about the offence, is that the threshold for finding that the offence of treating has been committed is very high. The provision in section 217 requires that giving of any food, drink or entertainment must be done "corruptly" and for the purpose of influencing a person to vote or refrain from voting. Unless there is an understanding or contract that the electors would vote in a certain way, there is unlikely to be sufficient evidence of an offence. This means that many activities that voters believe should not be allowed may not constitute treating under the current law and vice versa. Conversely, lack of clarity in the current provisions means that parties and candidates are unnecessarily concerned about what is now regarded as ordinary hospitality.
327. The Commission believes that it is timely for Parliament to review the treating offence in the legislation and consider whether it is still fit for purpose. The offence of treating has existed in electoral legislation since the 1850s, prior to the existence of the secret ballot. The consequences of being convicted of an offence of treating are serious, including imprisonment, loss of a parliamentary seat and/or disqualification as a voter for three years. Yet its ambit is unclear and it may set such a high threshold as to not regulate behavior that the public and Parliament think ought to be regulated and vice versa.

Election advertising

328. Generally there were high levels of compliance with the election advertising rules by candidates, parties and third parties for the 2014 election.
329. In the run up to the election, the Commission was asked to provide its view, by way of advisory opinions, on the Climate Voter website promoted by Greenpeace and others and a website criticising Hon Simon Bridges promoted by Greenpeace. The Commission's view was that both websites were election advertisements for the purposes of the Act. The requestors disagreed and subsequently took High Court action.
330. In the first case, Greenpeace and others sought a statutory declaration that the Climate Voter website was not an election advertisement under section 3A of the Act. The Court rejected Greenpeace's arguments and said that the website that the Commission considered when providing its advisory opinion was an election advertisement for the purposes of the Act.
331. In the second case, regarding a Greenpeace website criticising Hon Simon Bridges, the Court declared that the website was not an election advertisement as it related to his role as Minister of Energy and could not reasonably be regarded as encouraging or persuading people not to vote for a candidate or party.
332. The Commission was also asked for its view on the online 'Planet Key' video and music track in the run up to the 2014 general election. In the Commission's view both the video and music track were an election programme for the purposes of the Broadcasting Act and an election advertisement for the purposes of the Electoral Act.
333. The question of whether the 'Planet Key' video and music track is an election programme or an election advertisement was considered by the High Court on 11 September 2014. The court has yet to issue its judgment. The Commission will need to carefully consider the judgment and its implications in due course.

334. In 2014, the Commission was asked to give a view on whether political books such as 'Dirty Politics' by Nicky Hager or the Prime Minister's biography, both published in the run up to the 2014 election, were election advertisements. The Commission concluded that they were not given the circumstances of their publication including the fact that they were publications being sold at retail value.

Election Day

335. The Commission received a high number of queries and complaints about compliance with the election day rules (561 complaints and 85 enquiries).

336. Most of the complaints relate to matters that are lawful but that voters dislike. For example, the Commission received 102 complaints about scrutineers and the wearing of rosettes in voting places and 123 complaints about canvassing door-to-door or by telephone on election day. Both the wearing of party rosettes and party supporters contacting voters to ask if they require assistance to get to a voting place are permissible on election day. However, complainants generally feel these activities are contrary to the principle that voters are free from all forms of electioneering on election day.

337. The Commission also received a high number of complaints about the use of social media on election day (96). A number of these complaints were about the same content published online on election day. 24 of the incidents involved people publishing or distributing statements likely to influence voters on election day in breach of section 197 of the Act and were referred to the Police, including:

- seven incidents involving people publishing material indicating how they voted and/or publishing statements likely to influence voters: these included comments posted by high profile sports personalities;
- two incidents where a person posted a photograph of a completed ballot paper together with a statement that could influence voters;
- thirteen incidents involving people sharing on election day a video featuring John Key and a 'vote National Party' message posted on the Young Nats Facebook page after the close of advance voting on Friday 19 September; and
- two incidents involving people sharing on election day a 'vote for Nikki Kaye National Party candidate, Auckland Central' message posted on her Facebook page on Friday 19 September.

338. An additional two incidents have been referred to Police for further investigation involving individuals who posted online that they intended to vote more than once. Voting more than once is an offence under section 215 of the Act.

339. One referral was also made for an election day broadcast on a radio station that in the Commission's view breached section 197 of the Act and section 80 of the Broadcasting Act.

Administration

340. The Commission also received approximately 40 complaints regarding the administration of the election and voting services. Complaints covered such matters as:

- services to voters at voting places;
- hospital and rest home voting;
- voters being issued with the incorrect ballot paper; and
- voters not being correctly enrolled to vote.

341. All of these matters have been satisfactorily resolved. None of the complaints received involved any breach of statutory requirements by electoral officials.

THE CAMPAIGN RULES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Campaigning around advance voting places

342. With more people voting in advance, some voters are questioning the lack of restrictions on campaigning in and around advance voting places compared with the prohibition on campaigning on election day.
343. Due to a law change made in 2014, this was the first parliamentary election where scrutineers were able to be present at advance voting places. The Commission received complaints from voters about scrutineers wearing explicit campaign material in advance voting places.
344. The prohibitions on electioneering that apply on election day do not apply during the advance voting period, nor could they given that the 17 days prior to election day is a critical time for the election campaign.
345. However, it is an offence to interfere with an elector either in a voting place or on the way there with the intention of influencing an elector or advising an elector how they should vote (section 197(1)(a)). This rule is not limited to just election day and so it applies to voters on their way to an advance voting place. Any campaigning must not involve physically interfering with voters as they approach an advance voting place.
346. The Commission asked candidates, parties and third parties to exercise restraint around the vicinity of advance voting places to avoid complaints from voters and to ensure that voters had a good voting experience. We asked that campaigning by candidates and parties not be undertaken immediately outside advance voting places. We asked scrutineers not to wear campaign material such as vote candidate or party t-shirts, but if they refused, electoral officials had no ability to stop them from doing so.
347. A number of Returning Officers and voting place staff received complaints from the public or candidates and parties about campaign activity near advance voting places or election advertising being worn by scrutineers inside advance voting places. Some members of the public felt intimidated by people campaigning outside of advance voting places as they went in to vote. Scrutineers during the advance voting period could wear campaign paraphernalia, in addition to a party rosette (which is the only election related item allowed to be worn on election day). While Returning Officers and their staff asked individuals who were campaigning to exercise restraint during the advance voting period, this was not achieved at all advance voting places.
348. To ensure that voters have a good voting experience, the Commission believes legislative change is necessary to prohibit campaigning and the display of campaign material within advance voting places and in the immediate vicinity of advance voting places. Some certainty and physical demarcation would also help parties and candidates know where they can locate themselves without being in breach of section 197(1)(a).
349. For the Northland by-election the Commission has sought the co-operation of candidates and their campaign teams to maintain a 10 metre buffer away from the entrance of advance voting places.

The prohibition on campaigning on election day

350. With the rise of advance voting, more people are questioning the logic of the prohibition on electioneering on election day compared with the very limited restrictions during advance voting. Some argue that although voting places should be campaign-free, restrictions elsewhere reduce the sense of occasion and opportunities to promote participation. On the other hand the current rules are longstanding and many voters appear to strongly value a campaign-free election day as illustrated by the complaints the Commission gets every election from electors who believe the rules have been breached and who complain about scrutineers and supporters wearing party rosettes.
351. The Commission strongly believes that the immediate confines of voting places and advance voting places and their environs should be campaign-free and that rules are needed to ensure that voters can access voting places without impediment. However, the Commission recognises that what sort of election day New Zealanders want is a matter for Parliament to decide. Although the Commission does not have a position on it, we highlight that the current election day campaign rules are expected to be an issue that the Select Committee may well be asked to consider given the growth of advance voting.

Social media and websites on election day

352. In 2014, there were fewer breaches of the election advertising rules with the exception of issues related to social media on election day. Social media continues to present a number of challenges with regulating the election day advertising rules.
353. The election day rules prohibit any statement published or distributed that may influence how voters may vote and includes statements published or shared on social media. The relevant provisions in the Act were enacted prior to use of social media becoming a routine part of everyday life for many people. There are those who now feel that the current rules no longer reflect the expectation of voters about what they can post online and unduly criminalise behaviour that ought not to be restricted. There is a wide range of views and people's starting position is also influenced by their wider beliefs about the election day rules in general. An exemption could be provided for the personal expression of political views by individuals other than parties or candidates. However, it would be difficult to prevent party or candidate supporters from using the exemption and there was concern from a number of complainants about the influence of high profile sporting personalities using social media to make statements that could influence voters on election day.
354. If the election day rules remain, the existing provisions for websites on election day appear to no longer deal adequately with the reality of how information reaches people through social media.
355. The Commission received several complaints on election day about parties and candidates who posted material on social media sites prior to election day that was then commented on or shared on election day. For example, the NZ Young Nats Facebook page posted a video featuring John Key late on Friday 19 September. The video appeared to be designed to be viewed and shared on election day. The video was posted after advance voting places had closed on Friday 19 September 2014 and clearly referred to "this is the day you go out and vote". As such, it prompted a lot of interest. We understand that as at the end of September the video had over 24,000 views, over 1600 likes, over 200 shares and approximately 280 comments, many of which occurred before 7pm on election day. 13 people who shared the video were referred to the Police for breaching the election day rules.

356. There is an exemption in section 197(2A) of the Act that was introduced in 2002 so that persons did not have to take down entire websites containing any election material provided:

- the material was placed on the website before polling day;
- the material on the website was only made available, on polling day, to persons who voluntarily access the website; and
- that the website was not advertised on election day.

357. However, if parties and candidates publish material on their social media pages on the eve of election day addressing voters and leave the page up on election day, this breaches the spirit of the Act's prohibition on electioneering on election day. The effect of the publication is that, while the promoter has the benefit of the exemption provided in section 197(2A) of the Act, any persons who share it on election day end up in breach, which seems unfair given they may not be aware of the rules. The exemption clearly was designed with static webpages in mind and predates the rise in popularity of social media.

358. In the Commission's view the election day exemption for websites in section 197(2A) of the Act needs to be reviewed in light of the rise of social media. Parliament should consider whether parties and candidates should be able to take advantage of the exemption in section 197(2A) of the Act, while members of the public who share it in social media bear the legal consequences.

'Selfies'

359. One other issue that arose in 2014 during the advance voting period was candidates and voters taking selfies in voting places and posting them online. This behaviour raised concerns about congestion and disturbance in voting places and the potential non-compliance with rules in the Electoral Act protecting the secrecy of the vote. The Commission also advised that posting selfies could potentially expose a voter's friends to the risk of breaching the election day rules if they shared or reposted a selfie on election day.

360. The current provisions in the Act pre-date the capacity that exists now for voters with a cellphone to photograph themselves in a voting place and publish their voting paper online. The rules that protect the secrecy of the ballot are not only there to protect voters' privacy, they are there to protect the integrity of the vote by ensuring that a voter can never prove how they voted and therefore prevent intimidation. The current provisions do not adequately deal with this activity and create uncertainty about whether or not it breaches the existing rules in the Act that prohibit the removal of ballot papers from voting places, protect the secrecy of the ballot by officials and scrutineers and prevent the circulation of imitation ballot papers.

361. In its report on the 2011 general election, the Commission recommended further consideration and debate on the extent to which electioneering on the internet and social media should be regulated and how any regulation might be effectively managed. The Commission continues to believe that it is timely that Parliament reviews the rules that apply to election day under section 197 and 198 of the Electoral Act, to consider whether they are still relevant, taking into account the growth of social media and advance voting.

ENFORCEMENT

362. Currently the electoral legislation requires most electoral offences to be referred to the Police. For example, if the Commission believes that any person has committed an electoral finance offence (such as filing a false return of election expenses), the Act requires the Commission to report the facts on which that belief is based to the Police.
363. The most serious offences in the Act, the corrupt practice offences, carry significant penalties. For example, the penalty for a corrupt practice is a term of imprisonment of up to two years and/or a fine of up to \$100,000 in the case of a constituency candidate, party secretary, or registered promoter who is convicted of a corrupt practice under the electoral finance provisions.
364. Effective and timely investigation and prosecution of electoral offences is critical to ensuring public confidence in the integrity of the democratic process. Some electoral matters referred to Police are straightforward, such as dual votes or failure to file returns, and are dealt with in a timely manner. Some are more difficult and complex and the Commission is concerned about the priority the Police seem able to accord these referrals. Abolition of the express requirement to refer breaches to Police may go some way to overcoming the difficulty as referrals to other prosecuting agencies would then be open.
365. The Commission recommends that consideration be given to whether the current enforcement provisions are adequate and how better enforcement can be achieved. A similar recommendation was made following the 2011 election.

PART 3: ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE

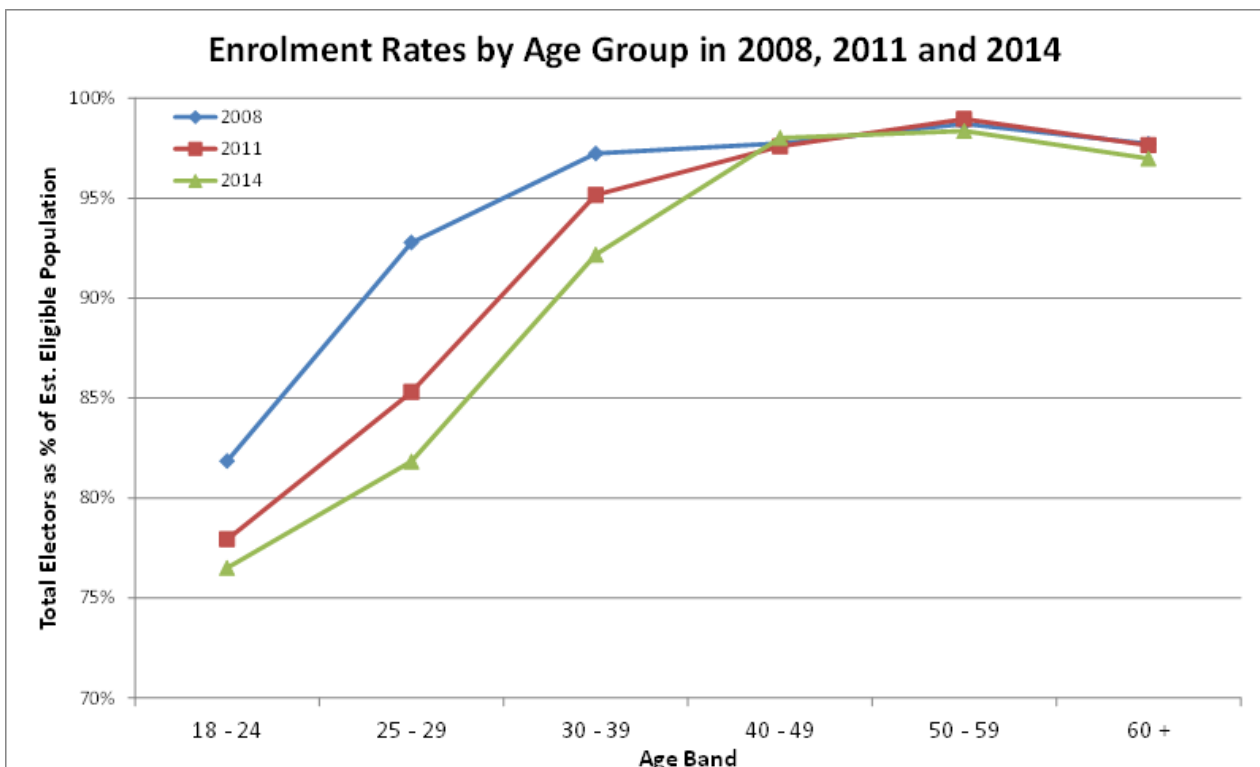
366. This part of the report focuses on what the Commission regards as the two critical priorities for future elections: (1) voter participation and (2) finding ways to meet the changing needs and expectations of voters.

VOTER PARTICIPATION

367. Turnout at the 2014 election was 72.14%, the second lowest since 1893. This small increase from the turnout in 2011, while welcome, is no cause for comfort. New Zealand has a serious problem with declining voter participation.

Decreasing rates of enrolment

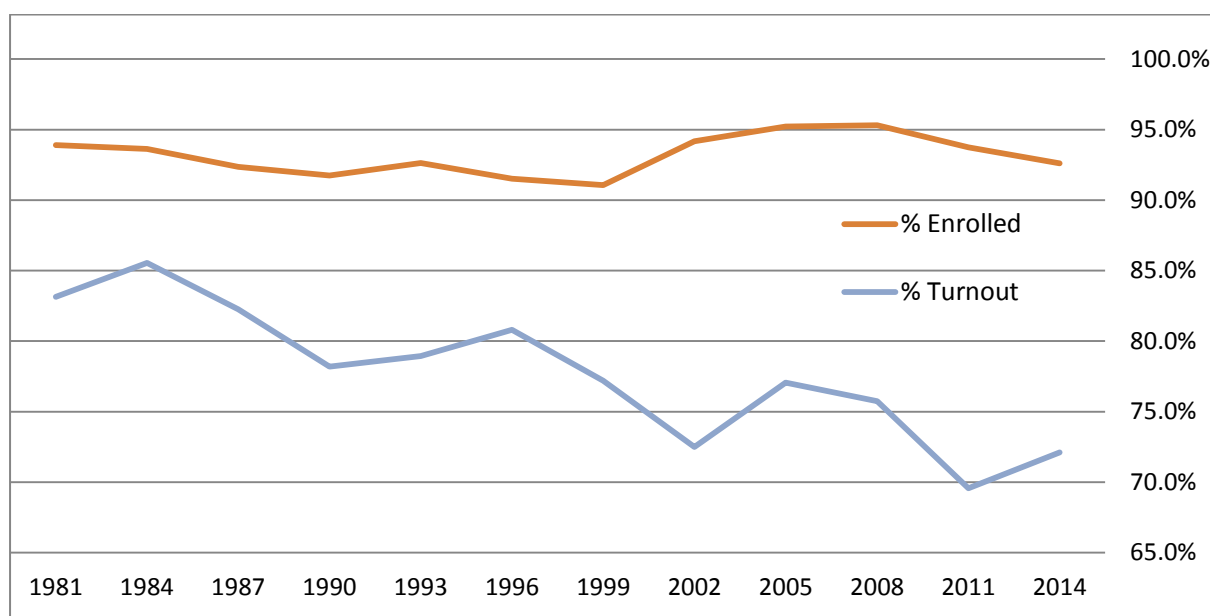
368. The estimated number of people not enrolled as a percentage of the total estimated eligible voting age population has been rising at each election and in 2008, 2011 and 2014 was 4.7%, 6.3% and 7.4% respectively. Although these changes in percentages may appear small, they represent a large and growing number of people who are eligible to vote but are not enrolling. In 2008 it was estimated that there were some 147,200 people not enrolled to vote. In 2014 this figure is estimated to be 250,700 people.
369. As illustrated below and also at **Annex W**, enrolment statistics by age group confirm that falling engagement is not limited to the so-called youth cohort of 18-24 year olds. The age group in which participation is falling is widening. At the last three general elections enrolment rates have dropped for all age groups between 18 and 39 year olds with the greatest drop being seen in the 25-29 year old age group. The rate of enrolment of 30-34 year olds fell from 93.7% to 88% between 2011 and 2014. The trend appears to show that enrolment and voting is a habit which needs to be formed young and, if it is not, non-engagement persists as one ages. This 'generational effect' is of concern because it indicates that if as a country we do not address this problem, it is likely that participation rates will continue to decline. It also means that the downward trend will not be easily reversed.



Falling voter turnout

370. Turnout has been in decline in most developed democracies over the last 30 years, but New Zealand’s decline has been particularly steep and consistent.
371. At the 2011 election, turnout as a percentage of those eligible to enrol dropped to 69.57%, the lowest recorded at a New Zealand Parliamentary election since the adoption of universal suffrage in 1893. Overall turnout as a percentage of those eligible to enrol rose 2.5% from 2011 (from 69.57% to 72.14%). This small increase, while welcome, is no cause for comfort. The 2014 result, 72.14%, is still the second lowest turnout recorded.

New Zealand General Election Enrolment and Turnout by Voting Age Population 1981 – 2014



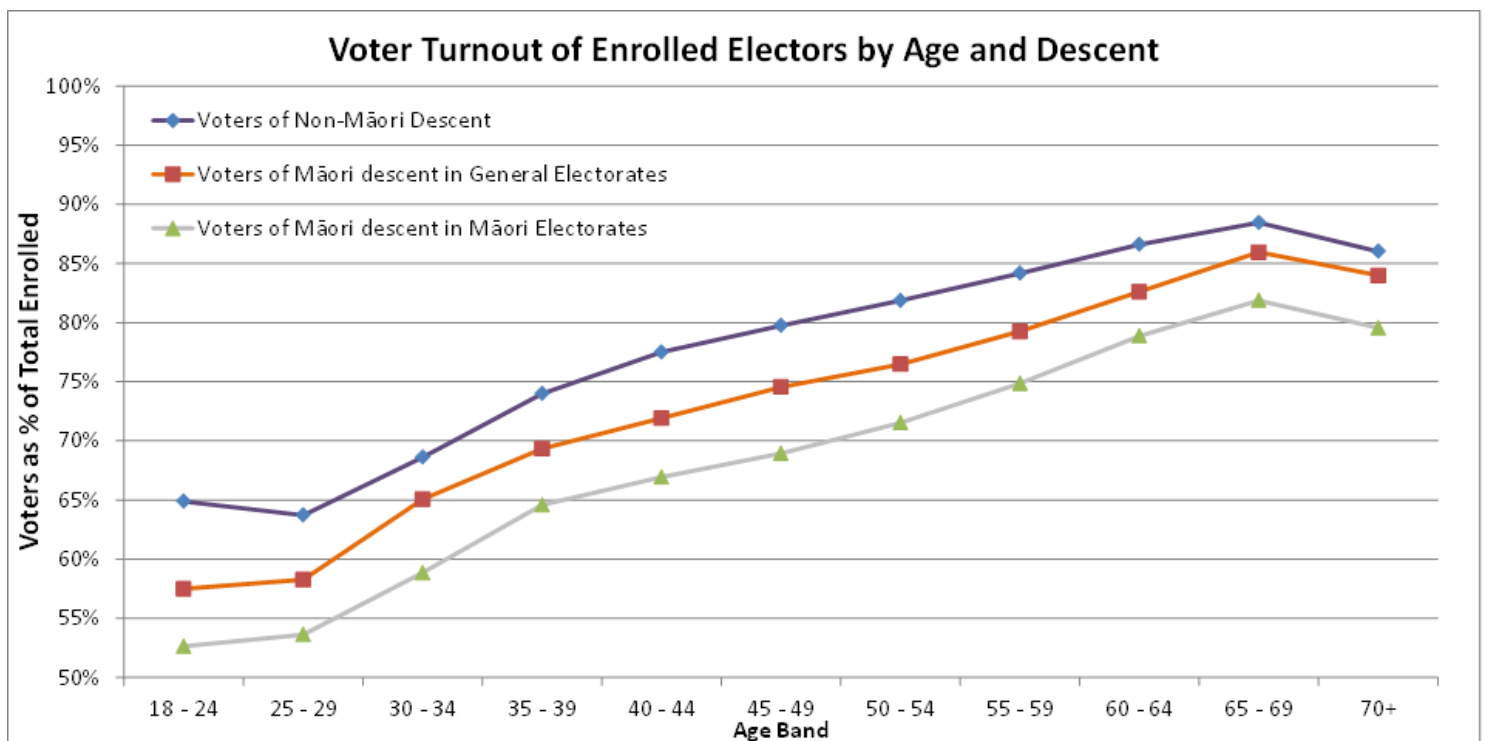
372. The main reasons non-voters gave for not voting in post-election surveys were: “lack of interest in voting” (27%), other personal reasons such as health and religious reasons or being away from home (22%); “didn’t know who to vote for” (11%); and “other commitments” (10%). Only 3% gave a reason of not knowing how, when or where to vote. Only 2% said it was because the voting place was too far away and they did not have transport. This indicates that it is less about institutional barriers and more about lack of interest or motivation to vote and the need to encourage people to value their vote.
373. The percentage of surveyed electors who self-report good or excellent understanding of how to enrol and vote is high (92%). However, 8% of 3.39 million (the estimated eligible electoral population) is a lot of people who report little or no understanding. Those of Asian ethnicity, those aged 18-29, those who did not vote, and those who did not enrol were much more likely to report little or no understanding.
374. At the 2014 election, the Commission was able for the first time to undertake more detailed statistical analysis about turnout using the master roll, enrolment and Census data⁴. As illustrated in **Annex W**, what the evidence shows is that young people that are enrolled are

⁴ This was enabled by the development of the new electronic roll scrutiny application (ERSA) and the electronic scrutiny process outlined in more detail in Part 2.

less likely to vote, but it is no longer just the 18-24 year olds. Amongst enrolled electors there is a growing similarity in the turnout rates of the 18-24, 25-29 and 30-34 year olds, again indicating that falling engagement is not confined to youth. Only voters aged 40 and over have turnout rates exceeding 75%.

375. Although turnout rates of enrolled electors who identify themselves as being of Māori descent increase with age, the turnout rates of electors of Māori descent only exceed 75% for those over 55 years of age (**Annex X**).

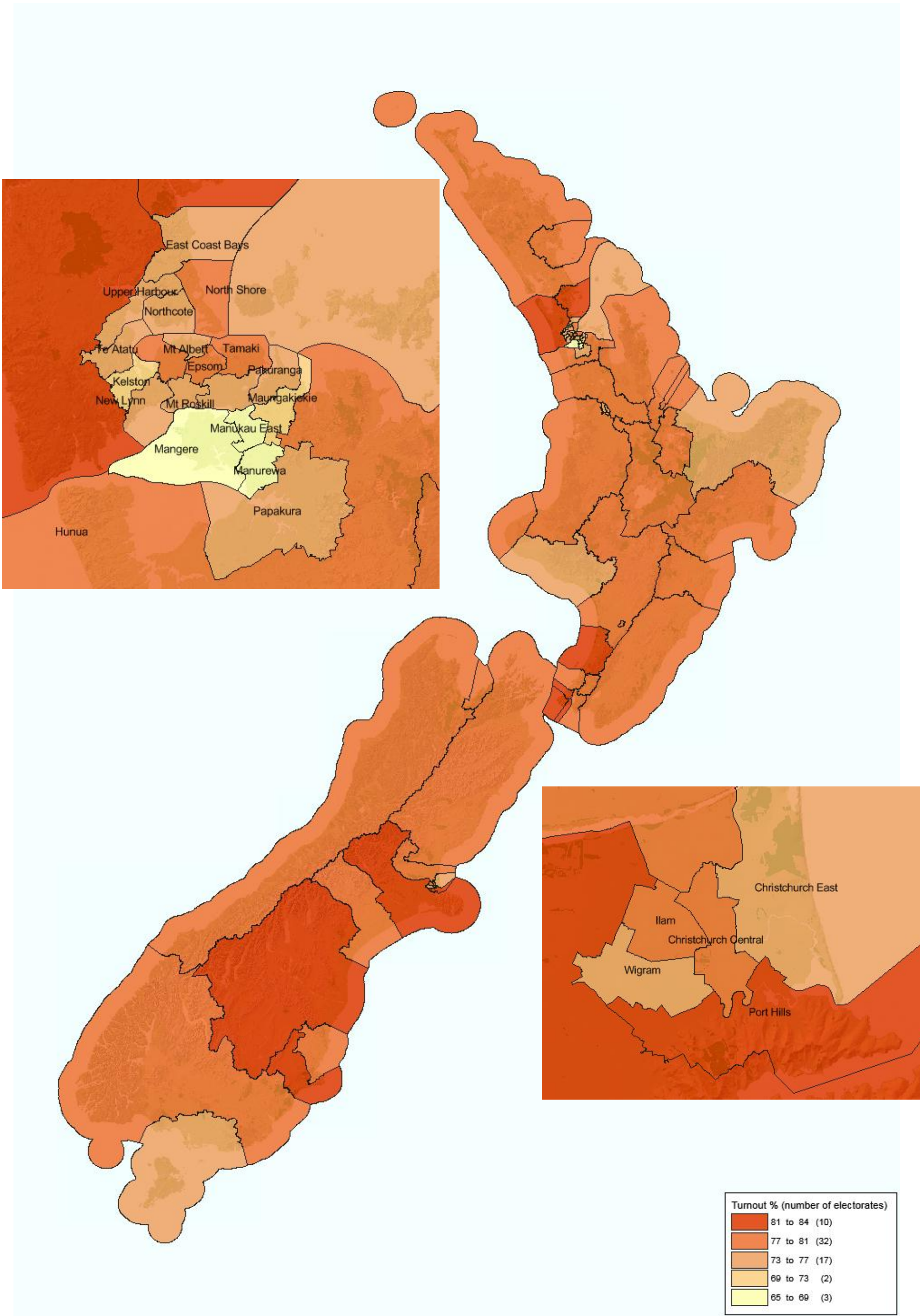
376. It was pleasing to see an increase in the average turnout of enrolled electors in the Māori electorates from 58.23% in 2011 to 65.08% in 2014. However, as illustrated in the table below, for all age groups, turnout rates of people who identify themselves as being of Māori descent is lower than for electors who do not identify themselves as being of Māori descent; and lower for those enrolled in Māori electorates than for those enrolled in General electorates.



377. As the map below shows, in the North Island there are higher rates of participation in the Wellington, Palmerston North and Auckland (other than Mangere, Manurewa, Manukau East and Botany) areas but much poorer rates in Northland, Whangarei, Whanganui and East Coast areas. Turnout rates in the South Island are slightly higher, but are concentrated around Christchurch and Dunedin with much lower rates outside these main centres.

Overall turnout of all Enrolled electors

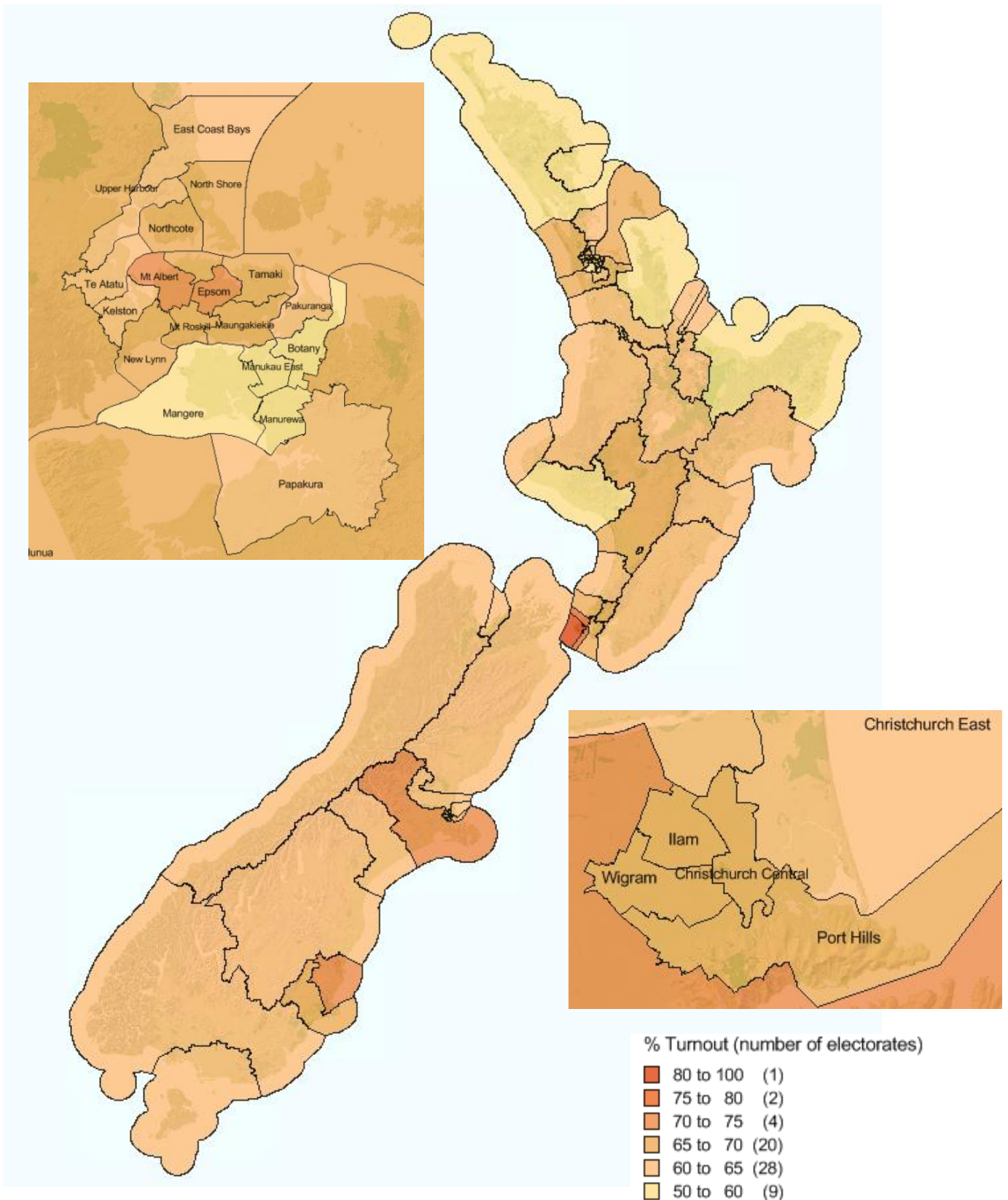
48



Turnout % (number of electorates)	
81 to 84	(10)
77 to 81	(32)
73 to 77	(17)
69 to 73	(2)
65 to 69	(3)

378. Turnout of enrolled electors overall is lowest amongst the Māori electorates with an average turnout of 65.08%. The average turnout percentage of enrolled electors in the general electorates is 78.96% but electorates with high population of Pasifika and Māori including Mangere (69.39%), Manukau East (69.68%), and Manurewa (70.19%) have much lower turnout rates.
379. Turnout rates are also lower in some electorates with higher Asian populations, for example, Botany (71.85%) and Upper Harbour (74.25%).
380. As shown in the map below, when the turnout rates of young people (aged 18-34) are mapped by electorate it shows that young people in rural areas have much lower turnout rates than their urban counterparts.

Turnout of enrolled electors aged 18-34



Need for participation to be a whole-of-Government priority and for a national participation strategy

381. For the 2014 election, the Commission sought to promote public discussion about the importance of participation, promoted research on the subject, and undertook a modest voter motivation campaign. The Commission was pleased with the level of public discussion, particularly in the media, about the importance of taking part in elections and by the generally supportive response to its voter motivation campaign. However, clearly, 2014 was just a beginning and there is much more that needs to be done.
382. A healthy democracy is in everyone's interest. It is a quintessential public good. It is not, however, something that New Zealanders can afford to take for granted. The values and culture that underpin it need to be learned and nurtured.
383. It is in New Zealand's strategic national interest that the steep downward trend in participation be reversed. This will not be quickly or easily achieved. It is certainly not something the Commission can achieve alone. A concerted and sustained effort will be required by those with the capacity to influence voter participation including politicians, political parties, public sector agencies, the media, academics, educationalists, and community leaders and influencers.
384. For this reason, in the Commission's view, promoting voter participation needs to become a national strategic priority with multi-party support. New Zealand needs a long-term national strategy to nurture and celebrate our democratic culture and values and encourage participation.
385. The strategy should include some ambitious goals. The Commission would like to see 80% of those eligible to enrol voting at the 2020 election. This would be a very large increase compared to where we are now. But it would put New Zealand back amongst the world's leading democracies.
386. If any country is well placed to achieve this it is New Zealand. We are a small, well-educated nation with a proud democratic tradition. We used to be a world leader in voter participation and we should aspire to be so again.
387. For its part, the Commission would be happy to play a leading role in the development of a national participation strategy. We will continue to promote participation and will be reviewing how we can build our capacity and organize our available resources to increase efforts to engage with hard to reach electors. We will also be continuing the work we began in 2012 with academics and researchers on voter participation and civic and citizenship engagement issues.

FINDING WAYS TO MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF VOTERS

388. Administratively, the 2014 election was a success with voters reporting high levels of satisfaction with the services received. However, for reasons we will outline below, it is clear to the Commission that the way in which enrolment and voting services are delivered will need to change for 2017 to meet the changing needs and expectations of voters.
389. The defining feature of the 2014 election was the growth in advance voting. Overall, 29.3% of those who voted in 2014 did so before election day (compared with 14.7% in 2011). More people voted in the last three days of advance voting than in the entirety of the advance voting period in 2011. The ability to vote early proved popular across all electorates and age groups and we can expect further substantial growth in 2017.
390. The size of the increase was a surprise to the Commission. Before 2014, the numbers voting in advance had increased significantly (by about 25% on average) from election to election. In 2014 the number increased by 100%. The Commission and its staff were thrilled by this turnout. However, it did place staff and resources under huge pressure. That staff delivered a great service to early voters and that the preliminary count of advance votes was completed on time was a testament to the hard work, resilience, and commitment of those staff. However, things will need to change for 2017.
391. The numbers voting in advance in 2014 represents a fundamental shift in voter behaviour which has major implications for staffing, training, properties, supplies, enrolment, vote issuing, the preliminary count, advertising and public information about voting places and candidates (in short, all aspects of electoral administration).
392. Voters' needs and expectations are changing. Voters are leaving it until closer to the election to enrol and many expect to be able to enrol and vote at the same time. They rightly expect from the Commission a simple, coherent enrolment and voting experience with high integrity.
393. As became clear in the course of the Te Tai Tokerau recount, some voters find aspects of the enrolment and voting process complex. Postal services, while currently a core feature of electoral administration processes, are in decline and voters are increasingly expecting to conduct business through digital channels.
394. The Commission believes there is considerable scope to use technology to modernise, integrate and make more relevant the delivery of enrolment and voting services.
395. Developing proposals for a programme of reform, including what might be feasibly achieved in time for 2017, is a major piece of work which the Commission is currently undertaking. We aim to be in a position to provide further high level proposals to the Government by the end of July 2015. Detailed programme design work would need to be completed before the end of the year. We are conscious that any reform would almost certainly require operational and legislative change and may well require organizational change. We are also conscious that legislation affecting the 2017 election needs to be preceded by parliamentary and public consideration and scrutiny and needs to be in place no later than the end of 2016.
396. The remainder of this section of the report sets out some of the issues and barriers that the Commission will need be considering in the course of this review.

Operational implications of increasing advance voting

397. In 2014, there were 295 advance voting places and there were 2,568 election day voting places. With more people voting in advance and fewer people voting on election day, the Commission will need to review staffing levels and resourcing in voting places and the location and number of voting places to meet the changing pattern. This may require closure of some election day voting places which is never popular with voters.
398. Securing suitable advance voting places can be difficult and costly. Advance voting places must be accessible, secure and ideally in highly visible, high foot traffic areas. Shops in malls, for example, are ideal but securing a lease in advance for a 17 day period can be an unattractive proposition for landlords and can be expensive. Schools, which make up about 60% of voting places for election day, are much less expensive but unlikely to be available throughout the advance voting period.
399. The Commission needs to consider whether a shorter more concentrated advance voting period should be provided. In 2014, 24% of advance voters had voted before the delivery of the EasyVote pack. Not surprisingly, the number of voters who took their EasyVote card with them when voting was 78%, down from 86% in 2011.
400. Since 2002, the advance voting period has been the 17 days before election day. Advance voting hours have varied from voting place to voting place depending upon local conditions and circumstances.
401. One option might be for the advance voting period to be concentrated in the 12 days before election day when the overwhelming majority of early votes are cast (50% of advance votes are issued in the last three days of advance voting). This may allow a more consistent and cost-effective service to be provided and could be aligned with the delivery of the EasyVote packs to voters. Returning Officers would still be able to provide a limited early voting service from their headquarters from 17 days before election day for those voters who would otherwise not be able to access advance voting, because for example they are leaving for overseas.
402. The rise of advance voting also means that we need to review the nature of the services provided. While voters currently cannot enrol on election day, voters can enrol or update their enrolment details during the advance voting period. The popularity of advance voting services saw a significant increase in the number of voters expecting to enrol or update their enrolment details and vote at the same time at an advance voting place a 'one-stop shop service'.
403. In 2014 advance voting places generally had enrolment forms, but issuing officers have never been expected, trained, resourced or authorized to deal with all aspects of taking a voter through the enrolment process and accepting the enrolment form. Anyone not enrolled was encouraged to cast a special vote and directed to the nearest PostShop to complete and lodge an enrolment form.

Advance vote counts

404. Since 2002, the Act has provided for Returning Officers to undertake the preliminary count of ordinary advance votes under secure conditions at their electorate headquarters before the close of the poll. In 2011, the statutory start time for the advance early count was brought forward from 3pm to 2pm because of the referendum held with that election. Anticipating

the growth of the advance vote in 2014, on the Commission's recommendation, the 2pm start time was retained for parliamentary elections.

405. In 2014, because of the unprecedented growth in advance voting, an average electorate had to count approximately 10,000 voting papers (with counts for both the party vote and candidate vote required) compared with an average of 4,000 voting papers in 2011. Wellington Central had to count almost 20,000 voting papers.
406. The Commission aims to release the results of the advance ordinary votes by 8:30pm on election night. As the number of advance votes grows this will become more difficult.
407. A new approach to the early count of advance votes may be required given the increasing number of advance votes. Given the logistical challenges of getting advance votes back to headquarters in large rural electorates, allowing the count to start earlier may not be an adequate solution. Changes will likely be required to the existing legislative provisions.

Information for voters

408. One of the principal methods of transmitting information to voters is by post (for example, enrolment update campaigns, the EasyVote pack). Postal services are in decline and voters are increasingly expecting to conduct business and interact with agencies through digital channels.
409. The Commission will be exploring how it can use alternative ways to provide information to electors. This may require legislative change.

Legislative institutional separation

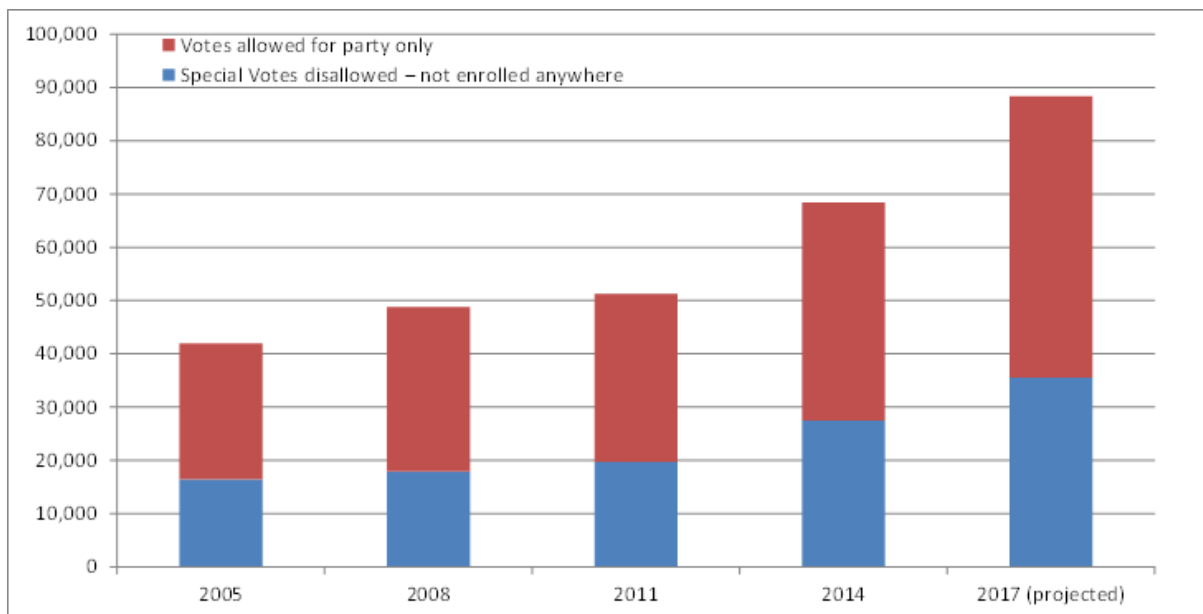
410. 2014 was the first general election at which the Commission was responsible for enrolment as well as voting services. Although amendments were made to the Electoral Act to provide for a single agency, delivering an election as a single agency has highlighted that many aspects of the legislation still reflect the historical separation of services.
411. For example, Registrars of Electors have to certify copies of the rolls provided to the Returning Officers for use in the conduct of the election. This process is time consuming and reflects a time when Registrars and Returning Officers were not working within the same agency.
412. The special vote checking process continues to reflect the institutional separation of functions with declarations having to be sent to Registrars for consideration.
413. Section 88 of the Act allows for enrolment forms received after the issue of a writ for an election to be deemed to be received by a Registrar of Electors if the envelope containing the form bears a postmark dated prior to election day or the form has been accepted and date-stamped by any New Zealand Post outlet or agency prior to election day. This provision predates the Commission assuming responsibility for enrolment in 2012. Voters expect to be able to lodge an enrolment form with any electoral official including an electoral official in an advance voting place.

Special votes

414. The special voting process is complex for both voters and election officials. The voter has to complete a declaration indicating their grounds for casting a special declaration vote. Special votes take significantly longer than ordinary votes to issue and process. Some voters and

witnesses find the declaration form difficult to complete and errors can result in special votes being disallowed. The rules for allowing or disallowing special declaration votes are complex. We need to find a way to help people to avoid the need to complete a special declaration vote wherever possible and technology may offer a solution.

- 415. We also need to address some of the institutional barriers highlighted at the election and in the subsequent Te Tai Tokerau judicial recount.
- 416. More voters than ever before had their vote disallowed during the official count because they were not enrolled correctly or at all. Observations made during the evaluation of disallowed votes at the Te Tai Tokerau judicial recount suggested that some people did not understand what was required, some did not understand what enrolment was at all, and others understood what was required but felt it was unnecessarily complex.
- 417. Overall 27,500 people who voted in 2014 (either in advance or on election day) were disqualified because they were not enrolled at all. A further 41,000 voters had their party vote counted but their candidate vote disqualified because (a) they were not enrolled in the correct electorate or (b) they voted in the wrong electorate because they had failed to understand which electorate they were enrolled in.
- 418. Of course some votes will always be disallowed in a system where successful enrolment is a prerequisite for voting. However, rates of disallowed votes are on the rise and this is contributing to lower rates of meaningful participation in general elections.



- 419. Apart from the increased number of overseas votes, the growing number of special votes appears to be due to people enrolling later and people not being on the roll. A growing number of electors find the enrolment system complex and have failed to realise that they are not currently enrolled.
- 420. With both enrolment and voting now being delivered by a single agency, many question why the special vote declaration cannot be treated as an application to enrol or update enrolment details for the purposes of the Act.

421. During the Te Tai Tokerau judicial recount, Judge Broadmore conducted an analysis of the enrolment histories of some of the special voters whose votes were disallowed. This indicated that some voters whose votes had been disallowed because they were not enrolled, had completed special vote declarations at previous elections, been written to by the Registrar and asked to enrol but had not responded. It appears that voters thought, perhaps not surprisingly, that by completing the special vote declaration at the previous election that they had enrolled. After all, when completing a special vote declaration they have provided the Commission:

- their full name and residential address;
- confirmation they have lived there continuously for more than a month;
- their occupation;
- their date of birth (although this is currently optional); and
- a declaration that they believe that they are qualified to vote in a particular electorate.

422. The fact that voters are present at an advance voting place, they can enrol during the advance voting period, and want to vote presents a golden opportunity to gather all of the information required from a voter at one time to enable them to enrol and have their vote counted.

423. One option the Commission will be considering as part of the review of enrolment and voting services is whether there should be legislative change to enable the special vote declaration to be treated as an application to enrol or update enrolment details.

Prescribed forms (including the enrolment form but excluding ballot papers)

424. Many forms, including enrolment forms and special vote declarations, are prescribed in regulation and can only be changed by Order in Council. The complexity of the enrolment form, in particular, is a barrier to participation. In the Commission's view, the Act should prescribe the data required and the purpose for which it may be used but the forms and method of collection should be left to the Commission to determine. This would enable the Commission to ensure enrolment forms and declarations meet the legal requirements but are user friendly and tailored to the needs of different users including, for example, the provision of forms in other languages. There is already precedent for this in that a number of other important forms, including nomination and return forms, are issued by the Commission.

425. The Commission's review will include consideration of whether the electoral legislation should be amended to provide for the Commission to be able to issue forms such as enrolment and special declaration forms (but not ballot papers) in accordance with legal requirements specified in the legislation.

Privacy concerns

426. Research by the Privacy Commission confirms that 50% of New Zealanders say they are becoming more concerned about privacy issues and this proportion has increased over three successive surveys.⁵ The public availability of the roll is important to ensuring the integrity of the roll. However, consideration needs to be given to how much information about an elector's address needs to be published to achieve this purpose. The present law requires

⁵ Individual Privacy & Personal Information Survey, UMR Omnibus Results, March 2014, Privacy Commission

electors to provide a full residential address for electoral purposes and this is published on the electoral roll. Privacy concerns arise not because of any electoral use of this information but because of the easy availability of the information in the published electoral rolls and habitation indexes. If rolls and habitation indexes can be inspected and purchased, it is impossible to ensure that they are not being used for ancillary purposes. Patterns of purchase indicate that rolls are rarely being used for scrutiny purposes. They are mainly purchased by business and media organisations and used for debt collection, marketing, and other ancillary purposes.

427. Section 115 of the Act provides for electors to go on the unpublished roll if publication of their name, address and occupation would be prejudicial to their personal safety or the safety of their family. However, feedback from outreach activities suggests that many electors are nonetheless unwilling to enrol because they do not meet the criteria for inclusion on the unpublished roll but have concerns about their full residential address being available at large.
428. To protect privacy, the law should, unless there is a strong public interest to the contrary, restrict the collection and use of personal information on a public register to the primary purpose for which the register is set up and made public. At the moment this is not the case.
429. Privacy concerns have resulted in tighter restrictions in other jurisdictions. In Australia, rolls have not been available for sale since 2004 and can only be inspected at an office of the Electoral Commission. End-use restrictions and the related penalties for wrongful disclosure or commercial use apply to all information relating to electors which is contained in the electoral roll, regardless of the medium of supply. Applying restrictions only to information supplied in electronic formats is no longer sufficient given the rise of scanning technology.
430. The Commission recommends that electoral rolls (and habitation indexes) no longer be available for general sale, that the inspection of rolls should be limited to offices of the Commission, and that house/flat/apartment number and occupation information should no longer be included in rolls available for inspection.
431. The Commission recommends that these and other matters concerning access to the rolls be reviewed, in consultation with the Privacy Commissioner, to encourage enrolment and protect the privacy of electors' personal information. The review should consider what access should be available for non-electoral and secondary purposes (i.e. purposes other than the conduct of local and parliamentary elections and referendums, jury lists, the iwi affiliation service, and for parties and candidates) and how access for electoral purposes can be given in a way that protects privacy.

Technology

Real-time enrolment info

432. The Commission is committed to looking at how technology can be used to improve and simplify enrolment and voting services.
433. Although we continue to have a largely manual enrolment and voting system, voters increasingly expect technology to be applied to ensure that electoral services are easy to access, and based on real-time information.
434. If a person is not on the printed roll in the voting place this does not necessarily mean that he or she is not enrolled and does not necessarily mean that he or she is not eligible to vote. There are other reasons why a person may not be on the printed roll in the voting place, for

example they have enrolled after writ day, they are on the unpublished roll, they are voting outside their electorate, or they are on the dormant roll.

435. At present there is provision for Returning Officers to be provided with copies of the main roll and supplementary rolls under section 123 of the Act.
436. Providing a seamless voting service would be easier if electoral officials in voting places were in a position to advise the voter of their current enrolment status in real-time before issuing them with a special vote or helping them to enrol. This could significantly reduce the number of special votes, party vote only, and disallowed votes.
437. The Commission will be exploring the feasibility of providing electoral officials access to an online enrolment checking function in voting places. Electoral officials in voting places would need additional access to enrolment information to enable a real-time enrolment checking function. Amendments to the Electoral Act may be required to enable this.

Special vote processing

438. There are examples in the legislation of provisions that require a manual process where an automated one makes much more sense. For example, section 36 of the Regulations covers the duties of Registrars of Electors when checking the enrolment status of voters from their Special Vote Declaration. The section was written to cover a manual process where Registrars of Electors must 'endorse the words [qualified, party vote qualified or not qualified] on the declaration'. This process has, for recent elections, been computerised to provide a more efficient and faster checking system. However, the process is still cumbersome in that Registrars of Electors must affix to the declaration a label showing the voter's enrolment status and endorse it by placing their initials beside it.
439. Regulation 36 of the Electoral Regulations needs to be amended to remove reference to 'endorsement' to facilitate a fully electronic process for special declaration vote processing.

LOOKING FORWARD

440. As well as the work that the Commission aims to undertake to improve enrolment and voting services for the next election, the Commission will also be:
- assisting the Justice and Electoral Committee with its Inquiry into the 2014 general election;
 - conducting a by-election in the Northland electorate on 28 March 2015 and any other by-elections that are required;
 - conducting two postal referendums on the New Zealand flag (20 November to 11 December 2015 and 3 March to 24 March 2016);
 - filling any list vacancies (in the last parliamentary term there were six list vacancies); and
 - managing continuous enrolments and enrolment updates and supplying rolls to local authorities for the 2016 local authority elections.
441. The Government has indicated that e-voting for parliamentary elections will not be a priority for 2017. The Commission will continue to monitor overseas developments in electronic voting. The Commission remains of the view that e-voting will be an important component of a modern electoral administration and that an appropriate first step would be enabling overseas voters and voters with disabilities to vote online. However, e-voting would require substantial additional funding, early policy decisions and legislative amendments. In the meantime, the Commission's focus has to be the more immediate priority of responding to the impact of increased advance voting and the changing needs and expectations of voters as we look ahead to 2017.
442. The default day for the start of the regulated period for the 2017 general election is 20 June 2017 (section 3B, Electoral Act 1993).
443. The last date at which a by-election must be held for a vacancy is a vacancy that arises by 9 April 2017. Under section 131 of the Act, there is the power to resolve that no writ be issued if a vacancy arises in the 6 months ending with the date of expiry of Parliament (9 October 2017).
444. The last legal date for the 2017 general election is 18 November 2017.

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

	Issue	Legislative implications	Reference in report
1.	<p>Adjournment of polling in an emergency</p> <p>Provisions for dealing with the impacts of an emergency on the election raise difficult constitutional and political issues that go beyond the mandate of the Commission. The Commission still considers that there is a need for consideration as to whether the current emergency provisions are adequate.</p>	Section 195 of the Electoral Act	Page 6
2.	<p>Recruitment of field staff</p> <p>The Commission will need to review the rates of pay for the 2017 general election to ensure staff are appropriately remunerated for what are very important and complex roles. Given the high number of staff the Commission employs, even a small increase will have a significant financial impact.</p>	N/A. This is an operational matter	Pages 7-8
3.	<p>General Election Technology Programme</p> <p>EMS is a legacy system that is increasingly vulnerable to security and maintenance risks. The Commission's intention is to replace the election management system in time for the 2017 general election. The development of a replacement system is now underway.</p>	N/A. This is an operational matter	Pages 8-9
4.	<p>Boundaries</p> <p>Instead of the current requirement to summarise the objections to proposed electoral boundaries, the Commission recommends amendment to enable all submissions to be made publicly available online. This would provide greater transparency and the submissions could be made available to the public within a shorter timeframe as there would be no need to complete a summary of each objection.</p>	Section 38 of the Electoral Act	Page 11

	Issue	Legislative implications	Reference in report
5.	<p>Kids voting</p> <p>The Commission will be looking to expand Kids Voting and continue to provide and develop curriculum linked resources.</p>	N/A. This is an operational matter	Page 15
6.	<p>Service to Māori voters</p> <p>The Commission wants to do more to ensure that Commission staff reflect the communities that they are serving and to increase the number of staff who can speak Te Reo Māori. The Commission plans to use outreach activities not just to encourage enrolment and voting but also to increase the diversity of the Commission's workforce.</p>	N/A. This is an operational matter	Pages 21-22
7.	<p>Service to Māori voters</p> <p>To replace the Māori Electoral Option, the Commission proposes for consideration a change to allow voters of Māori descent to change roll types once each electoral cycle. The ability to change roll type could then become part of general enrolment communications including the electoral update campaigns run prior to electoral events and would better meet the needs of Māori voters.</p> <p>The Commission could provide Māori electoral population information to the Government Statistician at the same time as the census is held.</p>	These changes would require amendment to Part 5 of the Act including sections 76-79 and section 35 (an entrenched provision under section 268 of the Act) and Part 1 of the Electoral Regulations	Pages 21-22
8.	<p>Service to Asian, Pasifika and young voters</p> <p>The Commission will be looking at ways to improve outreach and information for Asian, Pasifika and young voters.</p>	N/A. This is an operational matter	Page 22

	Issue	Legislative implications	Reference in report
9.	<p>Ongoing compliance obligations of parties</p> <p>If a party is able to continue without a party secretary for extended periods, enforcing compliance with the party's legal obligations becomes very difficult. The Commission recommends that provision is made in the Act that if a party secretary resigns, a new party secretary must be appointed and the Commission advised within twenty working days or the party's registration may be cancelled by the Electoral Commission in accordance with section 70.</p>	Part 4 of the Electoral Act	Page 24
10.	<p>Ongoing compliance obligations of parties</p> <p>The Commission believes that it is timely that the audit requirements in the Electoral Act are reviewed in consultation with Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, the New Zealand Auditing and Assurance Standards Board, and party auditors. The review should determine what level of assurance is appropriate to ensure effective accountability of the party expenses, donations, and loans requirements and consider whether the current audit provisions in the Electoral Act continue to be fit for purpose.</p>	Parts 6A and 6B of the Electoral Act (sections 206L, 210A and 214D)	Page 24
11.	<p>Broadcasting</p> <p>The Commission recommends further consideration of the differences between the statutory tests of 'election programme' in section 69 of the Broadcasting Act 1989 and 'election advertisement' in section 3A of the Electoral Act 1993 including the scope and nature of the exemptions. The application of the contrasting statutory tests to the same programme can yield different results. The Commission also recommends aligning the liability for breaching Part 6 of the Broadcasting Act 1989 so that provisions would apply to the broadcaster and any person who arranged for the broadcast of an election programme in contravention of the Act, whether within or outside an election period.</p>	Sections 69 and 80 of the Broadcasting Act and section 3A of the Electoral Act.	Pages 27-28

	Issue	Legislative implications	Reference in report
12.	<p>Broadcasting</p> <p>The Commission recommends consideration be given to removing the allocation of time for opening and closing addresses and giving parties greater flexibility to decide how they want to use their allocation to buy broadcasting time and pay for costs of producing broadcasts during the election period. Consultation with registered parties would be advisable. Removing free time for opening and closing addresses may also raise the issue of whether there would need to be an increase in the overall amount of money available to be allocated to ensure that parties continue to have a fair opportunity to conduct election broadcasting.</p>	Part 6 of the Broadcasting Act	Pages 28-29
13.	<p>Broadcasting</p> <p>The Commission considers it may be timely for policy makers to consider whether any clarification of, or additional exemptions to, the restrictions on the broadcasting of “election programmes” in section 70 of the Broadcasting Act are needed to address satirical, humorous, and creative programmes.</p>	Section 70, Broadcasting Act	Page 29
14.	<p>Broadcasting</p> <p>In the Commission’s view, the following matters relating to the power to vary broadcasting allocations require legislative review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the distinction between ceasing to be registered and failing to achieve registration; • eligibility to apply for allocations versus final eligibility for allocations; • the scheme anticipates variation by way of reallocation yet prohibits variation in circumstances in which a party or parties have given effect to an allocation in whole or in part. What amounts to 'giving effect to' is unclear; • distinctions between criteria for the allocations and the criteria that trigger a power to vary; 	Part 6 of the Broadcasting Act	Pages 29-30

	Issue	Legislative implications	Reference in report
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what circumstances constitute a change in relationships between political parties 'to a significant extent'; and • whether the power to vary includes a power to reduce allocations in circumstances not covered in section 76A(4). 		
15.	<p>Nominations</p> <p>The differing deadlines for party list and bulk nominations are confusing. The deadline for bulk nominations is noon on the day before nomination day. The deadline for party lists is nomination day. Given that most parties have dual candidates contesting both the party vote and an electorate, parties need to submit the party list and bulk nomination together. The Commission recommends legislative amendment to make the deadlines for both the party list and bulk nominations noon on the day before nomination day.</p>	Sections 146D and 127 of the Electoral Act	Page 30
16.	<p>Overseas voting</p> <p>The Commission has identified some minor improvements that could be made to clarify the address details that overseas voters need to provide on the declaration form prescribed in the Electoral Regulations 1996.</p>	Parts 3 and 4 of the Electoral Regulations 1996	Pages 32-33
17.	<p>Overseas voting</p> <p>The Commission also recommends that the existing regulations for remote dictation voting be changed to enable applications to be made until 4pm Thursday before election day and dictation votes to be cast up until close of polls at 7pm on election day. The current 4pm Thursday close-off for casting remote dictation votes appears unnecessarily restrictive and may hinder voting for people in remote locations.</p>	Part 4 of the Electoral Regulations (regulation 58)	Pages 32-33

	Issue	Legislative implications	Reference in report
18.	<p>Voters in remote locations in New Zealand</p> <p>The Commission recommends consideration be given to enabling voters in the following remote locations during the period between nomination day and polling day, and who by reason of their remote location have had no access to other voting services, to receive and return voting papers electronically or by phone dictation: people on vessels (of all kinds not just fishing vessels) and offshore installations; and people authorised to be on remote offshore islands administered by the Department of Conservation.</p>	Part 4 of the Electoral Regulations	Page 33
19.	<p>Dictation voting for blind and vision impaired voters</p> <p>Dictation voting is now part of our core voting services and the Commission aims to provide dictation voting services at all future elections, by-elections and referendums.</p>	N/A. This is an operational matter	Page 34
20.	<p>Official count</p> <p>The Commission will strengthen its messaging to scrutineers and candidates about the importance of observing the correct protocols during the official count and any recount and maintaining the confidentiality of results until they are officially released.</p>	N/A. This is an operational matter	Page 36
21.	<p>Returns of election expenses and donations</p> <p>The Commission recommends an amendment to section 146F of the Electoral Act to provide discretion to refund the bulk nomination deposits in certain circumstances if one candidate in the bulk nomination refuses to file a return of expenses and donations.</p>	Section 146F of the Electoral Act	Pages 37-38

	Issue	Legislative implications	Reference in report
22.	<p>Treating</p> <p>The Commission believes that it is timely for Parliament to review the treating offence in the legislation and consider whether it is still fit for purpose. The offence of treating has existed in electoral legislation since the 1850s, prior to the existence of the secret ballot. The consequences of being convicted of an offence of treating are serious, including imprisonment, loss of a parliamentary seat and/or disqualification as a voter for three years. Yet its ambit is unclear and it may set such a high threshold as to not regulate behavior that the public and Parliament think ought to be regulated and vice versa.</p>	Section 217 of the Electoral Act	Pages 38-39
23.	<p>Campaigning around advance voting places</p> <p>To ensure that voters have a good voting experience, the Commission believes legislative change is necessary to prohibit campaigning and the display of campaign material within advance voting places and in the immediate vicinity of advance voting places. Some certainty and physical demarcation would also help parties and candidates know where they can locate themselves without being in breach of section 197(1)(a).</p>	Section 197 of the Act and/or Part 2 of the Electoral Regulations	Page 41
24.	<p>The prohibition on campaigning on election day</p> <p>The Commission strongly believes that the immediate confines of voting places and advance voting places and their environs should be campaign-free and that rules are needed to ensure that voters can access voting places without impediment. However, the Commission recognises that what sort of election day New Zealanders want is a matter for Parliament to decide. Although the Commission does not have a position on it, we highlight that the current election day campaign rules are expected to be an issue that the Select Committee may well be asked to consider.</p>	Sections 197 and 198 of the Electoral Act	Page 42
25.	<p>Social media and websites on election day</p> <p>In the Commission's view the election day</p>	Section 197(2A) of the Electoral Act	Pages 42-43

	Issue	Legislative implications	Reference in report
	exemption for websites in section 197(2A) of the Act needs to be reviewed in light of the rise of social media. Parliament should consider whether parties and candidates should be able to take advantage of the exemption in section 197(2A) of the Act, while members of the public who share it in social media bear the legal consequences.		
26.	<p>'Selfies'</p> <p>In its report on the 2011 general election, the Commission recommended further consideration and debate on the extent to which electioneering on the internet and social media should be regulated and how any regulation might be effectively managed. The Commission continues to believe that it is timely that Parliament reviews the rules that apply to election day under section 197 and 198 of the Electoral Act, to consider whether they are still relevant, taking into account the growth of social media and advance voting.</p>	Sections 197 and 198 of the Electoral Act	Page 43
27.	<p>Enforcement</p> <p>The Commission recommends that consideration be given to whether the current enforcement provisions are adequate and how better enforcement can be achieved. A similar recommendation was made following the 2011 election.</p>	Depending on the outcome of this work, changes to the Electoral Act may be required.	Page 44
28.	<p>Need for participation to be a whole-of-Government priority and for a national participation strategy</p> <p>In the Commission's view, promoting voter participation needs to become a national strategic priority with multi-party support. New Zealand needs a long-term national strategy to nurture and celebrate our democratic culture and values and encourage participation.</p>	N/A	Page 51
29.	<p>Finding ways to meet the changing needs and expectations of voters</p> <p>Developing proposals for a programme of reform,</p>	The review is likely to result in further recommendations for legislative change	Page 52

	Issue	Legislative implications	Reference in report
	including what might be feasibly achieved in time for 2017, is a major piece of work which the Commission is currently undertaking. We aim to be in a position to provide further high level proposals to the Government by the end of July 2015. Detailed programme design work would need to be completed before the end of the year. We are conscious that any reform would almost certainly require operational and legislative change and may well require organizational change. We are also conscious that legislation affecting the 2017 election needs to be preceded by parliamentary and public consideration and scrutiny and needs to be in place no later than the end of 2016.	and will almost certainly have significant operational and organisational implications.	
30.	<p>Timing of advance voting</p> <p>One option might be for the advance voting period to be concentrated in the 12 days before election day when the overwhelming majority of early votes are cast (50% of advance votes are issued in the last three days of advance voting). This may allow a more consistent and cost-effective service to be provided and could be aligned with the delivery of the EasyVote packs to voters. Returning Officers would still be able to provide a limited early voting service from their headquarters from 17 days before election day for those voters who would otherwise not be able to access advance voting, because for example they are leaving for overseas.</p>	N/A. This is an operational matter	Page 53
31.	<p>Advance vote counts</p> <p>A new approach to the early count of advance votes may be required given the increasing number of advance votes. Given the logistical challenges of getting advance votes back to headquarters in large rural electorates, allowing the count to start earlier may not be an adequate solution. Changes will likely be required to the existing legislative provisions.</p>	Sections 174C-174G of the Electoral Act	Pages 53-54

	Issue	Legislative implications	Reference in report
32.	<p>Information for voters</p> <p>With postal services in decline and voters increasingly expecting to interact through digital channels, the Commission will be exploring how it can use alternative ways to provide information to electors. This may require legislative change.</p>	Depending on the outcome of the review this could require changes to the Electoral Act and regulations	Page 54
33.	<p>Special votes</p> <p>One option the Commission will be considering as part of the review of enrolment and voting services is whether there should be legislative change to enable the special vote declaration to be treated as an application to enrol or update enrolment details.</p>	Part 5 of the Electoral Act and Part 2 of the Electoral Regulations	Pages 54-56
34.	<p>Prescribed forms (including the enrolment form but excluding ballot papers)</p> <p>The Commission's review will include consideration of whether the electoral legislation should be amended to provide for the Commission to be able to issue forms such as enrolment and special declaration forms (but not ballot papers) in accordance with legal requirements specified in the legislation.</p>	A range of provisions including, sections 78, 83, 89C and s89D of the Electoral Act and forms in the Electoral Regulations	Page 56
35.	<p>Privacy concerns</p> <p>The Commission recommends that electoral rolls (and habitation indexes) no longer be available for general sale, that the inspection of rolls should be limited to offices of the Commission, and that house/flat/apartment number and occupation information should no longer be included in rolls available for inspection.</p> <p>The Commission recommends that these and other matters concerning access to the rolls be reviewed, in consultation with the Privacy Commissioner, to encourage enrolment and protect the privacy of electors' personal information. The review should consider what access should be available for non-electoral and secondary purposes (i.e. purposes other than the conduct of local and parliamentary elections and referendums, jury lists, the iwi affiliation service, and for parties and candidates) and how access</p>	Part 5 of the Act and Part 1 of the Electoral Regulations	Pages 56-57

	Issue	Legislative implications	Reference in report
	for electoral purposes can be given in a way that protects privacy.		
36.	<p>Technology: Real-time enrolment checking</p> <p>The Commission will be exploring the feasibility of providing electoral officials access to an online enrolment checking function in voting places. Electoral officials in voting places would need additional access to enrolment information to enable a real-time enrolment checking function. Amendments to the Electoral Act may be required to enable this.</p>	Section 123 of the Electoral Act	Pages 57-58
37.	<p>Technology: Special vote processing</p> <p>Regulation 36 of the Electoral Regulations needs to be amended to remove reference to 'endorsement' to facilitate a fully electronic process for special declaration vote processing.</p>	Regulation 36, Electoral Regulations	Page 58

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REPORT OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION ON THE REVIEW OF THE MMP VOTING SYSTEM

- The one electorate seat threshold for the allocation of list seats should be abolished.
- The party vote threshold should be lowered from 5% to 4%.
- There should be a statutory requirement for the Electoral Commission to review the operation of the 4% party vote threshold and report to the Minister of Justice for presentation to Parliament after three general elections.
- If the one electorate seat threshold is abolished, the provision for overhang seats should be abolished.
- Consideration should be given to fixing the ratio of electorate seats to list seats at 60:40 to help maintain the diversity of representation and proportionality in Parliament obtained through the list seats.
- Political parties should continue to have responsibility for the selection and ranking of candidates on their party lists.
- Political parties should be required to give a public assurance by statutory declaration that they have complied with their rules in selecting and ranking their list candidates.
- In any dispute relating to the selection of candidates for election as members of Parliament, the version of the party's rules that should be applied is that supplied to the Commission under section 71B as at the time the dispute arose.
- Candidates should continue to be able to stand both for an electorate seat and be on a party list at a general election.
- List MPs should continue to be able to contest by-elections.

ANNEX C

KEY ELECTION DATES

10 March	Announcement by PM
20 June	Start of regulated period for election expenses
23 June	Launch of Enrolment Update Campaign
14 August	Dissolution of Parliament
20 August	Writ Day
26 August	Nomination Day
3 September	Advance and overseas voting commences
20 September	Election Day and preliminary results
4 October	Official Results
9 October	Due date for return of writ (was delayed until 10 October due to judicial recount)
10 October	Return of writ and declaration of election of list members

ANNEX D

EXTRACT FROM SURVEY OF VOTERS AND NON-VOTERS

Sample			Total	Youth	Māori	Pasifika	Asian	Disabled	Non-Voters
Random	750	Ordinary Vote	90%	75%	90%	86%	90%	91%	N/A
Māori	185	Special Vote	9%	24%	10%	14%	10%	8%	N/A
Pasifika	151	Voted in advance	30%	24%	29%	41%	27%	35%	N/A
Asian	189	Good or excellent overall understanding of voting process	93%	84%	89%	83%	77%	94%	70%
Youth	172	Good or excellent understanding of how to enrol	92%	85%	91%	90%	82%	94%	77%
Disabled	232	Awareness of advertising about the voting process	58%	59%	54%	45%	47%	50%	42%
Non-voters	75	Read or Glanced at EasyVote Pack	85%	77%	81%	90%	91%	82%	76%
Total	1,310	Found EasyVote pack useful or very useful	86%	84%	74%	88%	88%	83%	70
		Took EasyVote card	78%	64%	77%	69%	78%	78%	N/A
		Time taken to vote was reasonable	97%	97%	96%	92%	95%	97%	N/A
		Overall rating of ballot paper (very good to excellent)	94%	98%	98%	96%	97%	94%	N/A
		<i>Rating of Voting Place (very good to excellent)</i>							
		Convenience	98%	96%	97%	94%	96%	97%	N/A
		Signage	85%	87%	86%	93%	90%	82%	N/A
		Ease of placing vote	98%	97%	94%	97%	98%	99%	N/A
		Privacy	90%	81%	93%	95%	93%	79%	N/A
		Staff - politeness	98%	97%	96%	96%	97%	98%	N/A
		- ability to answer questions (excluding don't know)	97%	96%	96%	98%	97%	98%	N/A
		- efficiency	97%	97%	95%	96%	96%	97%	N/A
		<i>Decision not to vote (timing)</i>							
		Election Day							30%
		1 week before							22%
		more than 1 week before							31%
		Overall rating of voting process (very good to excellent)	92%	90%	86%	98%	96%	88%	N/A

ANNEX E

ENROLMENT COMPARISONS AS AT WRIT DAY

<i>Writ Day – Overall Enrolment</i>	2014	2011	2008	2005
Estimated eligible voting age population	3,391,100	3,276,000	3,138,000	2,990,300
Enrolled electors	3,060,957	3,013,651	2,935,537	2,812,033
% enrolled	90.3%	92.0%	93.6%	94.0%

<i>Writ Day – Māori Enrolment</i>	2014	2011	2008	2005
General Roll	192,577	182,711	171,475	166,822
Māori Roll	230,337	226,925	224,305	204,519
Total Enrolled	422,914	409,636	395,780	371,341

<i>Writ Day – 18 to 34 Year Olds</i>	2014	2011	2008	2005
18 - 24 Year Olds	72.1%	74.3%	78.3%	79.2%
25 - 29 Year Olds	77.4%	81.8%	89.2%	94.3%
30 - 34 Year Olds	83.9%	90.7%	Not Available	Not Available

<i>Writ Day – Dormant Roll</i>	2014	2011	2008	2005
General Roll – Dormant	170,280	164,355	141,919	116,228
Māori Roll – Dormant	27,133	26,153	23,717	20,558
Total Dormant Roll	197,413	190,508	165,636	136,786

<i>Writ Day – Enrolments with Overseas Mailing Address</i>	2014	2011	2008	2005
	47,875	48,514	52,778	39,588

ANNEX F

ENROLMENT DOCUMENTS PROCESSED 4 WEEKS PRIOR TO AND POST WRIT DAY 2014

		Enrolment Documents Processed		Net Roll Increase		
		Number of Documents	Percent of Total Documents Processed	Net Roll Increase	Percent of Total Net Increase	Percent of Total Documents Processed For Week
4 Weeks Prior to Writ Day	Week 4	26,164	18.5%	9,086	17.3%	34.7%
	Week 3	34,165	24.1%	12,174	23.2%	35.6%
	Week 2	39,465	27.9%	14,977	28.5%	38.0%
	Week 1	41,814	29.5%	16,227	31.0%	38.8%
	Total	141,608	100.0%	52,464	100.0%	37.0%
4 Weeks Post Writ Day	Week 1	26,432	15.9%	10,719	13.5%	40.6%
	Week 2	27,181	16.3%	11,129	14.0%	40.9%
	Week 3	49,429	29.6%	22,835	28.7%	46.2%
	Week 4	63,698	38.2%	34,777	43.8%	54.6%
	Total	166,740	100.0%	79,460	100.0%	47.7%

Net Enrolment Increase – Writ Day to Election Day	2014	2011	2008	2005
Enrolled Electors	79,460	57,196	55,222	35,363
% Increase	2.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.3%

ANNEX G

SPLIT VOTING ANALYSIS – NATIONWIDE SURVEY

Summary Statistics of Split and Non Split Candidate Votes by Party

Party	Total Party Votes	Non Split Candidate Votes		Split Candidate Votes	
		Votes	%	Votes	%
ACT New Zealand	16,689	4,279	25.64	12,410	74.36
Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis Party	10,961	973	8.88	9,988	91.12
Ban1080	5,113	1,008	19.71	4,105	80.29
Conservative	95,598	38,511	40.28	57,087	59.72
Democrats for Social Credit	1,730	766	44.28	964	55.72
Focus New Zealand	639	178	27.86	461	72.14
Green Party	257,359	89,084	34.61	168,275	65.39
Internet MANA	34,094	14,464	42.42	19,630	57.58
Labour Party	604,535	497,307	82.26	107,228	17.74
Māori Party	31,849	15,844	49.75	16,005	50.25
National Party	1,131,501	942,266	83.28	189,235	16.72
New Zealand First Party	208,300	46,169	22.16	162,131	77.84
NZ Independent Coalition	872	157	18.00	715	82.00
The Civilian Party	1,096	0	0.00	1,096	100.00
United Future	5,286	479	9.06	4,807	90.94
Informal Party Votes	10,857	337	3.10	10,520	96.90
Total Party Votes and Percentages	2,416,479	1,651,822	68.36	764,657	31.64

ANNEX H

INFORMAL VOTE ANALYSIS – 2014 GENERAL ELECTION

At the 2014 general election, 670 informal ballots were examined from 135 voting places across two General electorates and two Māori electorates.

Reason for informality	Percentage of informal ballot papers	Deliberately informal (D) or informal by mistake (M)
Blank ballot paper	7.8%	D
Crossed out on both candidate and party sides of ballot paper	0.2%	D
Blank or crossed out party vote, valid candidate vote	1.9%	D
Blank or crossed out candidate vote, valid party vote	65.8%	D
Two party votes but no candidate vote	14.2%	M
Two party votes and one or more candidate votes	8.4%	M
Informal for other reasons	1.7%	M

Percentage of informal votes that appear deliberate	75.7%
Percentage of informal votes that appear to be due to voter mistakes	24.3%

ANNEX I

BROADCASTING ALLOCATION 2014 GENERAL ELECTION

	6 June	6 June		20 August Variation	20 August Variation	20 August Variation	29 August Variation	29 August Variation
Parties	Monetary allocation (inclusive of GST)	Time allocation of opening addresses (in minutes)	Time allocation for closing addresses (in minutes)	Monetary allocation (inclusive of GST)	Time allocation of opening addresses (in minutes)	Time allocation for closing addresses (in minutes)	Monetary allocation (inclusive of GST)	Time allocation for closing addresses (in minutes and seconds)
The New Zealand National Party (National Party)	\$1,053,622	15m30s	15m30s	\$1,076,229	15m30s	15m30s	\$1,087,902	16m15s
The New Zealand Labour Party (Labour Party)	\$919,829	13m30s	13m30s	\$939,565	13m30s	13m30s	\$949,756	14m10s
The Green Party of Aotearoa/New Zealand (Green Party)	\$401,380	7m30s	7m30s	\$409,993	7m30s	7m30s	\$414,439	7m55s
New Zealand First (NZ First)	\$200,690	4m30s	4m30s	\$204,996	4m30s	4m30s	\$207,220	4m45s
Māori Party	\$100,345	2m30s	2m30s	\$102,498	2m30s	2m30s	\$103,610	2m40s
ACT New Zealand (ACT Party)	\$76,930	2m	2m	\$76,930	2m	2m	\$76,930	2m
Internet Party and MANA Movement (Internet MANA)	\$76,930	2m	2m	\$78,581	2m	2m	\$79,433	2m5s
United Future New Zealand (United Future)	\$76,930	2m	2m	\$78,581	2m	2m	\$79,433	2m5s
New Zealand Independent Coalition (NZIC)	\$76,930	2m	2m	\$78,581	2m	2m	\$79,433	2m5s

	6 June	6 June		20 August Variation	20 August Variation	20 August Variation	29 August Variation	29 August Variation
Parties	Monetary allocation (inclusive of GST)	Time allocation of opening addresses (in minutes)	Time allocation for closing addresses (in minutes)	Monetary allocation (inclusive of GST)	Time allocation of opening addresses (in minutes)	Time allocation for closing addresses (in minutes)	Monetary allocation (inclusive of GST)	Time allocation for closing addresses (in minutes and seconds)
Conservative Party of New Zealand (Conservative Party)	\$60,207	1m30s	1m30s	\$61,499	1m30s	1m30s	\$62,166	1m40s
The Alliance (Alliance)	\$33,635	1m	1m	\$34,357	1m	1m	-	-
Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis Party (ALCP)	\$33,635	1m	1m	\$34,357	1m	1m	\$34,729	1m5s
The Civilian Party (Civilian)	\$33,635	1m	1m	\$34,357	1m	1m	\$34,729	1m5s
The Expatriate Party of New Zealand (Expat Party)	\$33,635	1m	1m	-	-	-	-	-
Focus New Zealand (Focus NZ)	\$33,635	1m	1m	\$34,357	1m	1m	\$34,729	1m5s
The New Zealand Democratic Party for Social Credit (Democrats for Social Credit)	\$33,635	1m	1m	\$34,357	1m	1m	\$34,729	1m5s
Truth, Freedom, Justice	\$33,635	1m	1m	-	-	-	-	-
Radio New Zealand (RNZ)	\$4,012	-	-	\$4,012	-	-	\$4,012	-
Total allocated	\$3,283,250	60	60	\$3,283,250	58	58	\$3,283,250	60
Total available	\$3,283,250	60	60	\$3,283,250	60	60	\$3,283,250	60

ANNEX J

STATISTICS ON NOMINATIONS

Candidates at 2014 Election

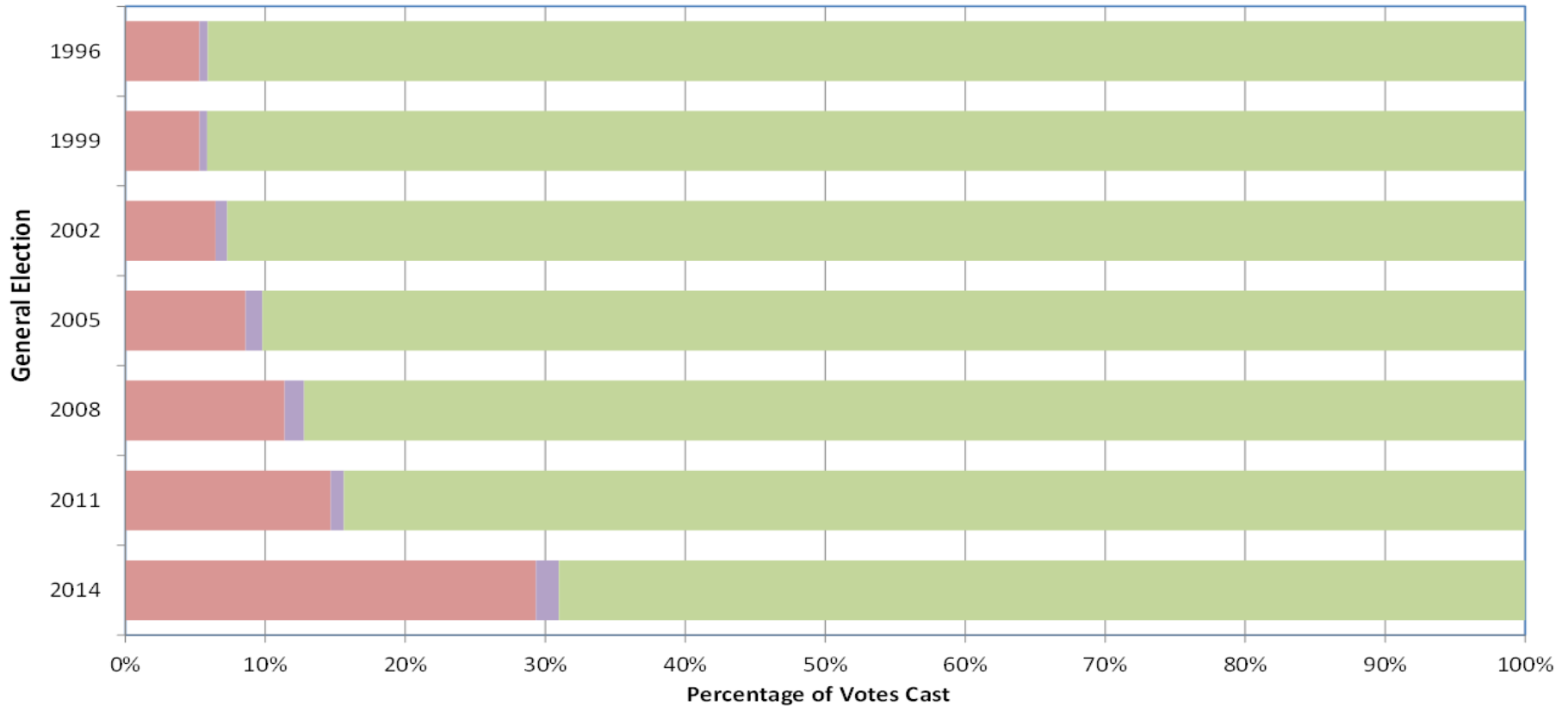
Candidates of Party Contesting Party Vote		
Dual candidates	369	
List only candidates	71	
Electorate only candidates	76	
Total		<u>516</u>
Independent candidates and candidates representing unregistered parties		38
Total		<u>554</u>

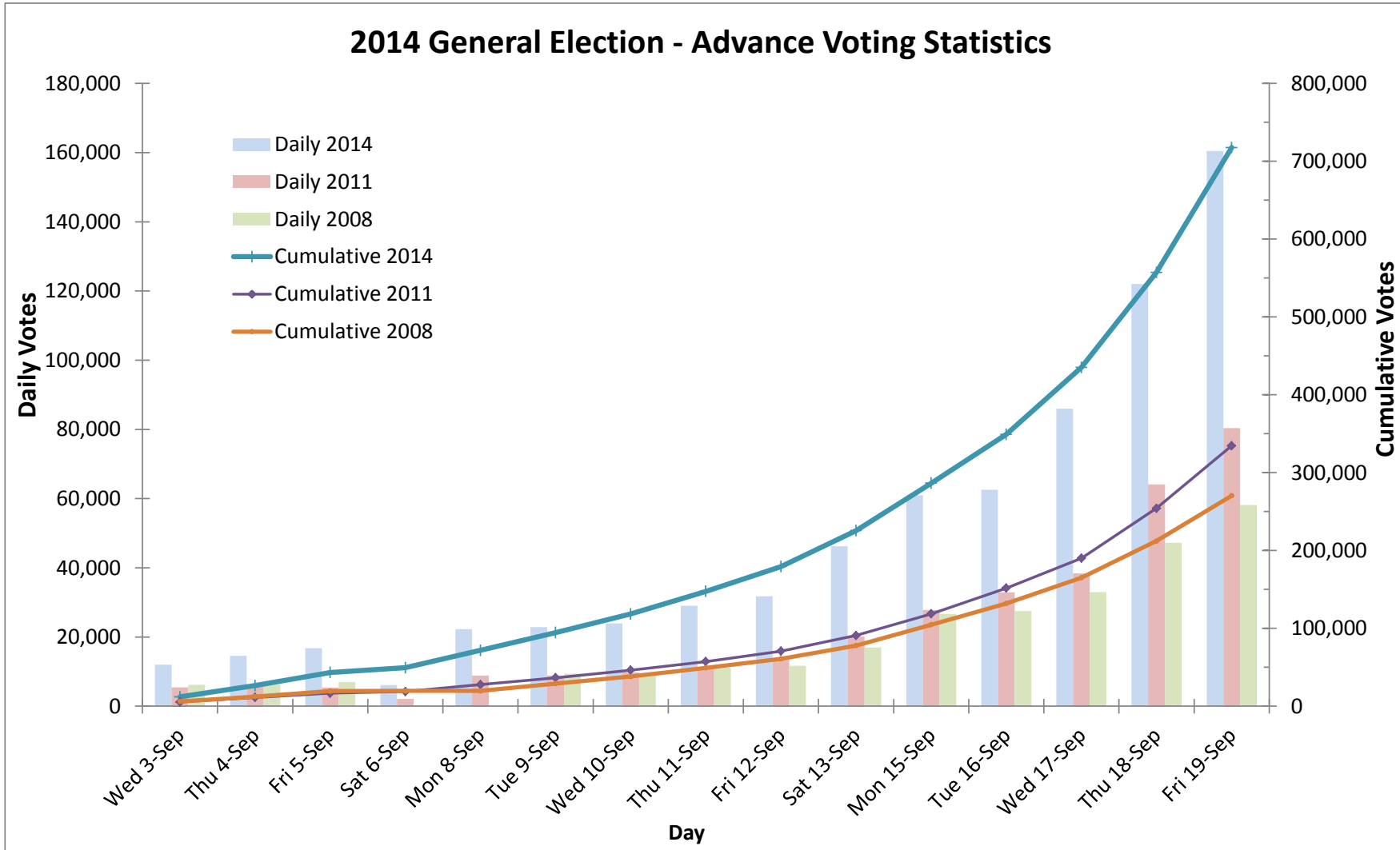
GENERAL NOMINATION STATISTICS

Category	2014	2011
Parties contesting party vote	15	13
Male candidates	390 (70%)	397 (73%)
Female candidates	164 (30%)	147 (27%)
Total number of candidates	554	544
List only candidates	71	91
Electorate only candidates	114	73
Dual candidates	369	380
Average number of electorate candidates per electorate	6.8	6.5

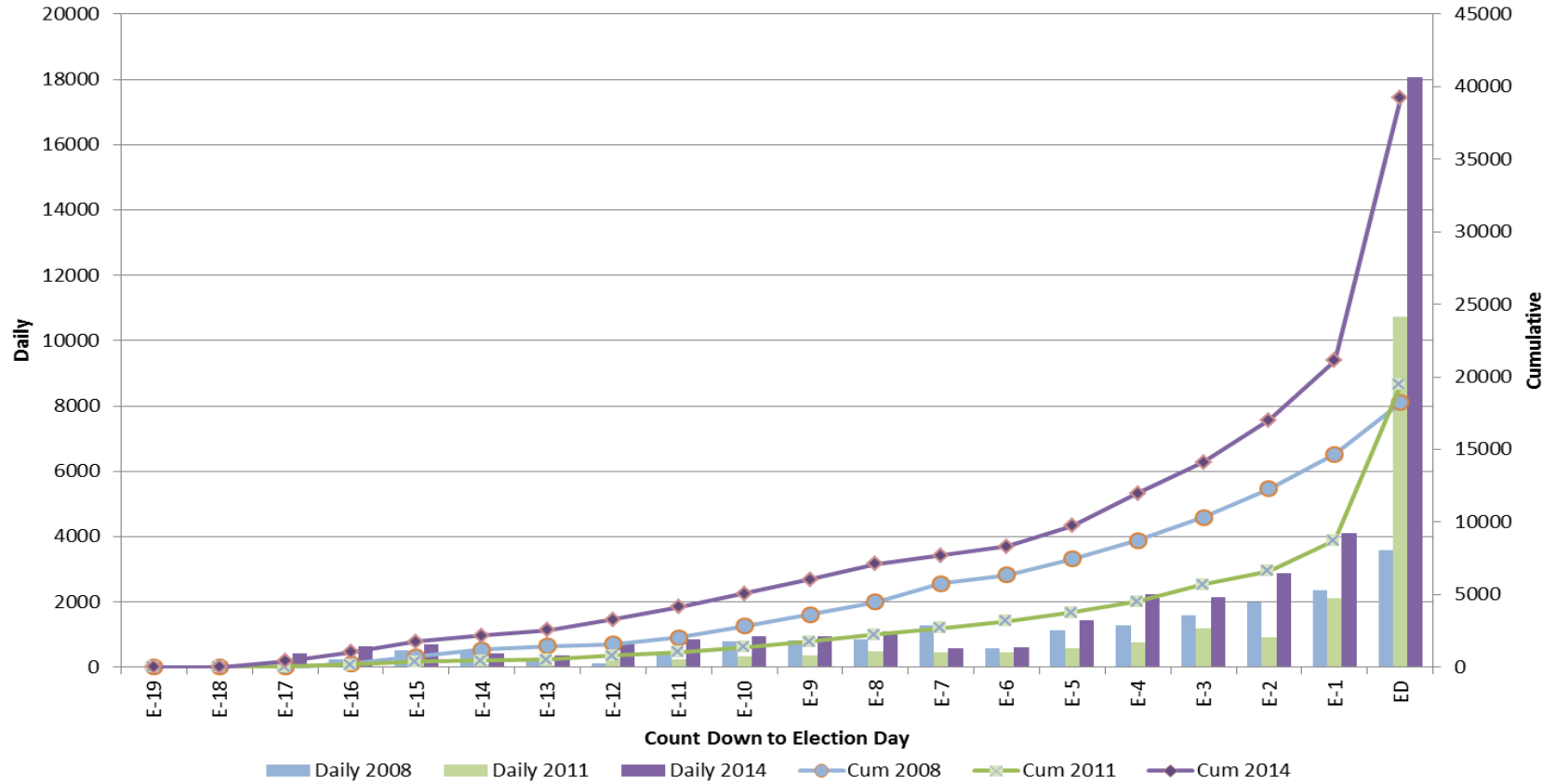
Voting Patterns 1996 - 2014 General Elections

Advance Votes Overseas Votes Election Day Votes





Total Overseas Votes Received 2008-2014
Including votes received at overseas posts



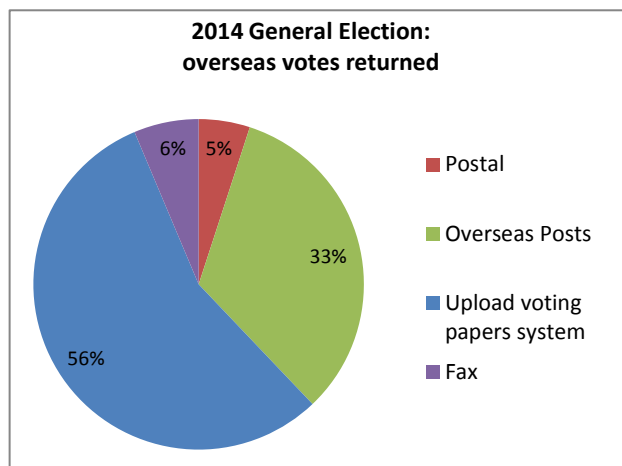
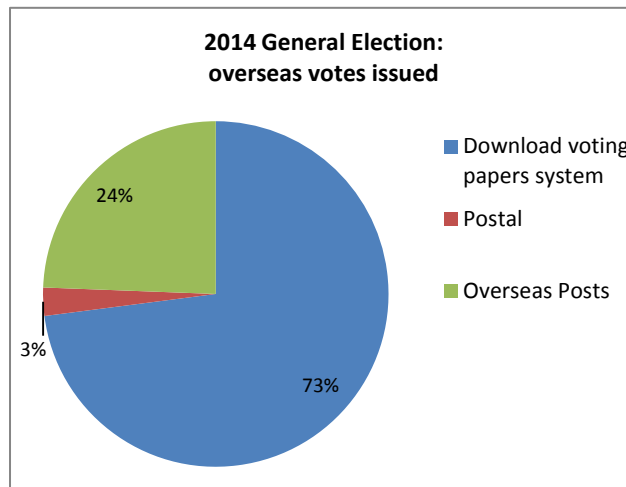
ANNEX O

NUMBER OF OVERSEAS VOTING PAPERS ISSUED AND RECEIVED

STANDARD VOTING SERVICES	Votes Issued	Votes Received
Download voting papers system	34,055	-
Postal	1,229	2,008
Overseas Posts	11,389	13,170
Upload voting papers system	-	22,333
Fax	-	2,541

REMOTE VOTING SERVICES		
Electronic (email) <i>Excluding fishing vessels</i>	0	7
Electronic (email) <i>Fishing vessels only</i>	60	56
Fax	0	0
Dictation	-	17

TOTAL	46,733	40,132
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ANNEX P

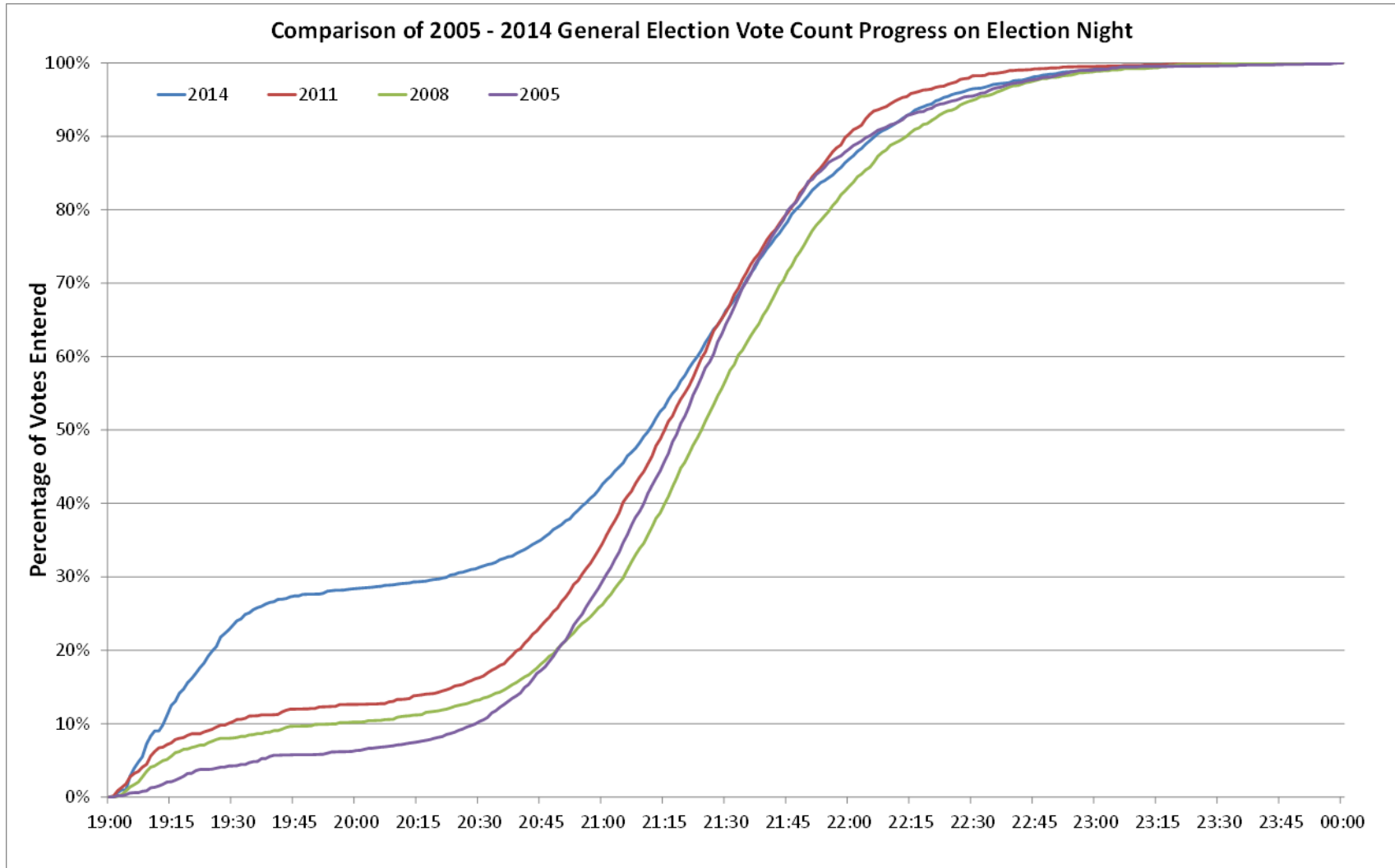
TOP 10 COUNTRIES – FROM WHICH OVERSEAS VOTES RETURNED	
Australia	14,166
UK	8,764
USA	3,288
Canada	1,211
France	1,065
China (including Hong Kong)	997
Germany	977
Singapore	634
Italy	491
Japan	419

TOP 10 OVERSEAS POSTS – VOTES RETURNED	
UK, London	3,736
Australia, Melbourne (Victorian Electoral Commission)	716
Australia, Perth	549
Australia, Gold Coast	447
Australia, Brisbane	420
France, Paris	376
USA, New York	352
Australia, Melbourne (Australian Electoral Commission)	343
Germany, Berlin	335
Samoa, Apia	311

ANNEX Q

NUMBER OF HOSPITAL VOTES ON ELECTION DAY

Hospital	Total Votes Taken
Auckland	1,215
Christchurch (Public Hospital and Princess Margaret)	1,462
Dunedin	684
Gisborne	417
Greymouth	127
Hawera	184
Hawkes Bay	479
Kenepuru	197
Lower Hutt	427
Papatoetoe (Middlemore)	488
North Shore	441
Palmerston North	251
Reefton	91
Rotorua	315
Taranaki	263
Waikato	546
Wellington	297
Whangarei	474
Total	8,378



ANNEX S

ADVANCE VOTE RESULTS 2014 GENERAL ELECTION

Party	Party Votes	% Votes	Electorate Seats	List Seats	Total Seats
National Party	300,237	47.85	41	19	60
Labour Party	153,656	24.49	26	5	31
Green Party	62,597	9.98	0	13	13
New Zealand First Party	57,288	9.13	0	11	11
Internet MANA	9,434	1.50	1	1	2
Māori Party	8,368	1.33	1	1	2
ACT New Zealand	3,751	0.60	1	0	1
United Future	1,230	0.20	1	0	1
Conservative	27,272	4.35	0	0	0
Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis Party	1,673	0.27	0	0	0
Ban1080	897	0.14	0	0	0
Democrats for Social Credit	472	0.08	0	0	0
NZ Independent Coalition	262	0.04	0	0	0
Focus New Zealand	171	0.03	0	0	0
The Civilian Party	168	0.03	0	0	0
			71	50	121

ANNEX T

2014 GENERAL ELECTION PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Party	Party Votes	% Votes	Electorate Seats	List Seats	Total Seats
National Party	1,010,464	48.06	41	20	61
Labour Party	519,146	24.69	27	5	32
Green Party	210,764	10.02	0	13	13
New Zealand First Party	186,031	8.85	0	11	11
Māori Party	27,074	1.29	1	1	2
ACT New Zealand	14,510	0.69	1	0	1
United Future	4,533	0.22	1	0	1
Conservative	86,616	4.12	0	0	0
Internet MANA	26,539	1.26	0	0	0
Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis Party	8,539	0.41	0	0	0
Ban1080	4,368	0.21	0	0	0
Democrats for Social Credit	1,609	0.08	0	0	0
The Civilian Party	906	0.04	0	0	0
NZ Independent Coalition	895	0.04	0	0	0
Focus New Zealand	677	0.03	0	0	0
			71	50	121

ANNEX U

OFFICIAL RESULTS 2014 GENERAL ELECTION

Party	Party Votes	% Votes	Electorate Seats	List Seats	Total Seats
National Party	1,131,501	47.04	41	19	60
Labour Party	604,534	25.13	27	5	32
Green Party	257,356	10.70	0	14	14
New Zealand First Party	208,300	8.66	0	11	11
Māori Party	31,850	1.32	1	1	2
ACT New Zealand	16,689	0.69	1	0	1
United Future	5,286	0.22	1	0	1
Conservative	95,598	3.97	0	0	0
Internet MANA	34,095	1.42	0	0	0
Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis Party	10,961	0.46	0	0	0
Ban1080	5,113	0.21	0	0	0
Democrats for Social Credit	1,730	0.07	0	0	0
The Civilian Party	1,096	0.05	0	0	0
NZ Independent Coalition	872	0.04	0	0	0
Focus New Zealand	639	0.03	0	0	0
			71	50	121

ANNEX V

SUMMARY – ELECTORAL COMMISSION ENQUIRIES BY CATEGORY – 2014

