

19 February 2026

By email to: [REDACTED]

Kia ora [REDACTED]

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST 2026/04

On Tuesday, 20 January 2026 you made a request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA) for the following information:

I request the following information relating to the Electoral Commission's acknowledged shortage of Māori roll ballot papers at multiple voting places during the 2023 General Election.

To ensure clarity and completeness, this request is structured into specific categories. Each category should be treated as a request for all documents, data, internal communications, reports, briefings, emails, memos, and operational records held by the Commission.

1. Operational Failures and Decision-Making

- All internal analyses or reports identifying the causes of Māori roll ballot shortages
- All forecasting models, assumptions, or calculations used to determine ballot paper quantities for Māori roll voting places
- All internal communications (emails, Teams messages, memos, meeting notes) discussing ballot supply risks, concerns, or warnings prior to or during the election period

2. Locations and Scale of Impact

- A complete list of all voting places where Māori roll ballot papers ran out, were insufficient, or required emergency resupply
- The duration of shortages at each affected location
- Any recorded impacts on voter experience, including delays, redirections, or inability to vote

3. Corrective Actions and Post-Election Review

- All post-election reviews or debrief documents addressing ballot supply issues
- Any recommendations, decisions, or directives issued to prevent recurrence
- Any changes to forecasting methodology implemented since the 2023 General Election

4. Planning for the 2026 General Election

- All planning documents, risk assessments, or supply models relating to Māori roll ballot paper quantities for 2026
- Any contingency plans for high-turnout scenarios or unexpected demand

- *Any formal assurances or commitments made internally or externally regarding adequate Māori roll ballot supply*

It is noted in the opening of your request that you are seeking 'information relating to the Electoral Commission's acknowledged shortage of Māori roll ballot papers at multiple voting places during the 2023 General Election'. The Commission has no record or recollection of acknowledging any shortages of Māori roll ballot papers during the 2023 General Election, or in any of its post-election reporting. Having stated this, the Commission is able to respond to your subsequent requests where they do not relate to Māori roll ballot shortages during that election.

1. Operational Failures and Decision Making

- *All internal analyses or reports identifying the causes of Māori roll ballot shortages*

We do not have any substantiated claims that any voting places ran out of Māori roll ballot papers. We do have evidence of 11 voting places being unable to issue votes for a period of time. Those voting places, and the reasons why this occurred are found in the attached spreadsheet.

- *All forecasting models, assumptions, or calculations used to determine ballot paper quantities for Māori roll voting places*

Early on in 2023 (the year of the election), the Electoral Commission National Office estimated the total pads needed for each electorate based on last election's printed number plus any adjustments for population change. This is used to procure suppliers for the printing of the ballots.

This number was refined later in the year based on estimated votes entered by the Electorate Managers and Issuing roles for each voting place.

Electorate Managers (EM) entered estimated votes in the Commission's Election Management System for each voting place by following a set of instructions. If the voting place is new, they base the information on a similar voting place. If the voting place is re-used from the previous election, the EM will check to see if anything has changed in the electorate and update estimated votes accordingly.

The information that EMs use to complete the above comes from a mix of previous election voting place information, information in the Election Management System and information from historical datasets, which provide a breakdown of the number and types of votes each voting place took in previous electoral events. The EM will regularly review these assumptions as they are building their voting services throughout the year.

Māori ballot quantities to be supplied to each electorate were calculated at one pad for every 18 estimated votes (a pad contains 20 ballots), plus one pad per Issuing Officer by delivery week (i.e. advance voting week 1, advance voting week 2, and election day).

This approach ensured that each voting place was able to be provided with more ballot papers than the number of votes it was estimated to take. As well as providing this contingency, the electorate headquarters retained a supply of Māori ballot papers that could be delivered to a voting place if there was any likelihood that it would run out.

It is up to the EM to ensure each voting place receives enough ballot pads.

- *All internal communications (emails, Teams messages, memos, meeting notes) discussing ballot supply risks, concerns, or warnings prior to or during the election period*

There are no internal communications to be provided in response to this request. As this information does not exist, we refuse this aspect of your request pursuant to section 18(e) of the Official Information Act.

2. Locations and Scale of Impact

- *A complete list of all voting places where Māori roll ballot papers ran out, were insufficient, or required emergency resupply*

As stated above we have no verified record of running out of Māori roll ballot papers.

- *The duration of shortages at each affected location*

Not applicable.

- *Any recorded impacts on voter experience, including delays, redirections, or inability to vote*

Not applicable.

3. Corrective Actions and Post Election Review

- *All post election reviews or debrief documents addressing ballot supply issues*

The Report of the Electoral Commission on the 2023 General Election can be found here <https://elections.nz/assets/2023-General-Election/Report-on-the-2023-General-Election.pdf>.

In 2023, we saw a pronounced shift to increased enrolment activity after writ day when the electoral rolls used for issuing ordinary votes are printed.

More than 600,000 enrolments or updates happened after writ day, including 450,000 during the voting period, of which 110,000 occurred on election day. In turn, this contributed to significant growth in special declaration votes to over 600,000 (21% of voters).

Special votes take longer to issue and process than ordinary votes, and this growth put pressure on voting place services, especially on election day, and may have led to voters having to queue for a period of time.

It is possible that some voters may have thought that such wait times were the result of the voting place running out of voting papers, when this was not the case.

- *Any recommendations, decisions, or directives issued to prevent recurrence*

Again, we do not believe this issue occurred during the 2023 General Election.

- *Any changes to forecasting methodology implemented since the 2023 General Election*

The Commission intends to use the same process as detailed in response to request 1 for the 2026 General Election. This is because it ensures that the Commission prints and provides to each voting place a quantity of Māori electorate ballot papers that exceeds the number of votes it is estimated to take.

4. Planning for the 2026 General Election

- *All planning documents, risk assessments, or supply models relating to Māori roll ballot paper quantities for 2026*

The Electoral Commission does not currently hold this information. As this information does not exist, we refuse this aspect of your request pursuant to section 18(e) of the Official Information Act.

- *Any contingency plans for high turnout scenarios or unexpected demand*

The contingency plan is to issue ballots from photocopied and/or handwritten ballots. This instruction is provided to all Issuing Officers in their Personal Instruction Manual.

As noted above, the electorate headquarters will also dispatch additional voting papers on request ahead of a voting place running out of them.

- *Any formal assurances or commitments made internally or externally regarding adequate Māori roll ballot supply*

The Electoral Commission is committed to ensuring all voting places have the supplies they need to issue votes for the electorates in each voting place. We have made this commitment in the Electoral Commission's [General Election Report on the 2023 General Election](#) (page 90).

In the interests of transparency, we release responses to Official Information Act requests every 3 months. We will publish this response with your personal details redacted.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to make a complaint to the Ombudsman if you are not satisfied with the response to your request. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Martin Rodgers
Director, Voting Services