

6 August 2025

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Tēnā koutou

**RE: NOTICE OF INTENTION TO SEEK JUDICIAL REVIEW**

This letter is in response to the enrolment-related concerns raised in your letter of 31 July 2025. Crown Law will respond separately to a letter from Carson Fox Legal dated 1 August 2025.

Nothing has changed in recent weeks to the enrolment processes that we follow. The Electoral Commission (the Commission) is following the legislative processes for the roll inquiry (enrolment update) campaign conducted prior to local elections.

The campaign began in April with a mailout to 3.6 million voters and nationwide advertising. We followed up with text messages and emails to people whose enrolment details were out of date. The purpose was to inform Māori electors who wanted to change rolls for the local elections to do so by 10 July 2025 and for people to enrol or update their details by 1 August, so they would receive their voting papers for the local elections in the mail.

We planned for higher volumes of calls to our freephone line in the weeks before 10 July and 1 August. We have received hundreds of calls a day over the past few days, which is higher than expected. Search traffic on our [vote.nz](https://vote.nz) enrolment look-up service has been at relatively normal levels for an enrolment campaign, other than on 30 and 31 July (where it was about 10 times higher than normal).

The following information is provided to explain:

- how the electoral rolls must be maintained by the Commission for parliamentary and local elections
- how the rolls can be inspected and how an elector can check their enrolment details, and
- the circumstances in which electors' names must be removed from the rolls.

## **Registration of electors and the maintenance of electoral rolls**

The Commission is responsible for the registration of electors and maintaining the electoral rolls in accordance with Part 5 of the Electoral Act 1993 (the Act).

A person is eligible to enrol and vote if they are 18 years or older, a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident, and have lived in New Zealand continuously for 12 months or more.

By law, eligible electors must enrol, and keep their enrolment details up to date.

It is important for the accuracy and integrity of the electoral rolls that they are kept up to date, to ensure voters are correctly enrolled to vote in the electorate (or ward or area for local elections) where they have lived for the last month.

The Commission must maintain a main and dormant roll for each electorate. The main and dormant rolls are continuously updated on a daily basis and therefore change all the time.

As of 5 August, there are 3,316,761 electors on rolls for general electorates, and 298,667 electors on the rolls for Māori electorates. There are 113,402 people on dormant rolls. Of these, 98,703 are on dormant rolls for general electorates, and 14,699 are on dormant rolls for Māori electorates.

### **The dormant roll**

The dormant roll is the list of electors who have been removed from the main roll for a Māori or general electorate because they cannot be contacted at their place of residence. When correspondence from the Commission is returned, and the whereabouts of the elector is not known, the Commission must by law, following any inquiries the Commission thinks fit, remove the elector from the main roll and place them on the dormant roll.

The Commission is not able to write to electors to tell them they have been put on the dormant roll, as their current address is not known. However, where we have mobile numbers or email addresses, we will attempt to contact electors by text and email to encourage them to update their details prior to them being made dormant.

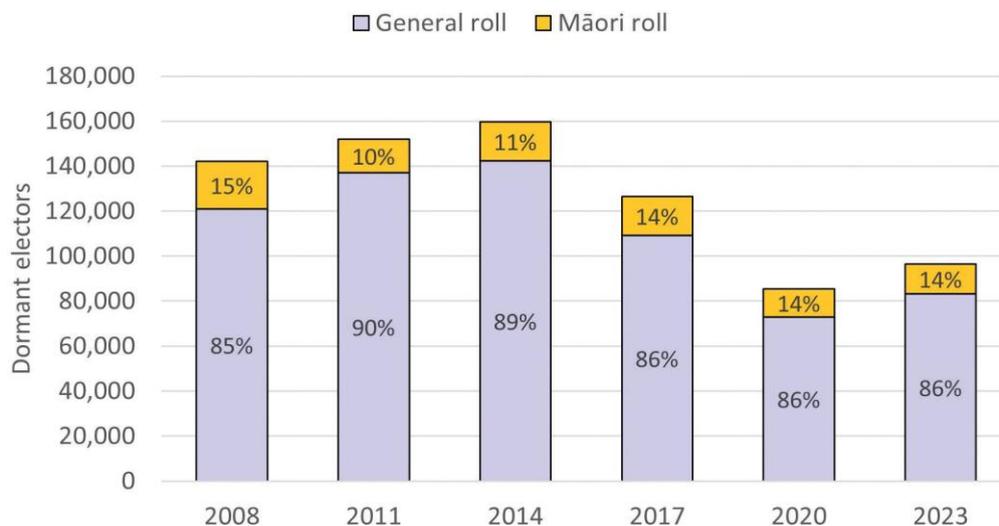
If correspondence is returned to sender due to an error with the postal delivery of correspondence, but the elector does in fact continue to reside at that address, the Commission can correct the removal from the roll under section 98(2) of the Act.

The dormant roll as it exists at polling day for the last general election must be available for public inspection at the Commission's offices.

If a person on the dormant roll checks their details online on the vote.nz website, they will not find their details and will receive a message that they need to reconfirm their details with us.

People on the dormant roll are still able to vote in parliamentary elections for up to three years after they are placed on the dormant roll, but need to cast a special vote because they do not appear on the printed roll.

The following graph provides a breakdown for people on the dormant general and Māori rolls, which shows the number of people on the dormant rolls has been declining for recent elections.



### The enrolment update campaign

By law the Commission must write to all registered electors before a general election and the triennial local body elections to check electors' details are up to date.

During an enrolment update campaign, we receive large numbers of returned mail from NZ Post marked "Gone no address" (GNA). A GNA notifies the Commission our correspondence could not be delivered to an elector at their address on the roll.

This is normally because an elector has moved address and not updated their enrolment record. The levels of GNAs we are receiving during this campaign are typical of what we usually see in a local election campaign. We are processing GNAs as we receive them. Where we get a GNA, electors remain on the roll while we try to contact them through email, text or an alternate address if we have this information. After four weeks, if we have not heard from the elector, e.g. the elector has not updated their details through a form or the online enrolment system, they will be put on the dormant roll.

By way of example, on 23 July, 12,496 electors were placed on the dormant rolls via this process. On 30 July, 8,622 electors were also placed on the dormant rolls via this process. If an elector in this group had checked their enrolment details using our vote.nz look-up service in mid-July, they would have found their record - but had they checked it after being placed on the dormant roll, their record would not appear.

The table below shows GNAs received, and electors placed on the dormant roll because they did not respond to follow up inquiries.

	<b>NUMBER OF GNA</b>	<b>ELECTORS PLACED ON DORMANT ROLLS</b>
2022 LOCAL ELECTIONS CAMPAIGN	133,022	67,949
2025 LOCAL ELECTIONS CAMPAIGN (TO 05/08/2025)	103,487	22,625

### **Access to the main rolls**

The main roll is the list of registered electors for a Māori or general electorate. The main rolls must be printed annually and are available for public inspection at the Commission’s offices and public libraries. The names of unpublished electors must not appear in the printed rolls. The main roll print for this year is as at 1 August 2025 and they will be available for public inspection from late August 2025.

In addition to the inspection of the main rolls, the law also allows any elector to inspect their own application for registration as an elector at the Commission’s offices.

As well as the legal right to inspect the rolls, the Commission enables electors to check their enrolment details on [vote.nz](https://www.vote.nz). This is a non-statutory service to help electors check if their enrolment details are up to date or if they need to update them.

There are a number of reasons why someone who believes they are enrolled might not find themselves using this service. They could:

- in fact not be enrolled
- be on the dormant roll
- be on the unpublished roll
- have submitted an enrolment application that is still being processed.

Even if a person is correctly enrolled, they may not find themselves if they:

- make errors when manually typing their address, rather than using the address finder
- enter an address that is different to the address in their enrolment record
- enter a first name and surname or date of birth that does not match their enrolment details

- use an auto-complete function on the web browser on their device and it enters incorrect or out of date information, or enters address information into the wrong fields.

To maintain voter privacy, the search must match the information contained in an elector's record. It is designed to ensure that an elector can only see the record we hold for them. Small variations from the details we have on file can mean that people can't find their records.

Anyone that is concerned about their enrolment or is experiencing problems finding their enrolment record on [vote.nz](http://vote.nz) can contact the Electoral Commission so we can help them. They can call freephone 0800 36 76 56 or send an email to [enquiries@elections.govt.nz](mailto:enquiries@elections.govt.nz)

### **Other reasons why a person's name must be removed from the roll**

The Commission can only change or remove a person's name from the roll in accordance with the requirements of the Act. In addition to the requirement to add electors onto the dormant roll if it appears they no longer reside at their enrolled address (explained above), the Commission must remove an elector from a roll in the following circumstances:

- An elector must be removed from the dormant roll when they re-enrol on a main roll.
- An elector must be removed from a roll when they enrol in a different electorate (after living there for one month).
- A Māori elector must be removed from a roll when they choose to transfer between the roll for a Māori electorate to the roll for a general electorate, or vice versa. If the choice is exercised during an exception period before an election, the change cannot be made until after the exception period.
- An elector must be removed from a roll when their death is notified to the Commission.
- An elector must be removed from a dormant roll after 3 years if they have not re-enrolled during this time period.
- An elector must be removed from a roll if they are put on the Corrupt Practices List.
- An elector must be removed from a roll if they are disqualified from registration under section 80.
- An elector who is not Māori must be removed from a roll for a Māori electorate.
- A person must be removed from a roll if they were registered by mistake, clerical error or as a result of false information.
- An elector can be removed from a roll following an objection process under section 95B.

## Māori Electoral Option

When first enrolling to vote, a person of Māori descent can choose the roll for the Māori or general electorate where they have lived for the last month. After that, Māori electors can change from the roll for the relevant Māori or general electorate at any time, except in the three months before a parliamentary general election or the triennial local elections, or before a parliamentary by-election. We are now in the three-month exception period prior to triennial local elections. Applications to change between the rolls for Māori or general electorates will be processed after the local elections.

A Māori elector's choice about whether they are enrolled for the relevant Māori or general electorate, is collected at step 4 of the enrolment form, which is used for applications to register as an elector and enrolment updates:

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**Step 4**  
Your roll

**This is an important choice.**  
To learn about Māori descent and roll choice, turn over to the QUESTIONS section 

Please tick **ONE** statement that applies to you.

I am of Māori descent. Please enrol me on the **Māori roll**.

I am of Māori descent. Please enrol me on the **general roll**.

I am not of Māori descent. (You will be enrolled on the **general roll**.)

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The questions section on the back of the form provides the following guidance:

### Māori descent and roll choice

For enrolment purposes, Māori descent means you are descended from a NZ Māori. This includes Chatham Island Māori, but not Cook Island Māori.

If you're of Māori descent, you can choose to enrol on the Māori roll or the general roll.

**Your choice is important.** The roll you choose to be on affects your electorate vote but not your party vote in parliamentary elections. If you're on the Māori roll, you'll vote for a candidate in a Māori electorate. If you're on the general roll, you'll vote for a candidate in a general electorate. The number of people on the Māori roll also affects the number of Māori seats in Parliament.

For local elections, if you're on the Māori roll and your council has a Māori ward or constituency, you'll vote for a candidate in the Māori ward or constituency.

You can change the roll you're on at any time except:

- in the 3 months before a general election,
- in the 3 months before the local elections held every 3 years, and
- during a parliamentary by-election if it puts you in the electorate where the by-election is being held.

People can also enrol or update online on [vote.nz](https://vote.nz), after verifying their identity using their NZ driver licence, NZ passport or RealMe verified ID. The online process has the same questions and guidance.

A person needs to tick the statement that applies to them. A person cannot identify as Māori at step 4 of the form without also selecting whether they wish to enrol for the relevant Māori or general electorate.

A person is unable to complete the Enrol Online process without completing step 4.

### **Voting in the local elections and the Tāmaki Makaurau by-election**

To receive a voting pack and cast an ordinary vote in the local elections, electors needed to be enrolled by Friday 1 August. But it's not too late to enrol after that. People can enrol right up to 10 October 2025, the day before the close of the voting period 11 October 2025, and apply for a special vote from the local electoral officer.

Similarly, to cast an ordinary vote in the by-election, electors needed to be enrolled in the Tāmaki Makaurau electorate by writ day, Wednesday 30 July. But it's not too late to enrol after that. People can enrol right up to the close of election day, Saturday 6 September. However, people on the dormant roll and people who enrol or update after 30 July will have to cast a special vote when they vote.

### **Electoral reform legislation**

Your letter raises concerns and seeks remedial action regarding electoral reform legislation. As an independent Crown entity, the Commission is not in a position to respond to the matters you have raised in relation to electoral reform legislation. The content and prioritisation of electoral reform legislation is a matter for Ministers, not the Commission.

Ngā mihi nui



Karl Le Quesne  
Chief Electoral Officer