

5 September 2025

[REDACTED]
By email to: [REDACTED]

Kia ora [REDACTED]

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST 2025/58

On 13 August 2025 you made a request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA) for the following information:

I am reaching out to submit an Official Information Act (OIA) request on behalf of the [REDACTED] which is currently conducting a study on the voting systems of OECD member countries. The purpose of this study is to explore ways to enhance the voting rights of overseas Koreans.

We would be sincerely grateful if you could kindly complete and return the attached form. Your input would be of great assistance to our research.

Please see below the completed form.

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



Kristina Temel
Manager, Legal Regulation and Policy

Survey of Overseas Voting Methods in OECD Member Countries (New Zealand)

Overseas Voting Method: Please check all that apply below.

In-person Voting at Polling Stations	Postal Voting	Proxy Voting	Electronic Voting
✓	✓	×	✓ (we do not have electronic voting but voters can download and upload their voting papers electronically)

Postal Voting System

Overseas Voters	<p>Temporary absentee or person permanently residing overseas.</p> <p>To be eligible, a citizen outside New Zealand must have visited New Zealand within the last 3 years and a permanent resident must have visited New Zealand within the last 12 months.. Other exceptions that are eligible are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a public servant or a member of the Defence Force; or • a head of mission or head of post within the meaning of the Foreign Affairs Act 1988, who is outside New Zealand in the course of that person’s duties; or • an officer or employee of New Zealand Trade and Enterprise established by the New Zealand Trade and Enterprise Act 2003; or <p>and a person accompanying a person described above who is outside New Zealand in the course of that person’s duties; and is the spouse, civil union partner, de facto partner, or child of the person referred to in subparagraph, or the child of the spouse, civil union partner, or de facto partner of that person.</p>
History of Postal Voting Introduction	<p>Special votes in New Zealand began as the original form of postal voting to make sure people who couldn’t get to a polling booth — like seafarers, travelling workers, and later, soldiers overseas — still had a way to vote.</p> <p>Over time, the categories expanded until “special votes” became the umbrella system we know today for those who are not able to vote in their home or shared electorate voting places, and includes overseas locations as well as overseas postal votes.</p> <p>Timeline of Postal / Special Voting in NZ</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1890 – First postal votes (seafarers, commercial travellers, shearers) Postal voting introduced for certain groups who were often away from home on election day. <i>Source: Special votes cast in general election NZ History, Wikipedia – Special vote</i> • 1905 – Absentee voting widened The Electoral Act allowed any registered voter outside their electorate on polling day to apply for a “special vote.” <i>Source: Wikipedia – Special vote</i> • World War I & II – Military postal voting Special arrangements were made so soldiers serving overseas could cast a vote. Votes were usually taken at base camps or shipped back by post for counting. • 1927 – Postal voting & “voting on declaration” added to law The Electoral Act 1927 put these wartime and absentee practices formally into legislation. This introduced the modern “vote on declaration” process — the basis of today’s special votes. <i>Source: Wikipedia – Special vote</i> • 1956 – Term “special vote” officially used The Electoral Act 1956 was the first to actually call these ballots “special votes,” covering a range of situations (absent, overseas, prisoners, etc). <i>Source: Wikipedia – Special vote</i>
Postal Voting Permitted Countries	No restrictions of countries to issue or receive postal votes to overseas voters. However, we use NZ Post to send postal voting papers and they no longer send mail to some countries.
Elections Conducted by Postal Voting	Election events conducted by the Electoral Commission are Parliamentary Elections (General election and by-elections) and Postal Voting Referendums. Postal voting is allowed for each of these.
Eligibility for Postal Voting	There is no specific eligibility for postal voting. Eligibility for overseas voting is outlined above.

<p>Postal Voting Method and Period (including the authority sending ballot papers, schedule for sending and returning ballots, return address, and postage costs)</p>	<p>The voter must complete and sign a declaration and have the declaration witnessed. In the declaration they must confirm their eligibility to vote. The voting papers can be returned either to the Electoral Commission or to an overseas post. Postage to be paid by the voter.</p> <p>Overseas voters who wish to participate do not have to pre-register as overseas voters.</p> <p>They do have to apply for special voting papers for each election.</p> <p>Overseas postal votes can be produced from the close of the nominations process for candidates, once the ballot papers are printed.</p> <p>Votes must be issued by hand or posted by an Overseas Returning Officer or Overseas Issuing Officer by 4pm local time on the day before polling day.</p> <p>Votes must be returned by hand or post to an Overseas Returning Officer or Overseas Issuing Officer by 4pm local time on the day before polling day, or by post to a Returning Officer in NZ or the Electoral Commission provided the envelope is postmarked or date stamped before polling day and received by the NZ Returning Officer or the Electoral Commission by noon on the 9th day after election day.</p> <p>Voting papers must be received by Returning Officer in NZ or the Electoral Commission by 7pm on the 10th day after election provided marked with the official mark of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseas Returning Officer • Overseas issuing officer • Returning Officer in NZ • Electoral Commission
<p>Types of Ballot Paper (Please attach the ballot paper format if possible)</p>	<p>The ballot paper is a prescribed form. The form for the general election is Form 11 Schedule 2 prescribed in the Electoral Act 1993. Electoral Act 1993 No 87 (as at 01 July 2025), Public Act – New Zealand Legislation and for a parliamentary by-election is Form 12 Electoral Act 1993 No 87 (as at 01 July 2025), Public Act – New Zealand Legislation.</p>
<p>Candidate Registration Period</p>	<p>Nominations can be formally accepted from writ day to noon on nomination day. Polling day must not be earlier than the 20th day after nomination day.</p>
<p>Prevention of Proxy Voting</p>	<p>Use of special ballot papers in which the elector has to complete their details and make a declaration and the requirement to have a witness also sign the declaration.</p>

	Personation is a corrupt practice offence, which is punishable by a term of imprisonment not exceeding 2 years, and/ or a fine of \$40,000.										
Issues, Limitations, and Countermeasures	The difficulty with postal voting is that with changes in the postal services, it is becoming more difficult for votes to be received back within the timeframes. The Commission encourages people to use other methods such as download/upload and voting in person at, for example, an overseas embassy. Law changes are proposed to remove overseas postal voting, which if passed will come into effect before the next general election in 2026.										
Allowance of In-Person Voting (Including Returnee Voting)	N/A										
Recent Postal Voting Statistics	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>Election Name</i></th> <th><i>Number of Overseas Voters</i></th> <th><i>Total Number of Voters</i></th> <th><i>Number of Postal Voters</i></th> <th><i>Postal Voting Participation Rate (%)</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><i>2023 New Zealand General Election</i></td> <td>Unknown because people do not have to register as an overseas voter and can be overseas temporarily</td> <td>77,295 overseas votes total</td> <td>48</td> <td>0.05%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<i>Election Name</i>	<i>Number of Overseas Voters</i>	<i>Total Number of Voters</i>	<i>Number of Postal Voters</i>	<i>Postal Voting Participation Rate (%)</i>	<i>2023 New Zealand General Election</i>	Unknown because people do not have to register as an overseas voter and can be overseas temporarily	77,295 overseas votes total	48	0.05%
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<i>2023 New Zealand General Election</i>	Unknown because people do not have to register as an overseas voter and can be overseas temporarily	77,295 overseas votes total	48	0.05%							
Other Postal Voting Issues and Policy Characteristics (Including Controversies)	N/A										

Electronic Voting System – note we do not have electronic voting but voters can download voting papers (DVP system), complete them, and then upload their voting papers (UVP system) to a secure Electoral Commission site.

History of Electronic Voting Implementation	<p>The download voting paper software application was introduced for the 2005 General Election.</p> <p>This application sits within our enrolment database as voters must be enrolled to download their voting papers.</p> <p>The upload voting paper software application was introduced for the 2014 General Election and rebuilt for the 2023 General Election to introduce a better user experience front end.</p>										
Electronic Voting Permitted Countries	No restrictions of countries to issue or receive votes via the DVP and UVP. However, we use NZ Post to send postal voting papers, and they no longer send mail to some countries.										
Elections Conducted by Electronic Voting	See above postal voting. It is the same.										
Eligibility for electronic voting	See above postal voting. It is the same.										
Electronic Voting Application Method	See above postal voting. It is the same.										
Electronic voting method and period	DVP and UVP are available for 17 days and voting closes at 7pm on election day.										
Identity Verification Methods	No authentication required. Have to enter your name enrolment address when last in New Zealand and date of birth to be able to download your voting paper. Must complete and sign a declaration and must have the declaration witnessed.										
Electronic Voting Security (Including Countermeasures Against Server Overload)	<p>The Commission has an IT Security team that monitors and responds to security events 24 / 7, including monitoring Firewalls and WAF are in place for denial-of-service attacks.</p> <p>Cyber security policies in place to govern processes, which include regular audits of each system for each election cycle.</p>										
Prevention of Proxy Voting	See above postal voting. It is same.										
Issues, Limitations, and Countermeasures	No issues - used by 87.88% of overseas voters in 2023.										
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	<i>2023 New Zealand General Election</i>	See above re postal voting. It is same.	See above re postal voting. It is the same.	66,437	87.8%
Other Electronic Voting Issues and Policy Characteristics (Including Controversies)	N/A				