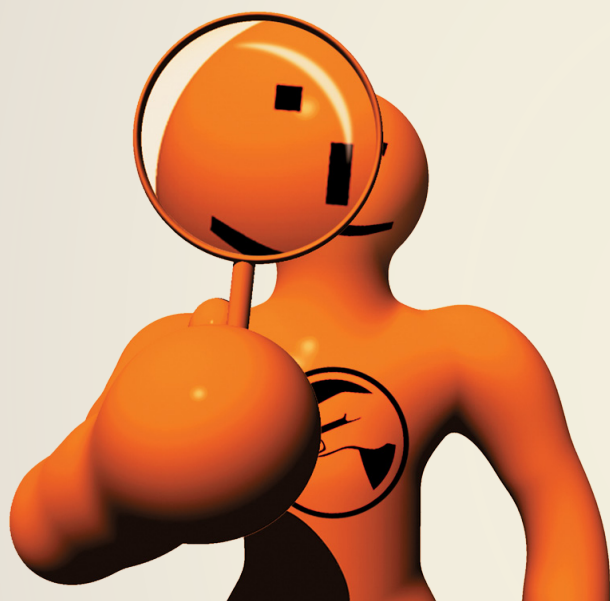




Media Kit



2011

**GENERAL ELECTION
AND REFERENDUM
ON THE VOTING SYSTEM**



www.elections.org.nz
www.referendum.org.nz

26 May 2011

2011 General Election and Referendum Media Information

The Electoral Commission provides this Media Information Kit to assist with coverage of the 2011 General Election and Referendum.

It includes:

- Key 2011 General Election and Referendum dates,
- voting and turnout statistics from previous elections,
- electoral enrolment details,
- information about the EasyVote system ,
- facts about the Referendum on the Voting System, and
- voting and campaigning resources.

Further General Election and Referendum information is available from www.elections.org.nz , and election results can be found at www.electionresults.govt.nz .

Please contact us if you want to know more.



Robert Peden
Chief Electoral Officer

Media Information Kit Contents

Media Contact Details	
• Media Contact Details	3
Timeline	
• 2011 General Election timeline at a glance	4
• 2011 General Election timeline – detailed	5 – 6
Boundaries	
• 2011 electorate boundaries	7
Voting	
• Election statistics	7 – 8
• New Zealand voter turnout	9
• International voter turnout	10
• Advance Vote, Election Night and Official Results from previous elections	11
• New Zealand Voting Patterns 1996 - 2008	12
• Official results	13 – 14
Electoral Agencies	
• Electoral Commission and Electoral Enrolment Centre Responsibilities	15 – 16
Frequently Asked Questions and Answers	
• Enrolling to vote	17
• Voting	18 – 19
• Candidates and parties	20
• Campaign and finance rules	20 – 23
• Referendum on the voting system	24 – 27
• Media activity on election day	27
Information Resources	
• Enrolment form	
• Going to be overseas on election day?	
• Get ready and vote	
• Guide to voting in the Referendum	

Media Contact Details

Anastasia (Stasi) Turnbull is the first point of contact for all media enquiries around the 2011 General Election, Referendum and by-elections.

Murray Wicks at the Electoral Enrolment Centre is the primary point of contact for enrolment matters.

Full contact details are:

Anastasia Turnbull
Manager Communications and Education
anastasia.turnbull@elections.govt.nz
04 494 8205
027 474 3997

Murray Wicks
National Manager, Electoral Enrolment Centre
murray.wicks@elections.org.nz
04 801 0701
027 249 4508

www.elections.org.nz

www.electionresults.govt.nz

Election Timetable* for 2011 General Election – At a Glance*

Dissolution of Parliament	Writ Day	Bulk Nominations Due	Nomination Day	Advance Voting Starts	Overseas Voting Starts	Last Day for Enrolment
Thursday 20 October	Wednesday 26 October	Noon Monday 31 October	Noon Tuesday 1 November	Wednesday 9 November	Wednesday 9 November	Friday 25 November
Election Day	Preliminary Results Released	Declaration of Official Results	Application for Recount Expires	Last Day for Return of Writ	Declaration of List Members	Last Day for Parliament to Meet
Saturday 26 November	After 7.00pm Saturday 26 November	By 2.00pm Saturday 10 December	Wednesday 14 December	Thursday 15 December (Writ returned with successful electorate candidates)	Thursday 15 December (if no recount)	Thursday 26 January 2012

*Presumes no recounts

2011 General Election Timetable

Date	Activity
Friday 26 August	Regulated period for General Election and Referendum advertising expenses begins
Thursday 20 October	Dissolution of Parliament
Tuesday 25 October	Last day for registration of parties/logos by the Electoral Commission
Wednesday 26 October	Writ Day Governor General issues formal direction to the Electoral Commission to hold the election Electoral Rolls close for printing Voters enrolled after this date cast special declaration votes Candidate and party television and radio advertising may start.
Thursday 27 October	Nominations open Advertising calling for individual nominations of electorate candidates
Monday October 31 Noon	Bulk Nominations Due Deadline for registered political parties to bulk nominate their electorate candidates to the Electoral Commission
Tuesday 1 November Noon	Party Lists Deadline for political parties to submit list candidates to the Electoral Commission Individual Nominations Deadline for individual nominations of electorate candidates to Returning Officers
Wednesday 2 November 2.00pm target	Candidate Information Names of all electorate and list candidates released by the Electoral Commission. Production of ballot papers begins.
Wednesday 2 November 2.00pm target	Polling Place and Advance Voting Place details available
Wednesday 9 November	Advance Voting starts in New Zealand Advance voting available for voters who are away from home or unable to get to a polling place on election day
Wednesday 9 November	Overseas Voting starts Overseas voters can download voting papers from www.elections.org.nz , vote by post or vote in person at many overseas posts.
Saturday 19 November	EasyVote Information Packs available Information packs with EasyVote card sent to voters enrolled by 26 October .
Friday 25 November	Enrolments cease Last day to enrol for the election Advance Voting ends

Friday 25 November Midnight	Regulated period ends. All election and referendum advertising must end and signs taken down.
Saturday 26 November	Election Day Polling places open from 9.00am to 7.00pm
Saturday 26 November	Election Night Preliminary results released progressively from 7.00pm on www.electionresults.govt.nz . Targets for release: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by 8.30pm all advance vote results for General Election and Referendum • by 10.00pm General Election results from 50% of polling places • by 11.30pm General Election results from 100% of polling places Referendum voting papers will not be counted in polling places on election night to avoid delays to the release of the General Election results.
Saturday 10 December 2.00pm target	Official Results for General Election and referendum declared (including special declaration votes)
Wednesday 14 December	Deadline for applications for Judicial Recount
Wednesday 14 December	Deadline for Broadcaster Returns of Election Programmes to the Electoral Commission
Thursday 15 December	Return of Writ by Electoral Commission showing successful electorate candidates*
Thursday 15 December	Declaration of Election of List Members *
Thursday 1 March 2012	Deadline for parties to submit broadcasting accounts to Electoral Commission
Friday 16 March 2012	Deadline for Returns of Party Election Expenses to the Electoral Commission*
Monday 26 March 2012	Deadline for Returns of Third Party Election Expenses and Donations to the Electoral Commission
Monday 26 March 2012	Deadline for Returns of Candidate Election Expenses and Donations to Electoral Commission
Monday 26 March 2012	Deadline for Returns of Registered Promoters' Referendum Expenses to the Electoral Commission

*if recount required, then return of writ, final results, election of list members and deadline for returns of party election expenses will be delayed by 4-5 days.

Electorate Boundaries for the 2011 General Election

The 2011 General Election will be run under existing electorate boundaries. There will be 70 electorates: 63 general electorates and seven Māori electorates.

Election Statistics

Total Voting	2008	2005	2002
Number enrolled	2,990,759	2,847,396	2,670,030
Total votes cast	2,376,480	2,304,005	2,055,404
Number of informal votes* cast - Party	11,970	10,561	8,631
Number of informal votes* cast - Candidates	25,332	24,801	26,529
Turnout (all voters)	79.46%	80.92%	76.98%
Special Voting			
Number of special votes cast	270,965	248,677	218,846
Percentage of total votes cast	11.40%	10.79%	10.65%
Electorate with the most special votes	Wellington Central	Wellington Central	Wellington Central
Number of special votes disallowed	19,517	17,815	15,156
Number of special votes disallowed – as percentage of special votes cast	7.80%	7.16%	6.93%
Overseas Voting			
Number of Overseas votes cast	33,278	28,145	17,760
Top five overseas polling places	London (2,964) Melbourne (603) Sydney (594) Rarotonga (372) Apia (361)	London (3,402) Sydney (657) Melbourne (533) Brisbane (442) Apia (346)	London (2,881) Sydney (790) Melbourne (395) Brisbane (384) Apia (334)
Advance Voting			
Number of Advance Votes	267,078	197,938	132,609
Percentage of voters	11.24%	8.59%	6.45%
Māori Roll			
Number of voters on Māori Roll	229,666	208,003	194,114
Number of votes in Māori electorates	143,334	139,510	111,745
Turnout (Maori roll)	62.41%	67.07%	57.57%

- Informal votes are where the voter's intention is not clear.

New Zealand Voter Turnout 2008 - 1990

Year	Roll	% of estimated voting age population on the roll	Total votes cast	Turnout as % of voting age population	Turnout as % of those on roll
1990	General		1,822,529		86.00
	Māori		54,586		65.75
	Overall	91.74	1,877,115	78.20	85.24
1993	General		1,908,954		85.99
	Māori		69,138		68.06
	Overall	92.64	1,978,092	78.93	85.20
1996	General		2,025,005		88.28
	Māori		110,170		77.62
	Overall	91.53	2,135,175	80.80	88.21
1999	General		2,014,644		85.73
	Māori		112,621		70.65
	Overall	91.06	2,127,265	77.19	84.77
2002	General		1,943,659		78.50
	Māori		111,745		57.57
	Overall	94.17	2,055,404	72.50	76.98
2005	General		2,164,495		82.01
	Māori		139,510		67.07
	Overall	95.22	2,304,005	77.05	80.92
2008	General		2,233,146		80.88
	Māori		143,334		62.41
	Overall	95.31	2,376,480	75.73	79.46

International Voter Turnout

COUNTRY	AVERAGE %	Last Three Elections					
		Date	Turnout %	Date	Turnout %	Date	Turnout %
Australia*	94.2	2010	93.2	2007	95.2	2004	94.3
Belgium*	90.9	2010	89.2	2007	91.9	2003	91.6
Denmark	86	2007	86.6	2005	84.5	2001	87.1
Italy	82	2008	80.5	2006	83.6	2001	81.4
Sweden	81.2	2006	82	2002	80.1	1998	81.4
France (Presidential)	81.1	2007	84	2002	79.7	1995	79.7
Austria	80.1	2008	81.7	2006	74.2	2002	84.3
Netherlands	79.8	2006	80.4	2003	80	2002	79.1
Germany	79.7	2005	77.7	2002	79.1	1998	82.2
New Zealand	79.1	2008	79.5	2005	80.9	2002	77
Norway	77	2005	77.4	2001	75.5	1997	78.3
Finland (Presidential)	65.9	2006	74	2000	76.8	1994	77
Ireland	65.4	2007	67	2002	62.6	1997	66.7
United Kingdom	62	2010	65.1	2005	61.4	2001	59.4
Japan	62	2007	58.6	2005	67.5	2003	59.8
Canada	61.8	2008	59.5	2006	64.9	2004	60.9
U.S.A (Presidential)	57.2	2008	58.2	2004	62.1	2000	51.3
Switzerland	45.6	2007	48.3	2003	45.2	1999	43.2

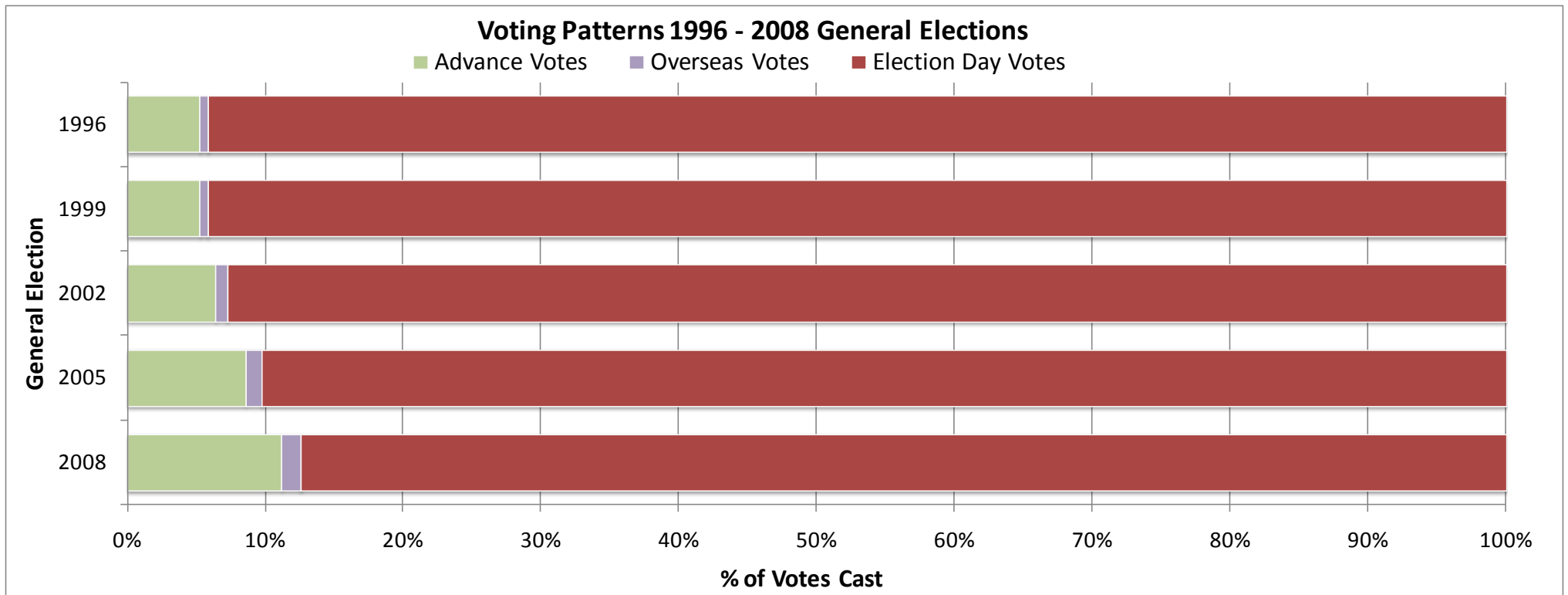
* Indicates Compulsory Voting

Sources: International IDEA Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

Advance Votes Compared to Election Night and Official Counts

Party Votes 2008	Act New Zealand	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First	United Future	Jim Anderton's Progressive	Māori Party	Other
Advance Vote %	3.28	6.15	31.66	48.54	4.62	0.82	0.84	2.13	1.96
Election Night Count %	3.72	6.43	33.77	45.45	4.21	0.89	0.93	2.24	2.36
Official Count %	3.65	6.72	33.99	44.93	4.07	0.87	0.91	2.39	2.47
Party Votes 2005	Act New Zealand	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First	United Future	Jim Anderton's Progressive	Māori Party	Other
Advance Vote %	1.69	4.81	36.82	43.51	6.13	3.04	1.06	1.60	1.34
Election Night Count %	1.52	5.07	40.74	39.63	5.84	2.72	1.21	1.98	1.29
Official Count %	1.51	5.30	41.10	39.10	5.72	2.67	1.16	2.12	1.32
Party Votes 2002	Act New Zealand	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First	United NZ	Jim Anderton's Progressive		Other
Advance Vote %	7.38	5.60	40.13	24.41	10.95	5.58	1.77		4.18
Election Night Count %	7.08	6.49	41.36	21.08	10.60	6.82	1.75		4.82
Official Count %	7.14	7.00	41.26	20.93	10.38	6.69	1.70		4.90
Party Votes 1999	Act New Zealand	Green Party	Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First	United NZ	Alliance		Other
Advance Vote %	8.43	3.96	35.13	34.32	4.97	0.50	7.54		5.14
Election Night Count %	7.00	4.90	39.00	30.60	4.30	0.50	7.80		5.90
Official Count %	7.04	5.16	38.74	30.50	4.26	0.54	7.74		6.03
Party Votes 1996	Act New Zealand		Labour Party	National Party	New Zealand First	United NZ	Alliance		Other
Advance Vote %	6.01		25.69	38.09	12.67	0.97	10.00		6.57

Election Night Count %	6.17		28.27	34.13	13.13	0.91	10.12		7.27
Official Count %	6.10		28.19	33.84	13.35	0.88	10.10		7.54



2011 General Election and Referendum Official Results

The official results for the 2011 General Election and Referendum will be declared 14 days after election day, by 2.00pm Saturday 10 December. This timetable is determined by the tasks Returning Officers must complete under the Electoral Act before the Electoral Commission can declare the official results.

Scrutiny of the rolls

Returning Officers must scrutinise the rolls. This involves marking off on a copy of the electoral roll the names of those who voted in the Returning Officer's electorate. This marked roll becomes the Master Roll and is available for public inspection after the election.

This process identifies any voters who appear to have voted more than once. If someone has voted more than once their ballot papers are excluded from the official count.

Processing of special votes

The processing of special declaration votes takes place after election day. The declarations of all special voters must be checked to ensure they were eligible to make a special vote. This includes checking if they were 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 was enrolled.

All special voters are marked off the Master Roll or added to a list of voters not on the roll.

The deadline for special votes to be in the hands of Returning Officers is ten days after election day. Special vote processing **cannot**, therefore, be completed before this point. Special votes delivered after this must be disallowed.

Valid special votes are admitted to the official count. This includes "Party Vote Only" special votes. These special votes arise where a special voter votes in the wrong electorate. For example, they might be registered in the Rongotai electorate but cast a special vote for the Wellington Central electorate. In this case, the voter's electorate vote is disallowed (because they were not eligible to vote in the Wellington Central electorate contest) but their party vote will count (because they are registered on an electoral roll).

In 2008 there were:

- 267,078 advance votes
- 270,965 special declaration votes, including 33,278 overseas votes.

Official count

All General Election ballot papers counted on election night are checked again to ensure the voter's intention is clear and then recounted

All Referendum votes will also be counted.

All valid special General Election and Referendum votes are counted.

The Returning Officer forwards the results of the completed official count for their electorate to the Electoral Commission. Further checks are carried out by the Electoral Commission before the official results are declared.

Responsibilities of the Electoral Agencies

Responsibility	Electoral Enrolment Centre	Electoral Commission	Ministry of Justice
Information for electors on enrolment	✓		
Enrolment of voters (opportunity and encouragement)	✓		
Conduct of voter enrolment inquiry exercises prior to major electoral events.	✓		
Production/maintenance of electoral rolls and habitation indexes	✓		
Supply of electronic lists of electors & walk lists (residences with no enrolment) to parties, MPs and candidates	✓		
Hosting of the elections website	✓		
Conduct of Māori Electoral Option	✓		
Verifying, by sample, that signatures on citizen initiated referendum petitions are those of enrolled electors	✓		
Supply of lists of qualified electors to Courts for jury rolls	✓		
Supply of enrolment details of consenting electors of Māori descent to the Māori Affiliation Service.	✓		
Registration of political parties/logos		✓	
Listing third parties for General Election and/or referendum		✓	
Allocation to parties of election broadcasting time and money; payment of parties' election broadcasting accounts; receipt of broadcasters' returns of election programmes		✓	
Providing advisory opinions on whether an advertisement is an 'election advertisement' for the purposes of the election advertising rules		✓	
Supervision of annual returns of donations and returns of election expenses – political parties		✓	
Supervision of returns of election expenses – third parties		✓	
Supervision of returns of referendum expenses			
Administration of donations protected from disclosure		✓	
Supervising compliance with the general rules governing election advertisements		✓	
Public education and information on electoral matters		✓	
Conduct of Parliamentary General Elections and by-elections			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ information to voters, parties and candidates 		✓	

Responsibility	Electoral Enrolment Centre	Electoral Commission	Ministry of Justice
▪ receipt of writ		✓	
▪ designation and staffing of polling places		✓	
▪ calling for and receipt of nominations (including bulk nominations)		✓	
▪ acceptance or rejection of party lists (General Elections)		✓	
▪ voting papers-production		✓	
▪ voting (advance, on election day)		✓	
▪ scrutiny of rolls and identification of dual votes		✓	
▪ preliminary and official counts		✓	
▪ qualification of special votes	✓	✓	
▪ declaration of results		✓	
▪ recounts		✓	
▪ return of writ		✓	
▪ allocation of members from party lists (General Elections)		✓	
▪ supervision of returns of candidate expenses and returns of donations		✓	
Conduct of referendum (government initiated and citizen initiated)		✓	
Filling vacancies from the party list		✓	
Membership of the Independent Representation Commission (electoral boundaries)		✓	
Administration of the Electoral Act			✓
Policy advice to Ministers		✓	✓
Advice to Select Committees	✓	✓	✓

Enrolling to Vote

Who can enrol to vote?

People must enrol if they:

- are 18 years or older, **and**
- have lived in New Zealand for more than one year continuously at some time in their life, **and**
- are a New Zealand citizen, **or**
- are a permanent resident of New Zealand*.
* Cook Island Maori, Niueans and Tokelauans can enrol once they have lived in New Zealand continuously for 12 months. They do not require permanent residency to be eligible to enrol and vote.

Is enrolling compulsory?

Yes. It is a legal requirement to enrol to be registered on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll. However, unlike in some countries, voting is not compulsory in New Zealand.

Which electorate should people enrol for?

The electorate where people last resided for one month or more. Those who have had to temporarily or occasionally move away from home for work or study, or because of a natural disaster, may still enrol at the address they call home even though they may have been away from this address for more than one month.

What can cause someone to be removed from the roll?

There are a number of circumstances that can cause someone to be removed from the roll, such as, death or being sentenced, following a criminal conviction, to serve a term of imprisonment.

The main reason people are removed from the roll is due to them changing the address of where they reside and not updating their details by re-enrolling.

How will Christchurch voters stay enrolled?

The Christchurch earthquakes have displaced many Cantabrians.

With many people unable to go home, or living at a temporary address, there may be confusion about which address to enrol at.

Christchurch residents should decide which of these applies to them, and follow the instructions.

I am temporarily staying somewhere other than my home – but I hope to move back home one day.

They should keep their home address as their enrolment address, even if they're not staying there and may not be able to move back there for some time.

To update their details on the enrolment form they should keep their home address under 'Residential Address', but write the address they are temporarily staying at in the 'Postal Address' panel of the form.

I am unable to move back to my home and have moved permanently somewhere else.

They need to re-enrol to vote at their new address (after they've lived there for a month), even if they will be moving to another address in the future. They should write their new address in the 'Residential Address' panel on the enrolment form.

More information for Canterbury residents is available here:

<http://www.elections.org.nz/enrolment/cantabrians-you-can-still-have-your-say.html>

Voting

Who can vote in the election?

Anyone eligible who is enrolled by 25 November, the day before election day can vote in the election. Voters who enrol by Wednesday 26 October will receive an EasyVote information pack about a week before the election. The pack will include voting information along with an EasyVote card. Voters are encouraged to take their EasyVote card with them on election day as it will make voting easier.

Enrolment forms are available by calling 0800 36 76 56, freetexting name and address to 3676, from www.elections.org.nz or at PostShops. People can also enrol online, but will be required to sign the enrolment form.

How can people find out what electorate they are in?

People can check their enrolment details at www.elections.org.nz which will tell them what electorate they are enrolled in. Maps of all electorates are available on the website. People can also check the electoral rolls at all PostShops and public libraries.

What about people who will be away from home at the time of the election?

Voters who will be away on election day or who can't get to a polling place on election day can vote in advance. Information on advance voting places will be available from Wednesday 2 November by calling 0800 35 76 56 or visiting www.elections.org.nz. This information will also be in the EasyVote information pack that will be sent to enrolled voters in the week before election day.

Where can people go to get information about polling places?

A list of polling places will be available from Wednesday 2 November from the elections website www.elections.org.nz, by calling 0800 36 76 56, or in the EasyVote information pack sent to all voters who are enrolled.

What happens if people don't receive an EasyVote card? Can they still vote?

People who don't receive an EasyVote card can still vote as long as they are enrolled by 25 November. On election day, people can still vote without their EasyVote card, but it will take longer.

How many polling places will there be?

There will be approximately 2,700 polling places for the election.

Overseas Voting

What happens if people are overseas at the time?

People who are overseas during the election can still vote. Voters going overseas can cast an advance vote before they go in the period starting Wednesday 9 November.

Voters who will be overseas during the voting period can download voting papers from the elections website www.elections.org.nz or pick up voting papers from overseas posts. A list of participating overseas posts will be available at the website or by calling 0800 36 76 56.

Can overseas voters vote electronically?

No, overseas voters cannot vote electronically or return their votes by email. But they can return their voting papers by fax to +64 4 494 2300.

Election and Referendum Results

When will the election and referendum results be announced?

Preliminary results will be released progressively from 7.00pm on 26 November on www.electionresults.govt.nz. Targets for release:

by 8.30pm	all advance vote results for General Election and referendum
by 10.00pm	General Election results from 50% of polling places
by 11.30pm	General Election results from 100% of polling places.

These are *targets*, not guarantees.

Referendum voting papers will not be counted in polling places on election night to avoid delays to the release of the General Election results, but preliminary results of advance referendum ordinary votes will be released progressively on election night from 7.00pm.

The official results are expected to be declared by 2.00pm Saturday 10 December.

Where can we get the results from?

Election results will be available progressively and in real time from 7.00pm on 26 November at www.electionresults.govt.nz.

Candidates and Parties

Who can be a candidate?

Candidates must be enrolled as a voter and be a New Zealand citizen. Candidates do not need to be enrolled in the electorate they are seeking election for.

How does the nomination process work?

There are two ways that electorate candidates are nominated:

Bulk nominations – registered political parties can nominate all the candidates representing the party at one time by lodging a bulk nomination schedule with the Electoral Commission. (This system is used by most registered parties).

Individual nominations – individual nominations can be made by two voters in the electorate lodging an individual nomination paper with the electorate Returning Officer.

List candidates are nominated by registered political parties supplying a party list to the Electoral Commission.

When is the deadline for nominations?

Electorate candidates must be nominated by:

- noon on Monday 31 October – for bulk nominations to the Electoral Commission
- noon on Tuesday 1 November – for individual nominations to the Returning Officer for the electorate.

Party lists must be supplied by:

- noon on Tuesday 1 November to the Electoral Commission.

When will the candidates be announced?

Candidates for the General Election will be announced by 2.00pm Wednesday 2 November.

Campaign Rules

What process will the Electoral Commission take in relation to advertising and expenditure complaints?

The Electoral Commission will consider complaints regarding party, candidate and third party advertising. The Electoral Commission will not discuss the specifics of a complaint or issue while it is being considered.

The Electoral Commission provides general guidance to parties, candidates and third parties, both in hard copy and on www.elections.org.nz.

The Electoral Commission encourages candidates, parties, and third parties to contact it if they have any questions about the application of the election or referendum advertising and expenditure rules to activities they are planning.

General rules regarding election advertising and expenditure

All election advertisements must state the name and address of the promoter. The promoter is the person who has initiated or instigated the advertisement.

Parties and electorate candidates may only broadcast an election programme on radio or television from Wednesday 26 October to Friday 25 November. The regulated period for election expenses starts on 26 August and ends on 25 November 2011.

The maximum amount of a party's election expenses during the regulated period is \$1,065,000 plus \$25,000 per electorate contested by the party including GST. This figure comes into effect on 1 July 2011.

Candidate election expenses are the costs of advertising in any medium undertaken between Friday 26 August 2011 and Friday 25 November 2011 that:

- may reasonably be regarded as either encouraging voters to vote for the candidate, or discouraging voters from voting for another candidate, or both; and
- is promoted by the candidate or any person authorised by the candidate.

Candidates have to disclose candidate donations of more than \$1,500.

Candidates will be required to file a return of candidate election expenses and donations by 26 March 2012.

Further information about the rules is in the Candidate Handbook – 2011 General Election and Referendum.

Party election expenses are the costs of advertising in any medium undertaken between Friday 26 August 2011 and Friday 25 November 2011 that:

- may reasonably be regarded as either encouraging voters to vote for the party, or discouraging voters from voting for another party, or both; and
- is promoted by the party secretary or any person authorised by the party secretary.

Parties have to disclose party donations of more than \$15,000.

Parties must file a return of their donations annually by 30 April for the previous calendar year. Parties must file a return of party election expenses by 16 March 2012.

Further information about the rules is in the Party Secretary Handbook – 2011 General Election and Referendum,

Third parties must register with the Electoral Commission if they will spend more than \$12,000 including GST on election advertising during the regulated period.

The maximum amount of a third party's election expenses during the regulated period is \$300,000 including GST.

Third party election expenses are the costs of advertising in any medium undertaken between Friday 26 August 2011 and Friday 25 November 2011 that:

- may reasonably be regarded as either encouraging voters to vote or not vote for a candidate, party, or type of candidate or party described by reference to views or positions that are, or are not, held or taken; and
- is promoted by the third party.

Third parties must file a return of their election expenses by 26 March 2012 if they spend more than \$100,000 including GST on election advertising.

Further information about the rules is in the Third Party Handbook – 2011 General Election and Referendum.

General rules regarding referendum advertising and expenditure

A referendum advertisement is an advertisement in any medium that may reasonably be regarded as encouraging or persuading voters to vote, or not to vote, in a particular way in the referendum.

All referendum advertisements must state the name and address of the promoter. The promoter is the person who has initiated or instigated the advertisement.

The regulated period for referendum expenses starts on 26 August and ends on 25 November 2011.

Promoters of referendum advertisements must register with the Electoral Commission if they intend to spend more than \$12,000 including GST during the regulated period. Registered promoters cannot spend more than \$300,000 including GST during the regulated period.

Registered promoters who spend more than \$100,000 on referendum advertisements published during the regulated period will have to file a return of referendum expenses by 26 March 2012.

What activity is allowed on election day?

Campaigning on election day is a criminal offence

The Electoral Act prohibits campaigning of any kind on election day. The general intention of the Electoral Act is to leave voters alone from midnight until 7pm on election day so they can vote without interference.

It is a criminal offence to distribute or broadcast any statement that is likely to influence a voter as to the candidate/party/referendum option the voter should or shouldn't vote for, or which influences people to abstain from voting.

News media can broadcast a statement having direct or indirect reference to the 2011 General Election and Referendum, for example, a news item noting that it is election day and when results will be available. However, news items must not include any words or visual images that are likely to influence voters about how they should vote. Care should be taken with any items that show any candidates or include interviews with any candidates. If in any doubt, broadcasters should delay broadcasting the item until after the polls close at 7pm.

On election day, candidates, political parties and others must:

- Cover up or take down all election and referendum signs.
- Cover up or place away from public view vehicles advertising parties or candidates (this includes bumper stickers) and referendum options.

- Not distribute any campaign material.
- Not distribute or display anything showing political party or candidate names and referendum options.
- Not post any new material on websites. Election and referendum material does not have to be removed from a website on election day as long as the material is only made available to people who voluntarily access it. Advertisements promoting the website must not be published on election day.
- Not display clothing (such as T-shirts) promoting a party or candidate or referendum option.

Parties, party supporters, candidates and referendum option proponents may

- Wear party lapel badges (including rosettes) in public bearing the party's name, emblem, slogan or logo (but not the candidate's name).
- Wear referendum lapel badges (including rosettes) in public bearing the name of the group, and an emblem slogan or logo relating to the referendum
- Display streamers, rosettes, ribbons and similar items in party or referendum colours on people or vehicles.
- Contact voters to offer help to get to a polling place. They must not say or do anything that influences voters as to the party or candidate or referendum option they should or should not vote for.
- Display fixed signs exhibited before polling day on party headquarters including party names, slogans or logos that do not relate specifically to the election campaign.
- Keep election or referendum material on a website on election day as long as the material is only made available to people who voluntarily access it. New material must not be posted on the website on election day. Advertisements promoting the website must not be published on election day.

Scrutineers

Scrutineers may be appointed by candidates to observe in polling places and during the preliminary count. Scrutineers may wear party lapel badges. They must not communicate with voters. When the electoral official reads out from the electoral roll the line and page number of the voter the scrutineer is entitled to record this.

2011 Referendum on the Voting System

There will be a Referendum at the same time as the 2011 General Election on Saturday 26 November,

Voters will be asked two questions in the Referendum:

- *The first question* asks whether they want to keep MMP (which is the voting system New Zealand uses at the moment) or whether they want to change to another voting system.
- *The second question* asks which of four other voting systems they would choose if New Zealand decides to change from MMP.

What voting papers will be used?

Voters will be given two voting papers in the polling place – one orange and one purple. The orange one is the 2011 General Election voting paper used to elect Members of Parliament. The purple one is the Referendum voting paper.

What are the voting system options?

Alongside MMP, voters will be able to choose from four alternative voting systems – First Past the Post, Preferential Vote, Single Transferable Vote and Supplementary Member.

MMP – Mixed Member Proportional

This is the system we currently use to elect our Parliament.

There are 120 Members of Parliament (MPs). There are 70 electorates, including the Maori electorates. Each elects one MP, called an Electorate MP. The other 50 MPs are elected from political party lists and are called List MPs.

Each voter gets two votes.

The first vote is for the political party the voter chooses. This is called the party vote and largely decides the total number of seats each political party gets in Parliament.

The second vote is to choose the MP the voter wants to represent the electorate they live in. This is called the electorate vote. The candidate who gets the most votes wins. They do not have to get more than half the votes.

Under current MMP rules, a political party that wins at least one electorate seat **OR** 5% of the party vote gets a share of the seats in Parliament that is about the same as its share of the party vote. For example, if a party gets 30% of the party vote it will get roughly 36 MPs in Parliament (being 30% of 120 seats). So if that party wins 20 electorate seats it will have 16 List MPs in addition to its 20 Electorate MPs.

Coalitions or agreements between political parties are usually needed before Governments can be formed.

FPP - First Past the Post

There are 120 Members of Parliament. Each of the 120 electorates, including the Maori electorates, elects one MP.

Each voter has one vote to choose the MP they want to represent the electorate they live in. The candidate who gets the most votes wins. They do not have to get more than half the votes.

Large parties – and in particular the winning party – usually win a share of the seats in Parliament larger than their share of all the votes across the country. Smaller parties usually receive a smaller share of seats than their share of all the votes.

A government can usually be formed without the need for coalitions or agreements between parties.

PV - Preferential Voting

There are 120 Members of Parliament. Each of the 120 electorates, including the Maori electorates, elects one MP.

Voters rank the candidates – 1, 2, 3, etc – in the order they prefer them.

A candidate who gets more than half of all the first preference votes (that is votes marked “1”) wins.

If no candidate gets more than half the first preference votes, the candidate with the fewest number “1” votes is eliminated and their votes go to the candidates each voter ranked next.

This process is repeated until one candidate has more than half the votes.

Large parties – and in particular the winning party – usually win a share of the seats in Parliament larger than their nationwide share of the first preference votes. It is hard for smaller parties to win seats in Parliament, but votes for smaller party candidates may influence who wins the seat because of second, third, etc preferences.

A government can usually be formed without the need for coalitions or agreements between parties.

STV - Single Transferable Vote

There are 120 Members of Parliament. Each electorate has more than one MP. This includes the Maori electorates. It is likely the 120 MPs would be divided between 24 and 30 electorates, each with 3 to 7 MPs.

Each voter has a single vote that is transferable. Voters either rank the individual candidates – 1, 2, 3, etc – in the order they prefer from all the candidates, **OR** they may vote for the order of preference published in advance by the political party of their choice.

MPs are elected by receiving a minimum number of votes. This is known as the quota and is based on the number of votes in each electorate and the number of MPs to be elected.

Candidates who reach the quota from first preference votes are elected.

If there are still electorate seats to fill, a two-step process follows.

First, votes the elected candidates received beyond the quota are transferred to the candidates ranked next on those votes. Candidates who then reach the quota are elected.

Second, if there are still electorate seats to fill, the lowest polling candidate is eliminated and their votes are transferred to the candidates ranked next on those votes.

This two-step process is repeated until all the seats are filled.

The number of MPs elected from each political party roughly mirrors the party's share of all the first preference votes across the country.

Coalitions or agreements between political parties are usually needed before governments can be formed.

SM - Supplementary Member

There are 120 Members of Parliament. There are 90 electorates, including the Maori electorates. Each elects one MP, called an Electorate MP. The other 30 seats are called supplementary seats. MPs are elected to these seats from political party lists and are likely to be called List MPs.

Each voter gets two votes.

The first vote is to choose the MP the voter wants to represent the electorate they live in. This is called the electorate vote. The candidate who gets the most votes wins. They do not have to get more than half the votes.

The second vote is for the political party the voter chooses. This is called the party vote. The share of the 30 supplementary seats each party gets reflects its share of the party vote.

For example, if a party gets 30% of the party vote, it will get about 9 List MPs in Parliament (being 30% of the 30 supplementary seats) no matter how many electorate seats it wins.

This makes SM different from MMP where a party's share of all 120 seats mirrors its share of the party vote.

Under SM, one or other of the major parties would usually have enough seats to govern alone, but coalitions or agreements between parties may sometimes be needed.

What happens after the referendum?

If at least half the voters opt to keep MMP, there will be an independent review of MMP in 2012 to recommend changes that should be made to the way it works.

The Electoral Commission will conduct the review. It must include a number of matters that have been decided by Parliament including the thresholds parties must meet to be eligible for a share of list seats, whether voters should be able to change the order of candidates on a party list and whether candidates can stand in both an electorate and on the party list.

The size of Parliament and Maori representation will not be reviewed, but the Commission may consider any other aspects of the MMP voting system.

If more than half the voters opt to change the voting system, Parliament will decide if there will be another Referendum in 2014 to choose between MMP and the alternative voting system that gets the most support in the second question in the 2011 Referendum.

Media Activity on Election Day

All election and referendum advertising and other statements, by anybody including the media, which could influence voters cannot be published or broadcast on election day. For this purpose newspapers published after 6pm on the day before election day are treated as being published on election day.

No opinion polling of voters can be carried out on election day.

News stories posted on websites before election day can remain, as long as the website is not advertised on election day.

Photo/filming opportunities on election day

Candidates may only be in a polling place for the purpose of voting.

Media organisations can take photos or film at a polling place as long as:

- The Returning Officer approves. Media must contact the Electoral Commission before Election Day to arrange this.
- No photographs or footage is taken of voters actually completing their ballot papers or showing how a person voted. Media cannot go behind the voting screens.
- Photographers or camera crews do not disrupt voters from voting, or officials from their duties.
- No undue delays are caused to voters.
- No interviews are conducted in or near the polling place



www.elections.org.nz



0800 36 76 56