

What is this poll about?

You're being asked to decide which of two electoral systems you want to be used for your local authority elections in 2004 and 2007. The two systems - FPP (First Past the Post) and STV (Single Transferable Vote) - are explained in this leaflet. The poll result will be binding on the Council for the 2004 and 2007 elections.

FPP and STV

To date FPP has been used in local authority elections, but STV is now an option. STV will be used for the election of members to all District Health Boards from 2004. District Health Board (DHB) elections are held at the same time as local authority elections. This means that all people voting in local authority elections in 2004 will use STV to vote for DHB candidates, regardless of whether their city, district or regional council adopts STV or remains with FPP.

Casting your vote under FPP

When you vote in an FPP election you tick the name of the candidate you most prefer. When the votes are counted, the candidate with the most votes is elected. This also applies if there is more than one vacancy. If there are vacancies for three councillors, for example, you can vote for up to three candidates. When the votes are counted, the three candidates with the highest numbers of votes are elected.

2

5

For more information please call:

_____ Council

on _____

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THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Te Tari Taiwhenua

Electoral System Poll



Casting your vote under STV

When you vote in an STV election, you rank the candidates in your order of preference. You write "1" next to the name of the candidate you most prefer, "2" next to your second choice, and so on. This process is the same whether there is one vacancy or several.

When votes are counted, all the first preferences (the "1"s) are allocated first. To be elected a candidate must reach a "quota" of votes, which is based on the number of vacancies and the number of valid votes. The following table shows how the quota is set:

Number of Vacancies	Votes needed to reach the quota
1 vacancy	half of the votes, plus a fraction of a vote
2 vacancies	third of the votes, plus a fraction of a vote
3 vacancies	quarter of the votes, plus a fraction of a vote
and so on ...	

A candidate who reaches the quota is elected. If there is more than one vacancy and a candidate gets more votes than the quota, a proportion of each vote for that candidate is transferred to the voter's second preference. If this results in another candidate getting more votes than the quota, a proportion is transferred to the third preference, and so on.

If insufficient candidates reach the quota after the first preferences are allocated, and after any surplus votes are transferred, then the candidate who received the fewest votes is eliminated and each vote for that candidate is transferred to the voter's second preference. This process is repeated until enough candidates reach the quota to fill all the vacancies.

New Zealand STV is based on a vote counting process called "Meek's method". While it is complex, supporters of STV regard it as being fair because candidates retain a proportion of all votes cast for them and this avoids the problems with some forms of STV where the order in which votes are counted can affect the outcome of an election.

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Comparing FPP and STV

FPP	STV
FPP has long been widely used in New Zealand, is familiar and is generally easy to understand.	STV is currently used in Australia, Ireland and Malta. The counting of votes is more complex and it's unfamiliar to most New Zealanders in local authority elections, but STV is used by some New Zealand companies, like Fonterra, to select board members.
Each voter is able to cast one vote for each vacancy to be filled. Voters place a tick beside the name of the candidate or candidates they wish to vote for.	Each voter gets one vote, no matter how many vacancies. Voters rank candidates in order of preference – '1' beside their most preferred candidate, '2' beside the second-most preferred candidate, and so on. Voters do not have to rank all candidates, but must use consecutive numbers.
The candidate who receives the most votes is elected. Where there is more than one vacancy, the candidates (equal to the number of vacancies) who receive the most votes are elected.	A candidate must reach the quota to be elected. Where there is more than one vacancy, the candidates (equal to the number of vacancies) who reach the quota are elected.
FPP is not a form of proportional representation. Each tick is counted as a vote for that candidate and the candidate or candidates with the most votes is elected. A candidate may be elected by a small margin.	STV is a proportional electoral system. Proportional systems are intended to provide more effective representation for all significant points of view, although it cannot be guaranteed that STV will provide an increased diversity of representation.
A candidate may receive more votes than they need to get elected.	A candidate would not receive more votes than they would need to get elected, as surplus votes are transferred to the next preference.
Some voters may not have supported any of the candidates who get elected.	If voters rank every candidate, they are likely to have supported at least one successful candidate.
Where political parties or organised political groupings contest the elections, and there are say 3 vacancies, voters can vote for the 3 candidates representing a political party or organised political group ("block" voting). This can result in all candidates from a political party or organised political group being elected.	STV can moderate "block" voting as voters can rank every candidate therefore making it more difficult for all candidates from a political party or organised political group to be elected.

A typical FPP voting document could look like this

HYPOTHETICAL CITY COUNCIL DOWNTOWN WARD ELECTION OF THREE (3) COUNCILLORS	
You can vote for a maximum of three (3) candidates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ↓ Vote Here
BROWN, Sandy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
JONES, Sam	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
OWENS, Harry	<input type="checkbox"/>
TAWHIRI, Ngaire	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
WATSON, Alice	<input type="checkbox"/>

A typical STV voting document could look like this

HYPOTHETICAL CITY COUNCIL DOWNTOWN WARD ELECTION OF THREE (3) COUNCILLORS	
Rank candidates in order of preference ... '1' '2' '3' etc	Number Here ↓
BROWN, Sandy	<input type="checkbox"/> 3
JONES, Sam	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
OWENS, Harry	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
TAWHIRI, Ngaire	<input type="checkbox"/> 2
WATSON, Alice	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

Note: it is not necessary to rank all candidates