

Local Authority Election Statistics 2001

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Local Authority Election Statistics 2001

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2

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Foreword

I am pleased to present this report of the 2001 Local Authority Election Statistics.

This is the twelfth edition in a series that began in 1959. This series provides an important and interesting picture of the development of local government elections over more than 40 years.

The 2001 elections were the fifth since local authorities were restructured in 1989, and the first since the establishment of district health boards. It is now possible to see national trends as well as more localised patterns in the results for each individual authority.

I believe this report will be of interest to all involved in local government in New Zealand and those with an interest in democracy in general.

I would like to thank the electoral officers and councils for providing the data from which this report is generated. Without their help we could not have produced this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C Blake". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end. To the right of the signature is a vertical line.

Christopher Blake
Secretary for Local Government

Contents

Section 1: Quick Reference	7
Section 2: Introduction	8
Section 3: Overview	13
Section 4: Interest in standing for local election	15
Section 5: Successful Candidates	17
Section 6: Particular Issues	22
Section 7: Levels of voter participation	24
7.1: Factors that might affect turnout	28
Section 8: Population of Local Authorities	38
Section 9: Regional Council Elections	39
Section 10: District Health Board Elections	46
Section 11: City Council elections	60
Section 12: District Council elections	68
Section 13: Community Board elections	82
Section 14: Local Authority parties	100
14.1: Details of Parties in Cities	101
14.2: Full list of Parties named in the 2001 elections	104

Figures

Figure 2.1: Example of Informal Votes	11
Figure 5.1: Proportions elected who were women 1959-2001	21
Figure 7.1 and Figure 7.2: Voter turnout in District Councils, 1989-2001	26

Figure 7.3 and 7.4: Voter turnout in District Councils, 1989-2001	27
Figure 7.5 and 7.6: Voter turnout for City Councils, and Regional Councils 1989-2001	27
Figure 7.7: Turnout by number of Candidates, 2001	30
Figure 7.8: Turnout by proportion of electors per position, 2001	32
Figure 7.9: Turnout levels by rural/urban territorial authorities, 2001	33
Figure 14.1: Proportion of candidates with party affiliation or independent status	103
Figure 14.1: Proportion of members with party affiliation or independent status	103

Tables

Table 3.1: Number of contested bodies, 1989 - 2001	13
Table 3.2: Number of elected positions, 1989 - 2001	13
Table 3.3: Representation, 1989 - 2001	14
Table 4.1: Candidates and contests, 1989 - 2001	15
Table 4.2: Candidates 1989 - 2001	15
Table 4.3: Number of candidates per available position, 1989 - 2001	16
Table 4.4: Members elected unopposed 1989 - 2001	16
Table 4.5: Proportion of members elected unopposed, 1989 - 2001	16
Table 5.1: Proportion of candidates and proportion of councillors who were previously sitting members, 1989 - 2001	17

Table 5.2: Women and men as candidates and elected members, 1989 - 2001	17	Table 7.11: Proportion of electors per position and turnout levels, 1998 - 2001	31
Table 5.3: Women candidates and members, 1989 - 2001	18	Table 7.12: Average turnout by urban/rural status of territorial authorities, 1998 - 2001	32
Table 5.4: Proportion of members who were women, 1989 - 2001	19	Table 7.13: Proportion of rural/urban territorial authorities by turnout levels, 1998 - 2001	33
Table 5.5: Women mayors, 1989 - 2001	19	Table 7.14: Average candidates per position, 2001	34
Table 5.6: Number and proportion of women candidates and women elected in local government, 1959 - 1986	20	Table 7.15: Average community board turnout, 1998 - 2001	34
Table 5.7: Number and proportion of women candidates and women elected in local government, 1989 - 2001	20	Table 7.16: Average electors per community board, 1998 - 2001	34
Table 6.1: Number of ratepayer electors, 1992 - 2001	22	Table 7.17: Average community board turnout by electors per community board, 1998 - 2001	35
Table 6.2: Informal votes: number of votes, 1989 - 2001	22	Table 9.1: Regional council candidate numbers, 1989 - 2001	39
Table 6.3: Informal votes: proportion of total vote, 1989 - 2001	23	Table 9.2: Contested regional council wards, 1989 - 2001	39
Table 6.4: Special votes, 1989 - 2001	23	Table 9.3: Sitting regional councillors re-elected, 1989 - 2001	39
Table 7.1: Overall average voter turnout, 1989 - 2001	24	Table 9.4: Representation of women in regional council elections, 1989 - 2001	40
Table 7.2: Average turnout of ratepayer electors, 1992 - 2001	24	Table 9.5: Electors on the roll for regional councils, 1989 - 2001	40
Table 7.3: Average turnout regional councils and district health boards, 1989 - 2001	25	Table 9.6: Average electors per councillor on regional councils, 1989 - 2001	40
Table 7.4: Average turnout for city and district councils and for communities, 1989 - 2001	25	Table 9.7: Voter turnout for regional council elections, 1989 - 2001	41
Table 7.5: Size of local authorities, 1998 - 2001	28	Table 9.8: Electors who voted in regional council elections, 1989 - 2001	41
Table 7.6: Size of community boards, 1998 - 2001	28	Table 9.9: Special votes in regional council elections, 1989 - 2001	42
Table 7.7: Average candidate and turnout levels, 1998 - 2001	29	Table 9.10: Informal votes in regional council elections, 1989 - 2001	42
Table 7.8: Proportion of candidate and turnout levels, 1998 - 2001	29	Table 9.11: Regional council elections - 2001	43
Table 7.9: Number of electors per position, 1998 - 2001	30		
Table 7.10: Average number of electors per authority, 1998 - 2001	30		

Table 10.1: Positions on district health boards, 2001	46	Table 12.5: Number of electors on the roll in district councils, 1989 - 2001	70
Table 10.2: Contested district health board constituencies, 2001	46	Table 12.6: Average electors per councillor on district councils, 1989 - 2001	70
Table 10.3: Representation of women in DHB elections, 2001	46	Table 12.7: District council voter turnout, 1989 - 2001	71
Table 10.4: Average electors per member for DHB elections, 2001	47	Table 12.8: Electors who voted in district council elections, 1989 - 2001	71
Table 10.5: Electors who voted in district health board elections, 2001	47	Table 12.9: Special votes in district council elections, 1989 - 2001	72
Table 10.6: Special votes cast in DHB elections, 2001	47	Table 12.10: Informal votes in district council elections, 1989 - 2001	72
Table 10.7: Informal votes in DHB elections, 2001	47	Table 12.11: District council elections, 2001	73
Table 10.8: District Health Board Elections, 2001	48	Table 13.1: Community board candidate numbers, 1989 - 2001	82
Table 11.1: City council candidate numbers, 1989 - 2001	60	Table 13.2: Contested community board elections, 1989 - 2001	82
Table 11.2: Contested city council wards, 1989 - 2001	60	Table 13.3: Sitting community board members re-elected, 1989 - 2001	82
Table 11.3: Sitting members of city councils re-elected, 1989 - 2001	61	Table 13.4: Representation of women in community board elections, 1989 - 2001	83
Table 11.4: Representation of women in city council elections, 1989 - 2001	61	Table 13.5: Electors on the roll for community board elections, 1989 - 2001	83
Table 11.5: Number of electors on the roll in city councils, 1989 - 2001	62	Table 13.6: Average elector per member on community boards, 1989 - 2001	84
Table 11.6: Average electors per councillor on city councils, 1989 - 2001	62	Table 13.7: Voter turnout in community board elections, 1989 - 2001	84
Table 11.7: Average city council voter turnout, 1989 - 2001	62	Table 13.8: Electors who voted in community board elections, 1989 - 2001	84
Table 11.8: Electors who voted in city council elections, 1989 - 2001	63	Table 13.9: Special votes in community board elections, 1989 - 2001	85
Table 11.9: Special votes in city council elections, 1989 - 2001	63	Table 13.10: Informal votes in community board elections, 1989 - 2001	85
Table 11.10: Informal votes in city council elections, 1989 - 2001	64	Table 13.11: Community board elections, 2001	86
Table 11.11: City council elections, 2001	65		
Table 12.1: District council candidate numbers, 1989 - 2001	68		
Table 12.2: Contested district council wards, 1989 - 2001	68		
Table 12.3: District council members re-elected, 1989 - 2001	69		
Table 12.4: Representation of women in district council elections, 1989 - 2001	69		

Section 1: Quick Reference

Number of Elected Councils

District Health Boards	21
Regional Councils	12
Territorial Authorities	
City Councils	15
District Councils	58*
Community Boards	146
Total number of authorities	253

Representation of Women

Number of women elected	615
Proportion of all those elected who are women	30.7%
Number of women mayors	12 (of 74)
Proportion of city councillors who are women	39%
Proportion of district councillors who are women	25%
Proportion of community board members who are women	31%
Proportion of district health board members who are women	44%
Proportion of regional councillors who are women	26%

* Rodney district not included

Elected of Members (including mayors)

Number of candidates (including those unopposed)	4,683
Number of members elected	2,006
Proportion of members elected unopposed	18
Proportion of members (including mayors) re-elected to previous positions	62%

Turnout

Resident electors on territorial authority electoral rolls	2,537,760
Ratepayer electors on territorial authority electoral roll	10,858
Proportion of all electors who are ratepayer electors	0.43%
Turnout in election of district health boards	50%
Turnout in election of regional councils	49%
Turnout in election of city councils	45%
Turnout in election of district councils	57%
Turnout in election of community boards	46%

Section 2: Introduction

This report covers the 2001 election statistics for territorial authorities (district and city councils), regional councils, district health boards (DHBs) and community boards. For the purposes of this report all of these elections will be referred to as local authorities elections.

Eligible to vote

The decision to vote is a personal choice, however it is a legal requirement for New Zealand citizens and permanent residents over the age of 18 years to be enrolled so they can choose whether or not to vote. People are qualified to enrol if:

- they are 18 years old or older, and
- they are a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident, and
- they have lived in New Zealand for one year or more without leaving the country.

They cannot enrol if:

- they are a New Zealand citizen who has not been in New Zealand at all within the last three years, or
- they are a permanent resident of New Zealand who has not been in New Zealand at all within the last 12 months, or
- they are in prison, having been sent there for three years or more because of a criminal offence, or
- they are a patient in a psychiatric hospital who has been sent there for the last three years or more, or
- they are on the Electoral Corrupt Practices List.

New Zealand public servants and members of the New Zealand defence forces who are on duty overseas for long periods are qualified to enrol, as are

members of their family.

The area in which a person is entitled to enrol will be the last one in which they lived for at least one month. If they have never lived in any one electorate for one month or longer, their electorate will be the one which they now live or in which they last lived.

(Source: <http://www.elections.org.nz/elections/enrolling/index.html>)

Types of Local Authorities

Regional councils are responsible for a range of functions including resource management, environmental planning and regional land transport. There are 12 regional councils covering most of the country. Members are elected to regional councils from constituencies and they appoint their own chairperson.

Territorial authorities (or *Territorial local authorities*) are responsible for a broad range of functions such as roads, water supply, sewage disposal and rubbish collection. They also assume responsibility for amenities such as parks, libraries and swimming pools, and undertake regulatory functions in respect of public health and safety. Territorial authorities with a population of 50,000 or more and which are predominantly urban and a major urban centre of regional activity may designated as city councils. Some cities of less than 50,000 in population were given that status in 1989. Other territorial authorities are designated as *district councils*.

There are 15 city councils and 59 district councils. Each territorial authority has a directly elected mayor. Most territorial authorities are divided into wards for the election of councillors. Several territorial authorities have been

allocated regional council functions and are called *unitary authorities* (Nelson, Gisborne, Tasman and Marlborough). They are counted as territorial authorities for this report.

Some territorial authorities have *community boards* to which they can delegate functions. Community boards are not technically local authorities, but are directly elected and are included as local authorities for the purposes of this report. There are 146 community boards.

District Health Boards (DHBs) are responsible for providing or buying Government funded health care services for the population of a specific geographical area. There are 21 DHBs in New Zealand and they have existed since 1 January 2001. The statutory objectives of DHBs are to improve, promote and protect the health of communities; to promote the integration of health services, especially primary and secondary care services; and to promote effective care or support of those in need of personal health services or disability support.

Up to 11 board members sit on each board, of which a maximum of 7 are elected and 4 appointed by the Minister of Health. Territorial Authority electoral officers (TAs) are responsible for running the elections (the DHBs pay the territorial authorities for the cost of running the elections¹).

Method of election

All elections were conducted by post and electors had three weeks within which to return their votes. The conduct of elections is governed by the Local

¹ Source: <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf>

Electoral Act 2001, with some issues being provided for in the Local Government Act 1974. DHB elections are regulated by the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 (NZPHD Act). If successful, candidates in all elections serve a three-year term and then new elections are held².

Research method

Election statistics were obtained electronically, in the majority of cases via a purpose-built website. Electoral Officers were sent a link to the site and a username and password to enable them to log-on to the site so they could enter the election results they were responsible for. A small number of authorities were unable to provide separate totals for votes cast under the ratepayer franchise.

The data in this publication has been carefully checked to ensure accuracy, but due to the volume and large number of sources involved in the data collection, there may be some errors that are beyond our control.

² The only exception is members of DHBs that are appointed by the Minister of Health. They can serve for a maximum of three terms (nine years)

Definitions

Members elected unopposed

Where the number of candidates in a ward, district or constituency is the same or less than the number of vacancies then every candidate is declared to be elected prior to the election.

Contests: Constituencies and Wards

For electoral purposes, regions are divided into constituencies, which generally correspond to cities and districts within the region. In a few cases, a territorial district is divided between two or more regions. Most territorial authorities are divided into wards for election purposes, with a separate election within each ward to elect one or more representatives to represent that area. However, some territorial authorities do not have wards and these elections are referred to as being *at large*. In 2001, four cities and three districts held council elections *at large* rather than in wards.

Electors

Resident elector is someone who is eligible to vote in the parliamentary elections. This means that anybody who is registered as a parliamentary elector, and whose address is in the particular area where an election is held qualifies as an elector in that district health board / community board (if any)/ licensing trust (if any)/ or regional/ city or district council area. Rolls of residential electors are compiled from parliamentary rolls.

Ratepayer elector

Since 1992, there has been a ratepayer franchise. This means that ratepayers owning property in a region, city, district or community where they are not a resident are entitled to enrol for the ratepayer franchise. A person

may enrol as the sole ratepayer in respect of a property, or may be nominated by joint ratepayers or a company or organisation. All ratepayer electors must also be registered parliamentary electors. Eligible ratepayer electors are able to vote in all elections except for district health boards and licensing trusts.

Total number of electors on the roll

This is the total on the roll for the whole district and includes contested and uncontested constituencies/wards, ratepayer (if applicable) and resident electors.

Representation

This is the total number of electors on the roll divided by the number of elected members.

Voters

Resident voter is someone who is an eligible resident elector that voted in the local authority elections. The number of resident voters divided by the number of resident electors gives the resident turnout.

Ratepayer voter is someone who is an eligible ratepayer elector that voted in the local authority elections. The number of ratepayer voters divided by the number of ratepayer electors gives the ratepayer turnout.

Total voters is the sum of resident and ratepayer voters (including informal and valid special votes). This figure is divided by the sum of resident and ratepayer electors (in contested wards only) to give total turnout.

A voter differs from the number of votes. Voters is a count of people who voted in an election. Votes refers to the number of votes cast in an election. These two figures differ when there are two or more positions to be filled. If there are multiple positions to be filled in a ward or constituency election a voter is able to cast as many votes as there are positions to be filled.

Special Votes

Anyone whose name appears on the roll and who claims to have not received voting papers, or to have lost, spoilt, or destroyed them, can cast a special vote – as can anyone whose name does not appear on the roll but who has enrolled on the parliamentary roll.

Informal Votes

This is the number of voting papers for a particular election on which the candidate or candidates for whom the electors wish to vote is not clearly indicated.

On a strict interpretation, this includes voting papers that have not been marked at all. Widespread use was made of combined voting papers, and any sections left blank have been counted as informal votes by returning officers.

Figure 2.1 gives an example of a combined voting form with two types of informal votes. The first, in the council election, shows that the voter only voted for two of three possible council positions. It is unclear whether the voter did not want to vote cast a third vote or did not realise how many votes they had to cast for council elections. The second type of informal vote in Figure 2.1 is where the voter did not cast a vote in the community board election at all, they may not have seen community board election on the election form or they may decided not to vote in that election.

Figure 2.1: Example of informal votes

Council election	Community Board election
You can vote for a maximum of 3 candidates	You can vote for a maximum of 3 candidates
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate A	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate A
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate B	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate B
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate C	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate C
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Candidate D	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate D

Turnout

This is the percentage of electors on the roll (for those areas where an election was necessary) who voted. Overall turnout is the total number of resident and ratepayer voters (including those who cast informal and special votes) divided by the total number of electors on both the resident and ratepayer rolls in contested areas.