

# NEW ZEALAND'S ELECTORAL SYSTEM

---





## **INDEPENDENT CROWN ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR:**

- Administration of parliamentary elections and referenda
- Maintaining electoral rolls
- Promoting participation in parliamentary democracy
- Promoting compliance with electoral laws
- Registration of political parties
- Allocation of time and money for the broadcast of election programmes
- Conducting of the Māori Electoral Option
- Servicing the work of the Representation Commission
- Advice, reports and public education on electoral matters



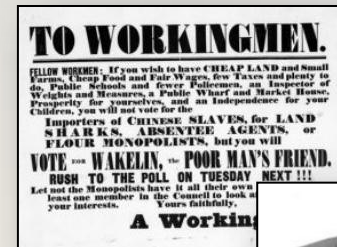
- Young, small and isolated
- Small population
- Largely urbanised
- Large parts of country sparsely populated
- Māori – tangata whenua
- Increasingly diverse population





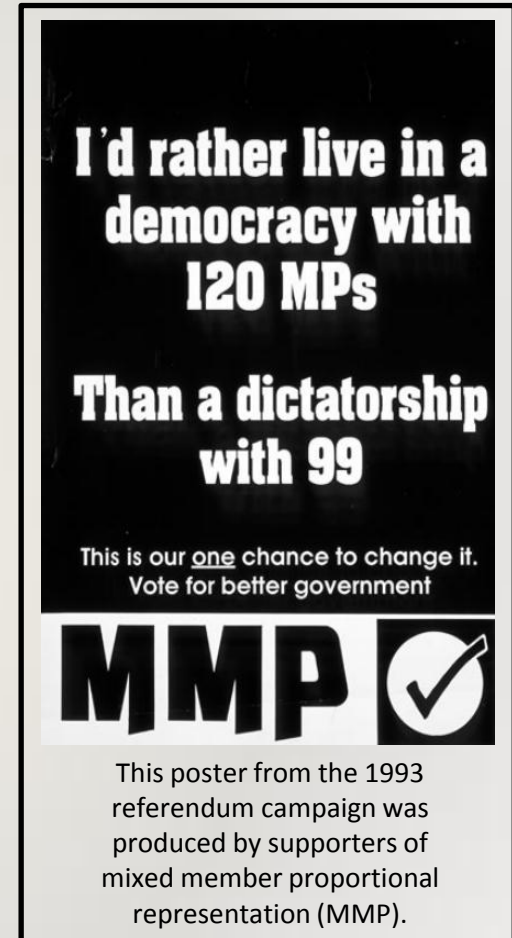
## DEMOCRACY FOR MOST OF MODERN HISTORY

- 1853 First election using First Past the Post
- 1870 Secret ballot introduced
- 1893 Universal suffrage achieved
- 1919 Women eligible to stand for parliament
- 1974 Voting age was lowered to 18
- 1993 Voting system changed to Mixed Member Proportional system (MMP)
- 1996 First election using MMP



- Criticism of the unfairness of the first past the post (FPP) voting system intensified after the 1978 and 1981 general elections.
- A Royal Commission on the Electoral System was established in early 1985.
- The Royal Commission's report, completed in December 1986 recommended New Zealand adopt the MMP system, with the size of Parliament increasing to 120 MPs; elected from single-member constituencies and selected from party lists.
- Government held an indicative referendum in 1992 asking voters:
  - If they wanted to change the existing voting system
  - To indicate support for one of four reform options: MMP, STV, SM or PV.
- 55% of registered electors took part, an overwhelming 85% voted to change, 70% favoured MMP.
- Government held a binding referendum with the 1993 General Election and asked electors which electoral system – FPP or MMP.
  - 85% turnout of electors;
  - MMP backed by a comfortable margin, 54% to 46%

## 1996 GENERAL ELECTION FIRST ELECTION USING MMP





## NEW ZEALAND IS A PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

- New Zealand is a constitutional monarchy, which is based on the British Westminster system
- The country's laws are made by Parliament
- New Zealand has a single chamber of Parliament which consists of
  - the House of Representatives - which generally has 120 MPs
  - the Governor-General - who does not personally attend the House
- Citizens and permanent residents who are aged 18 years and over are required to enrol to vote
- Voting is not compulsory
- Elections are held every three years
- Under the MMP system, New Zealanders cast two votes
- New Zealand also has sub-national elected government bodies including territorial local authorities, district health boards, and school boards of trustees

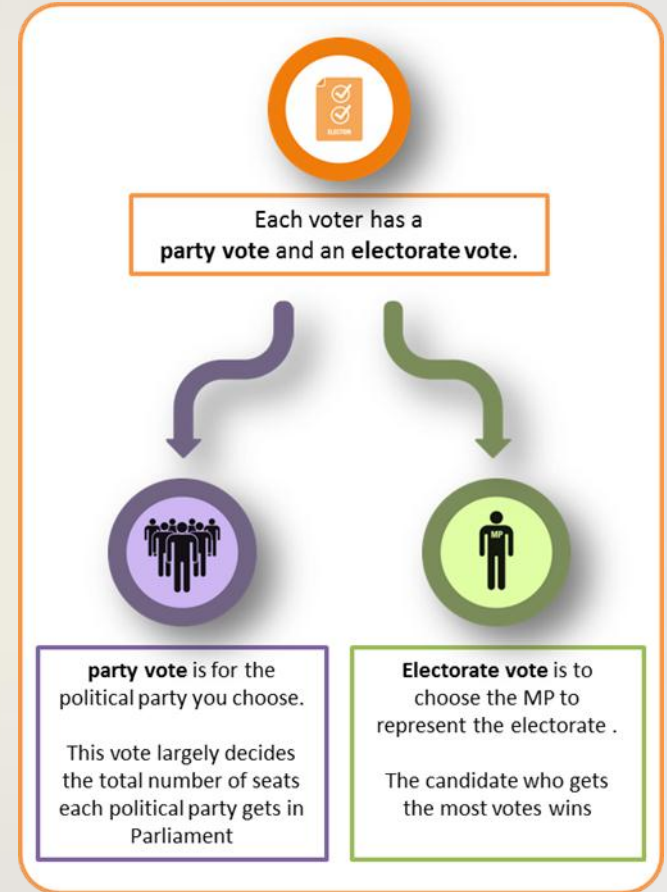


## VOTING

- Election Day is always on a Saturday
- Advance Voting and Overseas Voting available 17 days before election day
- Voters can vote at any voting place in New Zealand
- There were 2,568 voting places open throughout the country for 2014 General Election
- Voting places are open from 9am – 7pm on Election Day
- All voting places can issue votes for their home General and Māori Electorates
- All voting places can issue special votes for other electorates or if voter is not on roll.

## INTRODUCTION TO MMP

- Usually 120 seats in Parliament BUT can be more or less
- Voters have two votes – one Party vote and one Electorate vote
- MMP is a proportional system - the party vote largely decides the total number of seats a party gets in parliament
- Two types of MPs – Electorate and List
- Coalitions or agreements between political parties are usually needed to form Governments.





## THE BALLOT PAPER

- Candidates listed in alphabetical order with party listed against them
- Parties with no candidates for electorate then listed alphabetically
- Voting options are:
  - Vote for candidate and party
  - Vote for candidate only
  - Vote for party only
  - Leave ballot paper blank

ELECTORATE  
**59**

No. on Roll:  
(To be entered here only)

Page No. Line No.

Initials of Issuing Officer

---

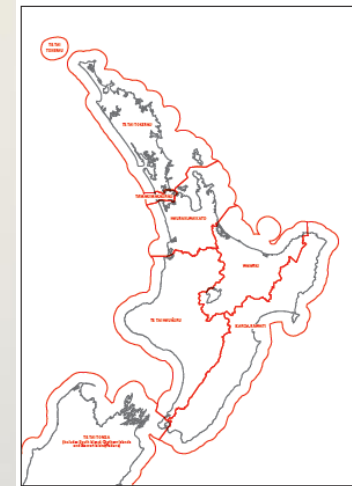
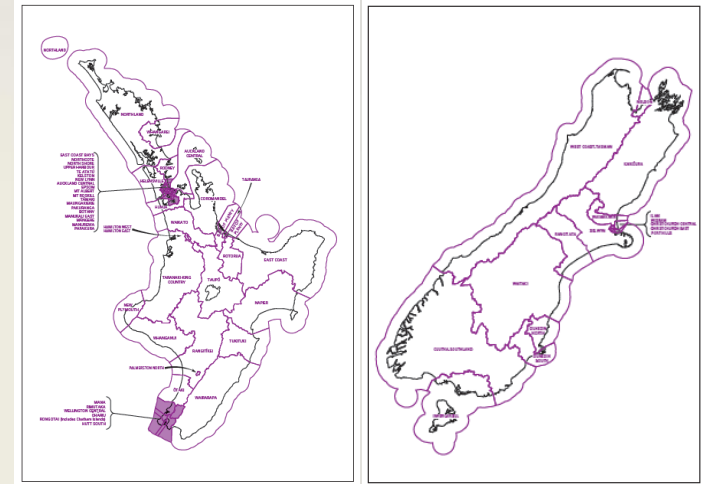
**59** **YOU HAVE 2 VOTES**

PARTY VOTE		OFFICIAL MARK	ELECTORATE VOTE	
<i>Explanation</i> This vote decides the share of seats which each of the parties listed below will have in Parliament. Vote by putting a tick in the circle immediately after the party you choose.		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Explanation</i> This vote decides the candidate who will be elected Member of Parliament for the WELLINGTON CENTRAL ELECTORATE. Vote by putting a tick in the circle immediately before the candidate you choose.	
<b>Vote for only one party</b>			<b>Vote for only one candidate</b>	
AOTEAROA LEGALISE CANNABIS PARTY	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPLEBY, Michael AOTEAROA LEGALISE CANNABIS PARTY	
ALLIANCE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> BOOMERT, Laurence NEW ECONOMICS PARTY	
NEW ZEALAND FIRST PARTY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> BUCHANAN, Kelly ALLIANCE	
LIBERTARIANZ	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> CRAVEN, Ben NEW ZEALAND FIRST PARTY	
NATIONAL PARTY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> CLUTTING, Reagan LIBERTARIANZ	
LABOUR PARTY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> FOSTER-BELL, Paul NATIONAL PARTY	
GREEN PARTY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> KARENA, Puhii INDEPENDENT	
CONSERVATIVE PARTY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> RICKERBY, Gynn PRIME PARTY OF NEW ZEALAND	
ACT NEW ZEALAND	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ROBERTSON, Grant LABOUR PARTY	
DEMOCRATS FOR SOCIAL CREDIT	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> SHAW, James GREEN PARTY	
MANA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> STIPKOVITS, Paul CONSERVATIVE PARTY	
			<input type="checkbox"/> WHITTINGTON, Stephen ACT NEW ZEALAND	



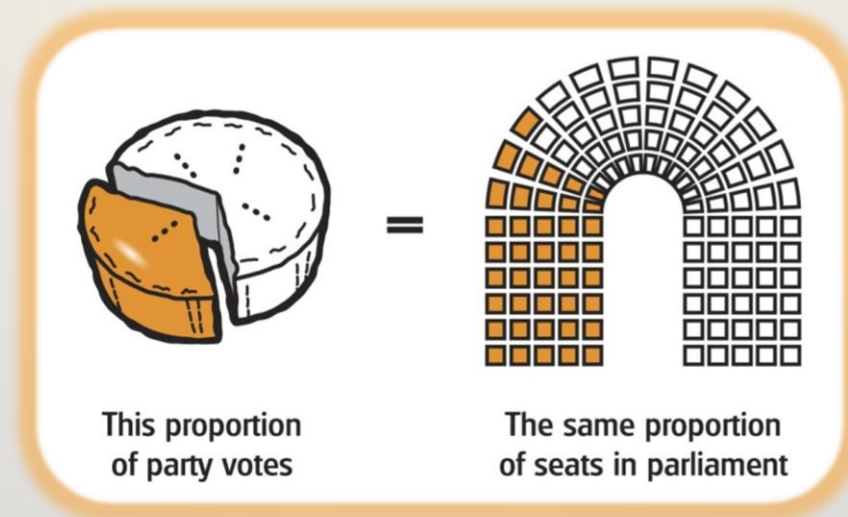
## NEW ZEALAND IS DIVIDED INTO 71 ELECTORATES

- 64 general electorates
- 7 Māori electorates
- Electorate MPs elected by first past the post
- MP represents their electorate in Parliament
- Electorate names and boundaries are reviewed by an independent statutory body after every population Census



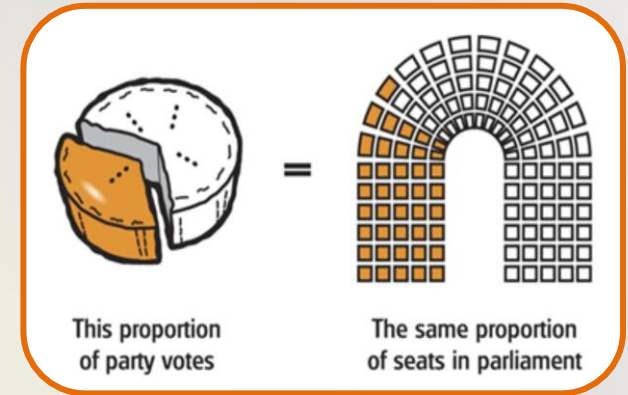


- List seats 'top up' electorate seats
- Only **registered political parties** can contest List seats
- Parties must win **one electorate seat** or **5% of party votes** to qualify for list seats
- List MPs elected from party lists
- Saint Laguë formula used to determine the allocation of list seats



## SAINT LAGUË FORMULA

- Electoral quotients calculated (refer to List Seats tab in resource folder)
- Highest 120 electoral quotients selected
- List seats allocated to each party to 'top up' electorate seats
- Remaining candidates selected in order of preference until all list seats are allocated



## OVERHANG SEAT

- An overhang seat occurs if a party wins more electorate seats than it would be entitled to under its share of the party vote.
- Where this happens:
  - The party keeps all its electorate seats
  - The number of list seats allocated to other parties is increased by the number of overhang seats
- This has the effect of increasing the size of Parliament



# MMP

<http://www.elections.org.nz/events/past-events-0/2011-referendum-voting-system/about-referendum-choices/mmp-%E2%80%93-mixed-member>



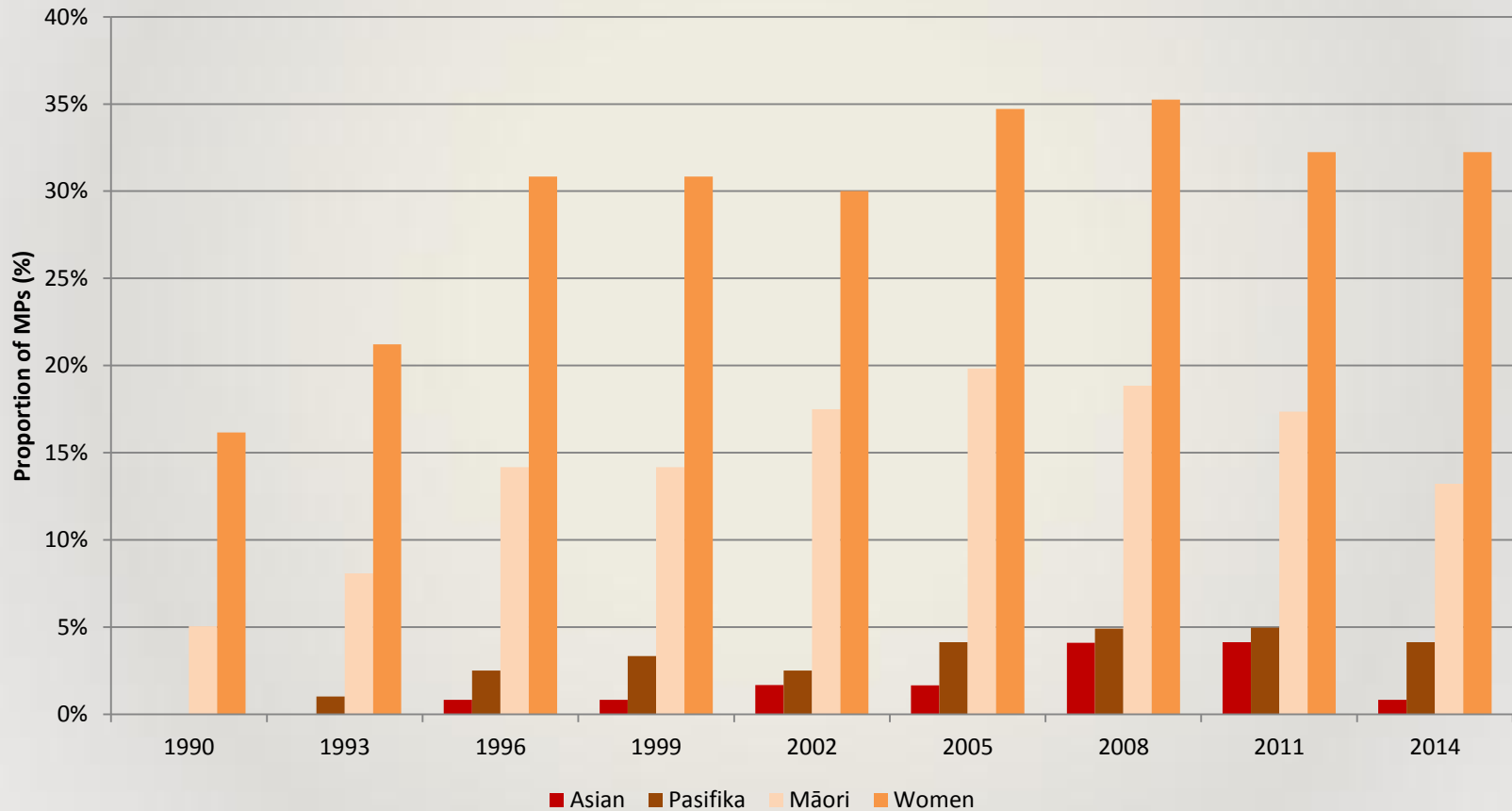


Voters showed a thorough understanding of MMP at the **2014 General Election**:

- Low levels of informal votes
  - Only 0.45 percent of Party Votes cast were declared informal
  - Only 1.17 percent of Candidate votes cast were declared informal
- High levels of split voting
  - 31.64 percent of voters cast a split candidate vote
- 94 percent of voters considered the ballot paper layout clear, concise and easy to use

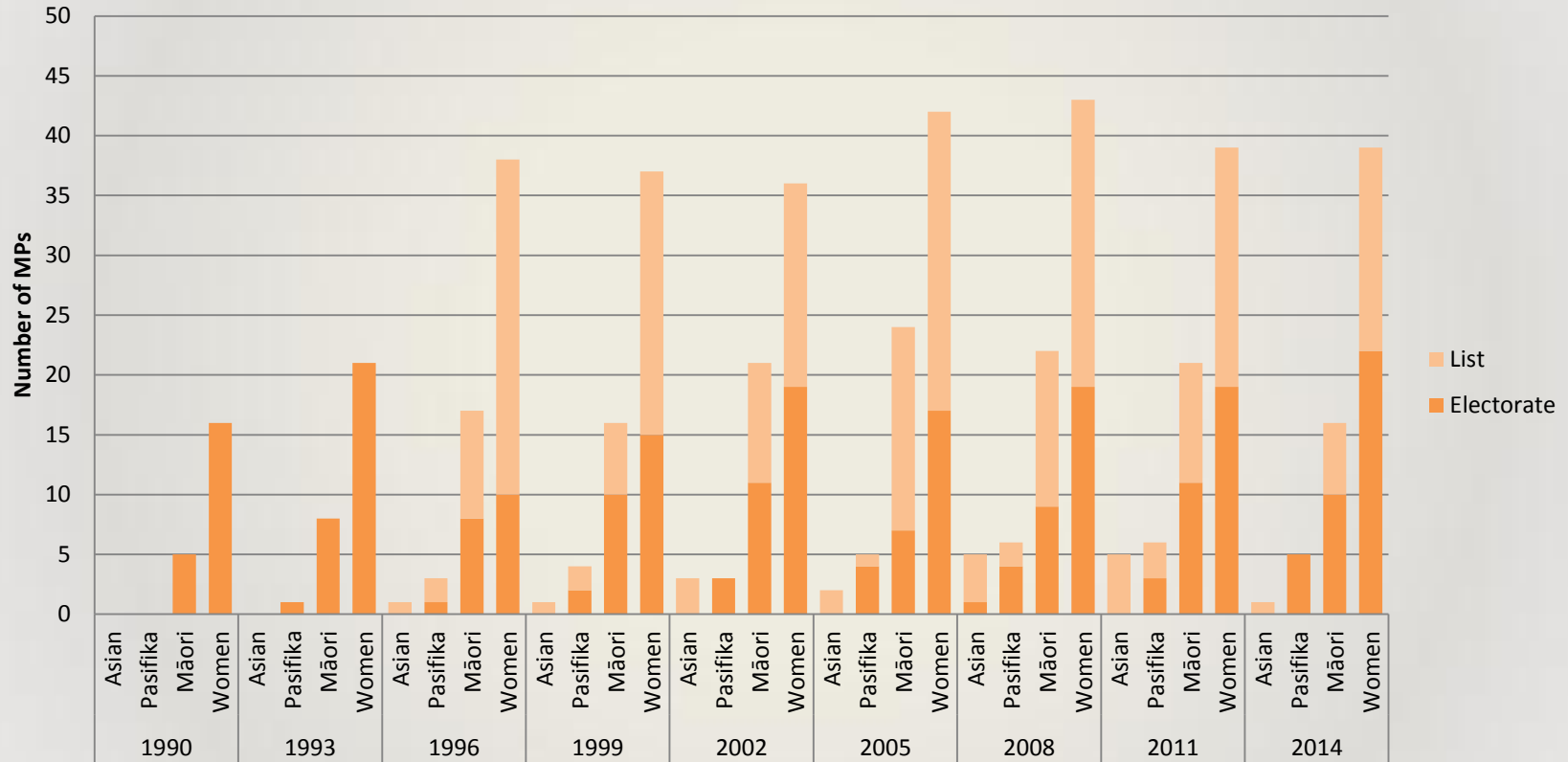


## Diversity in Parliament





## Diversity through party lists





# REFERENDUM ON THE VOTING SYSTEM AND REVIEW OF MMP





# Referendum Process

- 2008 election promise to hold a referendum
- October 2009 Minister of Justice announced referendum to be held with 2011 general election
- Electoral Referendum Bill introduced in March and passed in December 2010
- The Electoral Commission was charged with running a public information and education campaign on the referendum process and the 5 voting systems: MMP, FPP, PV, STV, SM

# Referendum on the Voting System



- Should New Zealand keep the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) voting system?
- If New Zealand were to change to another voting system, which voting system would you choose?
  - First Past the Post system (FPP)
  - Preferential Voting system (PV)
  - Single Transferable Vote system (STV)
  - Supplementary Member system (SM)

**Referendum on New Zealand's Voting System**

59 WELLINGTON CENTRAL ELECTORATE Official Mark

**Explanation**  
1. You may vote in **both Part A and Part B** or you may vote in **only Part A** or **only Part B**.  
2. Vote by putting a tick in the circle next to the option you choose.

**Part A**  
Should New Zealand keep the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) voting system?

**Vote for only one option** Vote Here

I vote to **keep** the MMP voting system

I vote to **change** to another voting system

**Part B**  
If New Zealand were to change to another voting system, which voting system would you choose?

**Vote for only one option** Vote Here

I would choose the **First Past the Post** system (FPP)

I would choose the **Preferential Voting** system (PV)

I would choose the **Single Transferable Vote** system (STV)

I would choose the **Supplementary Member** system (SM)

**Final Directions**

- If you spoil this voting paper, return it to the officer who issued it and apply for a new paper.
- After voting, fold this voting paper so that its contents cannot be seen and **place it in the referendum ballot box**.
- You must not take this voting paper out of the polling place.

# What would happen as a result?

Half vote to  
keep MMP

Independent  
review to  
recommend  
changes

Electoral  
Commission  
responsible for  
review

More than half  
vote for change

Government to  
decide if  
referendum held  
in 2014

Choose between  
MMP and system  
with most votes  
in 2011

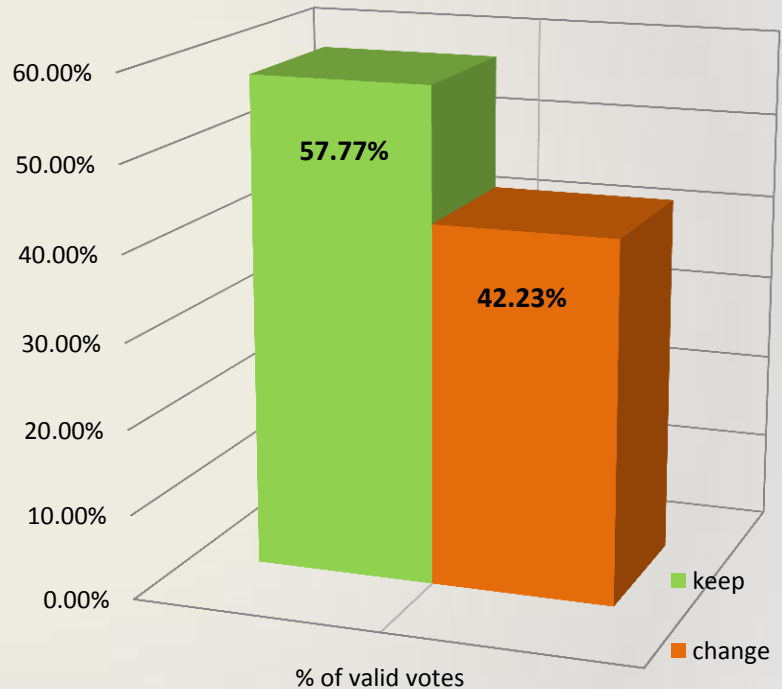


# REFERENDUM ON THE VOTING SYSTEM

## Should NZ keep the MMP voting system?

2,194,774 valid votes were cast in the referendum vote

## Should NZ keep the MMP voting system?





# MMP Review Process

Timeframe	Activity	Participation
13 Feb – 31 May 2012	Consultation Paper released for public submissions	Over 4,600 submissions received
April – May 2012	Public Hearings	120 people were heard in person
13 August – 7 September 2012	Proposals Paper released for public submissions	Over 1,000 submissions received
31 October 2012	Final Report to the Minister for presentation to Parliament	



## The issues the Commission

### HAD to consider were:

- the thresholds
- list MPs standing in by-elections
- dual candidacy
- who should decide the order of candidates on a party list
- what should happen when an overhang occurs
- the effects of population growth on the ratio of electorate seats to list seats

### COULD NOT consider were:

- the number of MPs
- Māori representation

## Recommendations

### The Commission recommended several changes to the MMP system, the main points:

- lowering the party threshold to 4 per cent
- abolishing the one electorate seat threshold
- abolishing the provision for overhang seats
- that Parliament consider fixing the percentage ratio of electorate to list seats at 60:40



# Compulsory voting

- Enrolment is compulsory in New Zealand.
  - fine of \$NZ100 for failure
  - encourage vs enforce
- Voting is not compulsory
- No current legislative plans to introduce compulsory voting
- Commission position





# Electronic voting

- No electronic voting in New Zealand
- Method of voting is entrenched - legislative change supported by 75% majority or a majority in a referendum required to enable e-voting
- No current legislative plans to introduce electronic voting for parliamentary elections
- Trial proposed for 2016 local authority elections not proceeding
- Telephone dictation voting has been introduced for voters who are visually impaired
- Overseas voters can download and upload their voting paper via a secure website, but must complete the paper manually

**YOU HAVE 2 VOTES**

999999

**PARTY VOTE**

*Explanation*

This vote decides the share of seats which each of the parties listed below will have in Parliament. Vote by putting a tick in the circle immediately after the party you choose.

OFFICIAL MARK

**ELECTORATE VOTE**









*Explanation*

This vote decides the candidate who will be elected Member of Parliament for the WELLINGTON CENTRAL ELECTORATE. Vote by putting a tick in the circle immediately before the candidate you choose.

**Vote for only one party**

**Vote for only one candidate**

	NEW ZEALAND FIRST PARTY	<input type="radio"/>
	NATIONAL PARTY	<input type="radio"/>
	AOTEAROA LEGALISE CANNABIS PARTY	<input type="radio"/>
	CONSERVATIVE	<input type="radio"/>
	DEMOCRATS FOR SOCIAL CREDIT	<input type="radio"/>
	LABOUR PARTY	<input type="radio"/>
	GREEN PARTY	<input type="radio"/>
	ACT NEW ZEALAND	<input type="radio"/>
	BAN1080	<input type="radio"/>
	FOCUS NEW ZEALAND	<input type="radio"/>
	INTERNET MANA	<input type="radio"/>
	MĀORI PARTY	<input type="radio"/>
	NZ INDEPENDENT COALITION	<input type="radio"/>
	THE CIVILIAN PARTY	<input type="radio"/>
	UNITED FUTURE	<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>
		<input type="radio"/>

<input type="radio"/>	BARR, Hugh NEW ZEALAND FIRST PARTY	
<input type="radio"/>	FOSTER-BELL, Paul NATIONAL PARTY	
<input type="radio"/>	GREGORY, Alistair AOTEAROA LEGALISE CANNABIS PARTY	
<input type="radio"/>	HOOPER, Brian CONSERVATIVE	
<input type="radio"/>	KARENA PUHI, Huimaono Geoff INDEPENDENT	
<input type="radio"/>	KNUCKEY, James DEMOCRATS FOR SOCIAL CREDIT	
<input type="radio"/>	ROBERTSON, Grant LABOUR PARTY	
<input type="radio"/>	ROBINSON, Peter Franklin INDEPENDENT	
<input type="radio"/>	SHAW, James GREEN PARTY	
<input type="radio"/>	VALENTINE, Callum INTERNET PARTY	
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		
<input type="radio"/>		

SAMPLE

**Final Directions**  
 1. If you spoil this ballot paper, return it to the officer who issued it and apply for a new ballot paper.  
 2. After voting, fold this ballot paper so that its contents cannot be seen and place it in the ballot box.  
 3. You must not take this ballot paper out of the polling place.

**2014 General Election**  
**Actual Quotients for Party List Seat Allocation**

Party List Seat Allocation														
Divisor	National Party	Seat No.	Labour Party	Seat No.	Green Party	Seat No.	New Zealand First Party	Seat No.	Māori Party	Seat No.	ACT New Zealand	Seat No.	United Future	Seat No.
1	1131501.000	1	604535.000	2	257359.000	4	208300.000	6	31849.000	35	16689.000	68	5286.000	
3	377167.000	3	201511.700	7	85786.330	14	69433.330	16	10616.330	106	5563.000		1762.000	
5	226300.200	5	120907.000	10	51471.800	22	41660.000	27	6369.800		3337.800		1057.200	
7	161643.000	8	86362.140	13	36765.570	30	29757.140	38	4549.857		2384.143		755.143	
9	125722.300	9	67170.560	17	28595.440	41	23144.440	49	3538.778		1854.333		587.333	
11	102863.700	11	54957.730	20	23396.270	48	18936.360	60	2895.364		1517.182		480.546	
13	87038.540	12	46502.690	24	19796.850	57	16023.080	71	2449.923		1283.769		406.615	
15	75433.400	15	40302.330	28	17157.270	66	13886.670	82	2123.267		1112.600		352.400	
17	66558.880	18	35560.880	32	15138.760	75	12252.940	93	1873.471		981.706		310.941	
19	59552.680	19	31817.630	36	13545.210	84	10963.160	104	1676.263		878.368		278.211	
21	53881.000	21	28787.380	40	12255.190	92	9919.048	114	1516.619		794.714		251.714	
23	49195.700	23	26284.130	44	11189.520	101	9056.522		1384.739		725.609		229.826	
25	45260.040	25	24181.400	46	10294.360	110	8332.000		1273.960		667.560		211.440	
27	41907.440	26	22390.190	51	9531.815	119	7714.815		1179.593		618.111		195.778	
29	39017.280	29	20846.030	54	8874.448		7182.759		1098.241		575.483		182.276	
31	36500.030	31	19501.130	58	8301.903		6719.355		1027.387		538.355		170.516	
33	34287.910	33	18319.240	62	7798.758		6312.121		965.121		505.727		160.182	
35	32328.600	34	17272.430	65	7353.114		5951.429		909.971		476.829		151.029	
37	30581.110	37	16338.780	70	6955.649		5629.730		860.784		451.054		142.865	
39	29012.850	39	15500.900	73	6598.949		5341.026		816.641		427.923		135.539	
41	27597.590	42	14744.760	77	6277.049		5080.488		776.805		407.049		128.927	
43	26313.980	43	14058.950	80	5985.093		4844.186		740.674		388.116		122.930	
45	25144.470	45	13434.110	85	5719.089		4628.889		707.756		370.867		117.467	
47	24074.490	47	12862.450	88	5475.723		4431.915		677.638		355.085		112.468	
49	23091.860	50	12337.450	91	5252.224		4251.020		649.980		340.592		107.878	
51	22186.290	52	11853.630	96	5046.255		4084.314		624.490		327.235		103.647	
53	21349.080	53	11406.320	99	4855.830		3930.189		600.925		314.887		99.736	
55	20572.750	55	10991.550	102	4679.255		3787.273		579.073		303.436		96.109	
57	19850.890	56	10605.880	107	4515.070		3654.386		558.754		292.790		92.737	
59	19177.980	59	10246.360	111	4362.017		3530.508		539.814		282.864		89.593	
61	18549.200	61	9910.410	115	4219.000		3414.754		522.115		273.590		86.656	
63	17960.330	63	9595.794	118	4085.063		3306.349		505.540		264.905		83.905	
65	17407.710	64	9300.538		3959.369		3204.615		489.985		256.754		81.323	
67	16888.070	67	9022.910		3841.179		3108.955		475.358		249.090		78.896	
69	16398.570	69	8761.377		3729.841		3018.841		461.580		241.870		76.609	
71	15936.630	72	8514.577		3624.775		2933.803		448.578		235.056		74.451	
73	15500.010	74	8281.301		3525.466		2853.425		436.288		228.616		72.411	
75	15086.680	76	8060.467		3431.453		2777.333		424.653		222.520		70.480	
77	14694.820	78	7851.104		3342.325		2705.195		413.623		216.740		68.649	
79	14322.800	79	7652.342		3257.709		2636.709		403.152		211.253		66.911	
81	13969.150	81	7463.395		3177.272		2571.605		393.198		206.037		65.259	
83	13632.540	83	7283.554		3100.711		2509.639		383.723		201.072		63.687	
85	13311.780	86	7112.176		3027.753		2450.588		374.694		196.341		62.188	
87	13005.760	87	6948.678		2958.149		2394.253		366.081		191.828		60.759	
89	12713.490	89	6792.528		2891.674		2340.449		357.854		187.517		59.393	
91	12434.080	90	6643.242		2828.121		2289.011		349.989		183.396		58.088	
93	12166.680	94	6500.376		2767.301		2239.785		342.462		179.452		56.839	
95	11910.540	95	6363.526		2709.042		2192.632		335.253		175.674		55.642	
97	11664.960	97	6232.320		2653.186		2147.423		328.340		172.052		54.495	
99	11429.300	98	6106.414		2599.586		2104.040		321.707		168.576		53.394	
101	11202.980	100	5985.495		2548.109		2062.376		315.337		165.238		52.337	
103	10985.450	103	5869.272		2498.631		2022.330		309.214		162.029		51.320	
105	10776.200	105	5757.476		2451.038		1983.810		303.324		158.943		50.343	
107	10574.780	108	5649.860		2405.224		1946.729		297.654		155.972		49.402	
109	10380.740	109	5546.193		2361.092		1911.009		292.193		153.110		48.495	
111	10193.700	112	5446.261		2318.550		1876.577		286.928		150.351		47.622	
113	10013.280	113	5349.867		2277.513		1843.363		281.850		147.690		46.779	
115	9839.139	116	5256.826		2237.904		1811.304		276.948		145.122		45.965	
117	9670.949	117	5166.966		2199.650		1780.342		272.214		142.641		45.179	
119	9508.412	120	5080.126		2162.681		1750.420		267.639		140.244		44.420	
121	9351.248		4996.157		2126.934		1721.488		263.215		137.926		43.686	
Number of Party Votes	1,131,501		604,535		257,359		208,300		31,849		16,689		5,286	
Percentage	50.17%		26.80%		11.41%		9.24%		1.41%		0.74%		0.23%	
Electorate Seats	41		27		0		0		1		1		1	
List Seats	19		5		14		11		1		0		0	
<b>Total Seats</b>	<b>60</b>		<b>32</b>		<b>14</b>		<b>11</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>	

# 2014 General Election

## Sainte Laguë Formula Explained

### Electorate Seats

The Member of Parliament (MP) for an electoral district is the candidate who wins more votes than any other candidate. He or she does not need to win more than half the votes cast. Under the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral system MPs for the electoral districts are elected in exactly the same way as they would be under the First-Past-The-Post (FPP) electoral system.

### Party List Seats

The number of party votes won by each registered party which has submitted a Party List is used to decide how many seats overall each party will have in Parliament.

If, for example, the party vote for the Grandstand Party entitled it to a total of 54 seats in Parliament and it won 40 electorate candidate seats, it would gain 14 further seats which would be drawn from the Party List of the Grandstand Party. Candidates may stand for Parliament both in an electoral district and on their Party's List. As a result, the first 14 candidates on the Grandstand Party's rank-ordered Party List *who had not been elected to Parliament to represent an electoral district* would be declared elected as Party List MPs.

A procedure, known as the Sainte Laguë formula (after its founder) is used to decide the order in which political parties are awarded seats in Parliament.

### Allocating 2014 General Election Parliamentary Seats using the Sainte-Laguë Formula

To determine the precise order in which all the seats in Parliament are allocated to the various political parties, the Electoral Act 1993 prescribes that a mathematical formula, called the Sainte-Laguë formula, be applied. The nationwide party vote of each of the parties which qualified for representation in Parliament is divided by successive odd numbers starting with 1 (i.e. the party votes divided by 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, etc). The 120 highest numbers (which are called quotients) determine both the number of seats for each party and the order in which they are allocated. The following explains how the process works:

#### Step 1:

The Electoral Commission draws up a table showing the name of each party shown on the party side of the ballot paper, the number of party votes it won, the percentage of all party votes it won and the number of electorate seats it won. For the purposes of this explanation minor parties are combined under the heading 'OTHER'.

Registered Parties	NEW ZEALAND										
	NATIONAL PARTY	LABOUR PARTY	GREEN PARTY	FIRST PARTY	CONSERVATIVE	INTERNET MANA	MĀORI PARTY	ACT NEW ZEALAND	UNITED FUTURE	OTHER	TOTAL
Party Votes	1,131,501	604,535	257,359	208,300	95,598	34,094	31,849	16,689	5,286	20,411	2,405,622
% of all party votes	47.04%	25.13%	10.7%	8.66%	3.97%	1.42%	1.32%	0.69%	0.22%	0.85%	100%
Number of electorate seats won	41	27	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	71

#### Step 2:

The Electoral Commission then excludes parties that are not eligible for Party List seats by deleting any party that has not won at least 5% of the total number of party votes and has not won at least one electorate seat (commonly termed the threshold). Although ACT New Zealand, Māori Party, and United Future each gained less than 5% of the party votes they did win electorate seats, so are included.

Registered Parties that gained 5% of total party votes or won at least 1 electorate seat	NEW ZEALAND							
	NATIONAL PARTY	LABOUR PARTY	GREEN PARTY	FIRST PARTY	MĀORI PARTY	ACT NEW ZEALAND	UNITED FUTURE	TOTAL
Party Votes	1,131,501	604,535	257,359	208,300	31,849	16,689	5,286	2,255,519
% of all party votes eligible for list seats	50.17%	26.80%	11.41%	9.24%	1.41%	0.74%	0.23%	100%
Number of electorate seats won	41	27	0	0	1	1	1	71

**Note** Because the parties not reaching the threshold have been disregarded the percentage share for each of the remaining parties has increased.

**Step 3:**

The Electoral Commission then divides the total party votes for each eligible party by a sequence of odd numbers starting with 1 (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, etc), until enough quotients had been found to allocate all 120 seats. In the table on the following page the bold numbers beside the highest 120 quotients indicate their order from highest to lowest.

**Step 4:**

The Electoral Commission then counts the number of quotients each party has in the highest 120.

**Step 5:**

The Electoral Commission then determines how many electorate seats each party has won, and allocates enough Party List seats to each party to bring the total number of seats up to the number to which it is entitled.

**Step 6:**

The Electoral Commission then examines the list of candidates each party submitted on its Party List before the election, and deletes the names of any candidate who has won an electorate seat. The Electoral Commission then allocates each Party's list seats to its list candidates, starting at the top of the list and working down until it has allocated all the list seats to which that party is entitled. The Electoral Commission then declares these candidates elected to Parliament and advises the Clerk of the House of Representatives of their names.

**Notes:**

There are five further points to note about the process:

- 1 If a party that appears on the party vote side of the ballot paper wins more electorate seats than it is entitled to based on its share of the party vote, then it does not receive any list seats. It keeps the extra seats, and the size of Parliament is increased by that number of seats until the next general election. The increase in the size of Parliament is known as an overhang. The number of seats won by other parties is not affected.<sup>1</sup>
- 2 If a party has not nominated enough list candidates to fill all the seats to which it is entitled on the basis of its share of the party vote, the seats remain unfilled and the size of Parliament is reduced by that number of seats until the next general election. The number of seats won by other parties is not affected.
- 3 If an electorate seat is won by a candidate not representing a party contesting the party vote, the Electoral Commission subtracts that number of seats from 120, and works out the allocation of seats between registered parties based on that lower number.
- 4 The list nominated by a party at a general election is used to replace a list MP from that party in the event of their seat being vacated (Electoral Act 1993, Section 137). The Electoral Commission asks the remaining candidates on the list in turn if they are willing to become an MP until a replacement candidate is found. If no such candidate can be found from the list, the seat remains unfilled until the next general election.
- 5 Parliament may, by resolution supported by 75% of all MPs, avoid filling a vacant list seat if the vacancy occurs within six months of the date Parliament is due to expire or if the Prime Minister has announced that a general election is to be held within six months of the date the vacancy occurred (Electoral Act 1993, Section 136).

---

<sup>1</sup> An overhang occurred at the 2014 general election because United Future won an electorate seat but was not entitled to any seats based on its share of the party vote. Accordingly, the size of Parliament increased to 121 seats.

# ELECTORAL COMMISSION REPORT ON THE 2011 GENERAL ELECTION AND REFERENDUM

The Electoral Commission's final report on the delivery of the 2011 General Election and Referendum on the Voting System was tabled on 2 May 2012, in accordance with Section 8(1) of the Electoral Act 1993.

The full report can be downloaded under the summary below.

## **Main Points**

### **Establishment of single electoral agency**

The first phase of the reform to establish a single electoral agency responsible for all aspects of parliamentary electoral administration proceeded smoothly with the new Electoral Commission coming into effect as scheduled on 1 October 2010.

The final stage of the integration, the transfer of the enrolment functions to the Commission, will be completed by 1 July 2012. The two stage approach was adopted to minimise risks to the delivery of the 2011 election.

### **The Commission's objective**

The Electoral Act 1993 (the Act) sets out the Commission's objective as:

"... to administer the electoral system impartially, efficiently, effectively, and in a way that -

- (a) facilitates participation in parliamentary democracy; and
- (b) promotes understanding of the electoral system and associated matters; and
- (c) maintains confidence in the administration of the electoral system" (section 4C Electoral Act 1993).

Voter research shows this objective was met and public confidence in the administration of elections was maintained.

### **The Commission's strategy**

The Commission believed public confidence in the administration of elections would be maintained if, in delivering the general election and referendum, it –

(a) Delivered voters the same level of service in polling places they received in 2008 (that is, polite, efficient staff and no long queues);

(b) Achieved the same reporting times for parliamentary preliminary results that it achieved in 2008 (that is, 100% of advance vote results in by 8.30pm, 50% of polling places reported by 10.00pm and the remainder by 11.30pm);

(c) Provided a good indication of the referendum result on election night (that is, 100% of referendum advance vote results reported by 8.30pm).

## **Voter satisfaction**

Voter survey results showed 88% of voters were satisfied or very satisfied with the information they received before the election, the voting process, and their voting experience.

The vast majority of voters considered the time spent in the polling place reasonable (98%), found the parliamentary (94%) and referendum papers (83%) straightforward, and were satisfied with the timeliness of the results (87%).

Voters were very positive (93%+) about the location and layout of polling places and the politeness, efficiency and knowledge of electoral staff. These results are on a par with those for 2008.

## **Voter participation**

Overall turnout as a percentage of those eligible to enrol fell 6% from 2008 (from 75.73% to 69.57%). The last time there was a similarly large drop was between the 1999 election and the early mid-winter election in 2002 when turnout fell 5% (from 77.19% to 72.49%). Turnout in 2005 was 77.05%.

Non-voters gave largely the same reasons as in 2008 for not voting: “other commitments” (14%), “work commitments” (9%), “couldn’t be bothered” (14%), “could not work out who to vote for” (11%). However, the number of non-voters giving the response “it was obvious who would win so why bother”, as a factor influencing their decision not to vote, increased from 19% in 2008 to 31% in 2011.

Facilitating participation is a key objective of the new Commission. Whilst it cannot be accountable for turnout (because it cannot control all the variables which affect turnout), the Commission can and will champion voter participation and lead efforts to turn the decline around.

An immediate area of focus for the Commission will be civics education. Declining voter participation is a world-wide longstanding generational problem and will not be easily or quickly turned around. However, an obvious starting point is our newest generation.

The Commission’s 2011 Kids Voting programme reached 46,659 school students in the weeks before the election and has received extremely positive feedback. This is an initiative the Commission intends to expand, resources permitting.

## **Delivery of general election and referendum on voting system**

The 2011 election was the most administratively challenging since 1999 because of the referendum on New Zealand's voting system.

To deliver the same level of service to voters as in 2008, substantially more election day staff (around 5,000), training, supplies and space in polling places were required. This greater scale increased the complexity of managing the election.

However, the streamlined process for issuing referendum papers, the use of colour to guide staff and voters through the process, the decision not to count referendum papers in polling places on election night, and the additional staff, training and resources had their desired effect.

Christchurch was an area of particular focus. To counter infrastructure and communication obstacles the Commission actively promoted advance voting in Christchurch. Advance voting in the badly affected Christchurch East and Christchurch Central electorates was substantially higher than the national average and turnout in the wider Christchurch area was only slightly less than the national average.

### **Advance voting**

334,558 people voted before election day (14.7% of all votes cast compared to 11.4% in 2008). The removal of the statutory requirement for advance voters to complete a declaration before voting simplified and sped up the process.

Advance voting went smoothly. However, given its growing importance, it would be timely to review the regulation of advance voting. For example, at present no provision is made for candidate scrutineers or the restriction of election advertising in the vicinity of advance voting places.

### **Overseas voting**

In contrast to advance voting, the numbers voting from overseas fell by 35% to 21,496 (33,278 in 2008).

42% of overseas voters returned their voting papers by fax in 2011. However, overseas voters reported increasing difficulties finding and using fax machines. The Commission will explore enabling overseas voters to scan and upload their voting papers and declarations to a secure location on the website for 2014.

The Commission recommends changes to the deadlines in regulations for the return of overseas votes to make it easier for overseas postal votes to be received in time.

### **Election advertising**

A new election advertising and finance regime came into force on 1 January 2011. By and large it appears to have bedded in well with high levels of compliance and a relatively small number of breaches referred to the Police.

The Commission provided guidance material to candidates, parties, and third parties on the new rules in February and updated these in July. Guidance for broadcasters was issued in August.



The Commission received 718 advisory opinion requests dealing with 1099 separate advertisements for the 2011 election of which 90% were requested by members of Parliament and over 50% were requested within the seven weeks before the beginning of the regulated period. The average response time for requests was five working days.

Surveys of party secretaries, candidates, third parties and broadcasters showed most found that the guidance material and advisory opinions provided were useful, timely and clear.

The extent to which electioneering on the internet and social media should be regulated and how any regulation might be effectively managed are questions that warrant further consideration and debate.

The exemption to the general prohibition on electioneering on election day permitting the display of party lapel badges and rosettes, ribbons and streamers in party colours continued to cause problems. It would be simpler and less confusing, and remove a source of considerable annoyance to many voters, if the exemption was removed and this is what the Commission recommends.

### **Delivery of the referendum information and education programme**

The Commission adopted a two stage approach to the programme. Stage one, from May to mid-October, raised general awareness about the referendum and provided comprehensive information for those who wished to engage early on with the subject matter.

Stage two, from mid-October, delivered the key messages to all voters through mass media channels and directed those who wanted more information to the website or freephone information service. The Commission engaged with major media to encourage and assist them to report accurately on the referendum.

Every registered elector received information about the referendum in their enrolment update pack in early June. Every household received a more detailed brochure in mid-October and every registered elector received the same information in their EasyVote pack a week before election day.

Comprehensive information about the voting systems was published by the Commission in all major newspapers in the week before election day. People who wanted more information were encouraged to go to the Commission's referendum website or to call the freephone number.

Overall, the Commission's programme was a success. 93% of voters were aware of the referendum and 81% of these voters felt very confident or fairly confident to make a decision. Knowledge of the key messages increased substantially. For example, 53% of registered electors knew that if there was a vote to keep MMP then an independent review of MMP would be held, compared to 2% in May.

However, it is fair to say that the referendum did not appear to excite a high level of public interest. The Commission received only 2,955 enquiries about the referendum (out of a total of 60,131 enquiries relating to the election).

### **Conduct of future referenda**

Serious consideration should be given to holding future referenda by stand-alone postal vote rather than with general elections, as the Justice and Electoral Committee recommended for citizens initiated referenda after the 1999 general election.

Holding referenda with parliamentary elections makes an already complex process significantly more complex. The additional staff, training, supplies and space required to deliver the referendum with the parliamentary election cost around \$8.5m. A stand-alone postal referendum could be delivered for a lesser cost.

The process is more complex for voters also. The question is whether voters are able to give proper attention to a referendum and a parliamentary election when they are held together or, as the Justice and Electoral Committee feared following the 1999 election, they both become “muddled in the agitation of the electoral contest”.

Turnout is one reason given for holding referenda with parliamentary elections. However, if the public regard the subject matter of a postal referendum to be of sufficient importance they will turn out, as 80.3% of electors did for the 1997 postal referendum on compulsory superannuation.

### **Service to Māori voters**

To address a concern regularly raised in the run-up to an election, the Commission proposes that consideration be given to allowing voters of Māori descent to change roll type once each electoral cycle instead of holding a five-yearly Māori Electoral Option.

### **Proposed improvements to vote issuing and scrutiny processes**

The Commission recommends the Act be amended to authorise the Commission to use an EasyVote card as the record an ordinary vote has been issued (instead of marking a voter off the electoral roll) and as evidence a special voter is eligible to vote (instead of requiring a voter to complete a declaration).

This would simplify and speed up vote issuing, reduce special votes, and improve the accuracy and efficiency of the scrutiny of the rolls. Voters without EasyVote cards would continue to be processed as they currently are.

### **Enforcement**

Currently the electoral legislation requires electoral offences to be referred to Police. The Commission is concerned that electoral matters are not able to be given sufficient priority.

Effective and timely investigation and prosecution of electoral offences is critical to ensuring public confidence in the integrity of the democratic process. The Commission recommends that consideration be given to how this can be better achieved.

### **Looking forward**

In this report the Commission identifies a range of areas in which it will seek to make administrative improvements. The report also raises a number of issues that have legislative implications.

The Commission sought guidance from the Government earlier this year on whether funding would be available to deliver for 2014 an option of internet and, perhaps, telephone voting for a limited class of New Zealanders (for example, overseas voters and blind and disabled voters) and has been advised that, in the current financial situation, this cannot be given priority.

Nonetheless, we will continue to monitor the results of overseas electronic voting initiatives and look for other ways to utilise technology to improve electoral processes.

In addition to planning for the next general election and any possible by-elections or citizens initiated referenda, other key priorities for the Commission are to:

Review MMP and report to the Minister of Justice by 31 October 2012 in accordance with the Electoral Referendum Act 2010;

Complete the work necessary to take over statutory responsibility for enrolment from the Chief Registrar of Electors of NZ Post from 1 July 2012 in accordance with the Electoral (Administration) Amendment Act 2011; and

Conduct the 2013 Māori Electoral Option, provide administrative support to the Representation Commission which will convene in October 2013 and complete its work in 2014 to determine the number and boundaries of electorates for the 2014 and 2017 elections.


The last possible date for the next election is 24 January 2015.

Source:


<http://www.elections.org.nz/events/past-events-0/2011-general-election/reports-and-surveys-2011-general-election/electoral-0>

## THE RESULTS OF THE MMP REVIEW

The Electoral Commission conducted a review of MMP from February to October 2012.

During this time, it released discussion papers for public comment. As a result of this and advice received, a  [Final Report](#) (PDF 2.63 MB) was completed in October 2012 and presented to the Minister of Justice.

The Commission released a  [Consultation Paper](#) (PDF 1.51 MB) in February 2012 and invited public comment.

After having considered all the submissions and advice received, the Commission released a  [Proposals Paper](#) (PDF 1008.83 KB) in August 2012 and again requested public input on its proposed changes to MMP.

The Commission presented its final report to the Minister of Justice on 29 October 2012 with the following recommendations:

- The one electorate seat threshold should be abolished (and if it is, the provision for overhang seats should also be abolished);
- The party vote threshold should be lowered from 5% to 4% (with the Commission required by law to review how the 4% threshold is working);
- Consideration be given to fixing the ratio of electorate seats to list seats at 60:40 to address concerns about declining proportionality and diversity of representation;
- Political parties should continue to have responsibility for selecting and ranking candidates on their party lists but they must make a statutory declaration that they have done so in accordance with their party rules;
- MPs should continue to be allowed to be dual candidates and list MPs to stand in by-elections.

It is now up to Parliament to decide what to do with the Commission's recommendations.

Source:

<http://www.elections.org.nz/events/past-events-0/2012-mmp-review/results-mmp-review>