

CANDIDATES' GUIDE

2025



Foreword >

Congratulations on taking this first step toward standing for local government.

Standing for public office – and being elected to represent the interests of your community – is a special honour.

As a member of a city, district or regional council, or a local or community board, you will have the opportunity to make a positive difference to the lives of those who live, work and play in your community. It is a privileged and rewarding role that demands hard work, sacrifice and dedication.

Now more than ever, we need people around the council table with a broad range of skills and experience, to lead their community in meeting the current economic, climate and infrastructure challenges facing our regions.

This candidate guide has been put together by Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ), the membership body for councils, to help you decide whether being an elected member is for you.

LGNZ champions, connects and supports local government. We're committed to continually working to improve governance, leadership, and performance across the local government sector, and to advocate for improvements that make your job easier and more efficient on the ground.

Local government needs candidates with vision, empathy and commitment. A good candidate has a range of skills and abilities – they need to be able to ask the right questions, be a proven collaborator, be able to make tough decisions – and be willing to compromise when needed.

They will also need to have the ability to think both strategically and pragmatically, as often they'll be tasked with balancing the short and long-term needs of the community they serve. Issues such as water reform, roading, transport and housing will no doubt be top-of-mind for members, both during the term and beyond.

LGNZ is here to help. We provide all elected members with targeted support, advice and professional development opportunities so that you can make the greatest impact in your role.

Thank you for thinking about standing and accepting this challenge and we're here to help guide you through the next steps.

Susan Freeman-Greene
Chief Executive

Key dates for the 2025 elections >

- > Nominations open Friday 4 July 2025
- > Nominations close noon, Friday 1 August 2025
- > Delivery of voting documents Tuesday 9 September-Monday 22 September 2025
- > Appointment of scrutineers by noon, Friday 10 October 2025
- > Depending on your council policy: removal of election signs by midnight Friday 10 October 2025
- > Voting closes noon, Saturday 11 October 2025
- > Preliminary results available as soon as practicable after close of voting on Saturday 11 October 2025
- > Official declaration of results approximately Thursday 16 October 2025
- > Return of expenses form approximately Friday 13 December 2025

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SECTION ONE >

Why stand?



Local government is our most basic level of democracy. It enables individuals, whānau and communities, through their elected representatives, to make decisions about the way their district, city or region works today and for the future.

LGNZ wants to see New Zealand deliver the most active and inclusive local democracy in the world, with space for everyone to be heard and to thrive. By working alongside communities, councils play an important role in empowering people to shape the community they live in, enhancing their collective wellbeing and enabling everyone to flourish. We welcome anyone who shares our ambition to join us by standing for office. By being an elected member of a council, or local or community board, you'll be making a positive difference for people and communities for both today and the future.

Today, councils have a unique role as they are the only form of government with responsibility for a specific geographic area or rohe – a role often known as 'place making' or 'place shaping'. Through their elected representatives, and directly, it enables communities to have a direct say in the governance of local public services and infrastructure and the decisions that will shape their future – local voices must be the source of local solutions.

Councils also provide leadership in honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) by actively delivering on the ground the commitment to partnership made between Iwi/hapu and the Crown.

What sort of person should stand?

Me pēhea te āhua o te tangata e tika ana ka tū ia?

A person who stands will be someone driven by the desire to care for and serve their community.

Undoubtedly, being involved in local government can be a challenging experience but equally an extremely rewarding one. You must balance competing demands for your time, be able to work well with others from a wide range of backgrounds and communicate a range of views and perspectives. You will need to be able to stand up for your community and its future.

Local government is open to people of all backgrounds and circumstances. Whether you're in employment or at home looking after children, standing for office is your democratic right. Councils will seek to accommodate your specific circumstances if they can. For example, many councils have parental leave policies and provide support for childcare, and meeting times can be adjusted to suit members. Check with your electoral officer to see if these options are available for your local council.

Effective communication, collaboration and engagement skills are fundamental, along with an open mind! You'll also need to be able to engage with new and complex information and be open to learning financial concepts so you can make sound decisions about your community's future.

If you've coached a team, organised a community event or a fundraiser, started a business, served on the marae, church, or school committee, if you have ever volunteered, organised a movement, or even just debated local issues with your neighbour because you really, really care – then you could be the person we need.

Why now?

He aha ai ināianeī?

Community empowerment is now more important than ever. The pace of change, driven by both local and global trends, from sea level rises to increasing inequality, poses a major threat to social cohesion and wellbeing.

This also impacts on our attitudes to democracy, with declining trust and participation at home and a rise in illiberal and autocratic states abroad. Local government has a role to play in rebuilding trust in our democratic institutions and strengthening citizenship, something that requires inspiring local leaders ready to work alongside their communities.

Here in New Zealand, significant changes are also occurring in the way in which local government works, changes that will impact directly on those candidates elected to office in October 2025. These include:

- > Changes to the way in which drinking and waste-water services will be delivered and funded. Many councils will be in the process of establishing new service delivery models and we can expect these to vary from council to council.
- > Changes to the Resource Management Act 1991 and the way in which cities, districts and regions plan for future growth.
- > Changes to the Local Government Act 2002 which sets out the purpose of local government and provides for elected members to make decisions on behalf of their communities.

Change is occurring at pace and can be both unsettling and polarizing for people. Councils and boards have a significant role to play because they are a trusted source of information, are accountable to communities for the decisions they make, and for their contribution to the resilience and prosperity of all our people, whānau and communities.

How elected members serve their communities?

Elected members work together to make decisions about what the council will do to meet community needs and how money should be spent in the best interests of the community as a whole.

Elected members should not be involved in the day-to-day running of their council. That is the role of the chief executive. Different communities have different needs, and members can be involved in a range of issues. The size and make-up of local communities, and whether they are in metropolitan, regional or rural areas, can impact the issues that elected members are involved in. Their role can involve:

- > attending council meetings (possibly by audiovisual link if available), often in the evenings and usually at least once a month
- > reading council business papers and preparing for council meetings
- > reviewing council strategic plans, policies and budgets on a regular basis to check if progress is on target
- > speaking to residents, local organisations, Iwi/hapu, local businesses about their needs and concerns, and highlighting their views to the council
- > holding management to account for the delivery of the council's work programme.

Other activities that an elected member might become involved in are:

- > taking part in council committees, such as infrastructure or planning committees
- > overseeing progress on council projects, like road works or building a new library
- > being aware of problems with council assets that need to be reported, such as damage to sports fields or broken signs
- > participating in civic events, like presenting sporting and other awards and attending citizenship ceremonies
- > representing the council at events and conferences, such as the annual LGNZ conference.

Councillors serve their communities by listening to people in their local area and then representing those views to the council.

Key roles for elected members:

Steward of place

- > working across the locality in partnership with others

Advocate

- > acting to represent the interests of all citizens

Sensemaker

- > translating a shift in the role of public services and the relationship between institutions and citizens

Catalyst

- > enabling citizens to do things for themselves, having new conversations about what is now possible

Entrepreneur

- > working with citizens and partners to encourage local vitality and develop new solutions

Orchestrator

- > helping broker relationships, work with partners and develop new connections.
-

What will I be doing if I am elected?

He aha aku mahi mēnā ka pōtitia ahau?

Specific tasks will depend on the role you're elected to. However, engaging with and representing everyone in your community is at the heart of all of them. You'll need to listen to the views of your communities and represent them at meetings and in your decision making.

Alongside effective representation is governance. Governance has two aspects. On the one hand you are collectively responsible (with other members of the governing body) for the council as an organisation, while on the other hand you have an overall interest in the governance of your city, town or region. This means advocating for the needs and interests of your constituents and ensuring public services are effective and provided in an integrated way.

Putting the needs of the community, district, city, or region first

Te tino aro ki ngā hiahia me ngā pānga o te takiwā, o te tāone nui me te rohe

As an elected member you must act in the interest of the whole area in which you've been elected, not just a particular neighbourhood or interest group. You must balance your responsibility to raise issues affecting your area with your responsibility to make decisions in the interests of the whole community and future generations.

This is reinforced by the declaration that you will have to agree to shortly after being elected:

“ ”

I, [full name], declare that I will faithfully and impartially, and according to the best of my skill and judgment, execute and perform, in the best interests of [name of region, district, city, local or community board], the powers, authorities, and duties vested in or imposed upon me as a member of the [name of local authority] by virtue of the LGA 2002, the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA), or any other Act.

Good governance helps an organisation by:

- > improving performance
- > having a defined vision for the future of the company or, in the case of councils, the communities they represent
- > taking the big picture view separate from operations
- > ensuring there is accountability and oversight of operations
- > managing risk, and
- > finding the right balance between making short-term gains and building long-term wealth.

I've never held a role like this before so I'm not sure I've got what it takes >

**Kāore anō au kia whai
tūranga pēnei nō reira
kāore au i te mōhio mēnā
ka whaihua au**

You might not feel you have the skills needed to be an elected member but before you decide not to stand, think about your transferable skills. These are skills that you may have used in previous jobs, roles or industries that are useful in a range of other roles and spaces.

Experiences such as past community work, leadership roles, coaching, volunteering, side projects, cultural initiatives, sports, and arts involvement, all develop important transferable skills such as leadership, people management, effective communication, community engagement, time management, prioritisation, delegation, project coordination, planning and problem solving. You can build on the transferable skills you've gained and bring them to the council table. Critical skills include the following:

Leadership, communication, and relationship management:

- > Providing direction and making things happen to achieve the council's vision and outcomes with an emphasis on strategic priorities
- > Building productive, collaborative, and supportive relationships to create and deliver the council's vision and outcomes
- > Being a clear and confident communicator, representing and promoting the council in a genuine and unified light and avoiding risks to the council's reputation including with media.

Strategic thinking and quality decision-making:

- > Understanding local priorities and how they relate to national and international developments and strategies
- > Being able to get to the bottom of issues and assessing the pros and cons of different options
- > Making decisions based on advice, community views, wisdom, experience, and informed judgement
- > Being financially prudent and having an eye for risk.

Understanding of complex, technical information:

- > Being able to unpack large volumes of information and use that information to guide decision-making
- > Understanding the role of the council and its financial language, budgets, and processes
- > Understanding and complying with relevant legislation.



What members think about their role >

“ ”

Fantastic – I’ve learnt an enormous amount and enjoyed working with the public

“ ”

An enjoyable experience of service to and representation of our citizens

“ ”

I really enjoy it. It’s a varied role and I like the range of activities I get to be a part of on behalf of our community.

Who will help me if I'm elected?

Mā wai ahau e āwhina mēnā ka pōtitia ahau?

As an elected member, you need a broad range of complex skills if you're going to provide strong and effective governance. Local Government New Zealand plays a key role in supporting all elected members to be successful. We provide a wide range of training opportunities designed to strengthen your skills and core competencies and bring all elected members up to speed with the requirements of their office, for example:

- > We advocate strongly to ensure councils have the tools and resources needed to lead communities, which may include providing advice around budgets, rates setting and annual plans, engaging with central government and the remuneration authority or acting as the central media voice for the sector.
- > Each year LGNZ hosts local government's largest conference where speakers from around the country and beyond challenge the sector with innovative ideas and fresh perspectives on how we lead, grow, and support our communities.
- > Opportunities for you to network with your peers and learn from more experienced colleagues include the Young Elected Members network, Te Maruata (our network for Māori elected members), the Metropolitan sector, Provincial sector, Rural sector, Regional sector, and the Community Board network.

In addition, our Te Korowai programme (formerly known as CouncilMARK) supports councils to understand their performance, identify key challenges and opportunities, and drive continuous improvement. It goes beyond assessments and benchmarking, offering expert insights and practical guidance. With a clear three-stage approach, Te Korowai ensures councils receive tailored, independent support aligned with their unique priorities and aspirations. [Visit our website](#) for more information.

Ākona – meeting your training and development needs

All LGNZ members have full access to the LGNZ Ākona development program built to cater to the unique learning needs of elected members regardless of background and prior experience. This comprehensive program offers learning activities across the full range of skills required by elected members – whether you're a Mayor, Chair, councillor or community board member. At your fingertips are short micro-modules, workshops, live online interactive sessions, templates, glossaries, case studies and more. You can pick and choose learning that suits your style, your schedule and the learning you need at any given time.

As the sector changes, Ākona changes right along with it so you can be sure you'll always be accessing the most up-to-date guidance. Once you're elected, and if your council is a member of LGNZ, you'll receive an email welcoming you to Ākona with instructions for logging in. The Ākona team are there to answer questions and support you to achieve your goals. [Get in touch with us](#) to find out more.

How much of my time will be needed?

E hia te wā ka pau i ngā mahi nei?

The term of office is three years for all positions, but weekly and monthly time commitments vary depending on the position you're elected to, the committees you might be appointed to, the volume of activity that comes with each position and the time you need to prepare for meetings and events. Some of the work will involve phone calls, meetings and events that occur outside traditional "business hours" or "9 to 5".

Mayors and councillors

Many Mayors find that the commitment is full-time. Most councils have monthly or six-weekly hui cycles with councillors often placed on council committees. The amount of time per week that an elected member spends on council duties will depend on the size of the council and their responsibilities. This could range from anywhere between 10 to 40+ hours a week.

Community and local board members

Many areas have community boards to ensure the voices of specific parts of the community can be heard. Auckland also has 21 local boards which operate much like community boards but are based in specific areas and have additional responsibilities.

The work of board members varies according to the physical size and population of their community and the range of delegated functions they're responsible for. Community board chairpersons can expect to work up to 20 hours a week, while community board members might work 10-20 hours, with Auckland's local board members averaging 20 hours per week.

SECTION TWO >

How local government works



Local authorities are the mechanism through which communities make democratic decisions about the future of their towns, cities and regions.

In New Zealand, “local government” generally refers to city, regional and district councils, as well as community and local boards. They are statutory corporations with perpetual succession, which means they will exist unless parliament resolves otherwise.

Local government consists of 78 local, regional, and unitary councils (also referred to as local authorities). Of that number, 11 are regional councils, 61 are territorial authorities and 6 are unitary councils. Unitary councils combine territorial and regional council roles.

While Parliament is elected to deal with issues relevant to the whole of New Zealand, local government enables democratic decision-making by and for local communities.

Local government’s purpose is set out in the Local Government Act 2002 (the LGA 2002). It has two parts, the first part emphasises the democratic nature of councils as being to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities. The second part of the purpose is to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of communities in the present and for the future (please note that the purpose is currently under review).

City and district councils have the widest range of responsibilities, which include:

- > infrastructure services, such as wastewater, storm water and drinking water (councils own assets worth more than \$120 billion) and local roads (councils own 87 per cent of all roads)
- > town planning and resource management
- > local regulatory services, such as building consenting, dog control and liquor licensing (councils undertake more than 30 separate regulatory functions)
- > developing and maintaining parks, recreation and cultural facilities, libraries, art galleries, museums and cemeteries
- > civil defence and emergency management
- > economic development (spending more than \$250 million per annum) and tourism promotion
- > supporting and promoting the arts and cultures of the area.

Regional Councils

Regional councils play a core role in the management of the natural resources of an area, which include:

- > biosecurity control (including pest control and harmful plants)
- > resource management (quality of water, soil, coastal planning) including food and river management
- > public transport
- > civil defence (natural disasters, marine oil spills)
- > regional transport planning and passenger transport services.

Functions may vary from place to place as responsibilities can be transferred between territorial and regional councils. Many councils have also established joint service delivery arrangements.

How do councils operate?

He pēhea te mahi a te kaunihera?

Each local authority has an elected council or governing body which is ultimately responsible for its decision-making and performance. In districts and cities, the governing body will be led by a Mayor who is directly elected by voters in the area. Regional councils are led by a chairperson who is elected by the members of the regional council's governing body.

Councils employ a chief executive who then employs all remaining staff, on behalf of the council. Most decisions are made in formally constituted hui or under delegation by staff, committees, local boards or community boards.

As an elected member you will be responsible for making decisions involving very large amounts of public money, including debt. The local government sector spends more than \$10 billion annually so elected members need to ask the right questions to ensure resources are used wisely and effectively.

How councils make decisions is subject to several rules and regulations which are set out in the Local Government Act 2002 and other statutes. Elected members have little individual authority. It is only when acting together with your colleagues that you can implement policies.

Councils and Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Many of the Acts that give councils their powers have provisions that relate specifically to Iwi/Māori and which are intended to give effect to the Crown's Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations. These tend to be centred on partnership, consultation in good faith, and recognition of the indigenous status of Iwi and hapū as mana whenua.

What are the different roles people hold in local government?

He aha ngā tūranga mahi rerekē a te kāwanatanga ā-rohe?

Mayor (Koromatua)

The role of Mayor is potentially the most rewarding, demanding, challenging and high profile of all local government positions. Mayors are directly elected by voters.

A Mayor's job is varied, involving long hours and a wide range of duties. The Mayor is expected to lead the development of their council's plans (such as the long-term and annual plan which are explained further in this guide), and policies and budgets for consideration by the full governing body. They are also responsible for chairing council meetings, advocating on behalf of their city or district, attending public events, and being available to meet with people in their community. They also play a large role in determining the culture of the governing body and its ability to act as an inclusive and effective team.

The role of Mayor can vary between councils. For example, the Mayor of Auckland Council has a range of executive powers that are not available to other Mayors, such as the right to have an independent mayoral office and to appoint their deputy and the chairs of committees. While the Mayor is normally the spokesperson for the council, he/she can delegate this to other members, such as committee chairs. In addition to these roles the Mayor has civil defence responsibilities and is also a Justice of the Peace (while holding office). Remuneration largely reflects the district's population.

Councillor (Kaikaunihera)

The role of councillor can again be both rewarding and demanding. Councillors must juggle various workloads and balance competing interests acting as both decision-makers and community advocates. It is a very public role and councillors are often seen as leaders of the community. The role of a councillor in a city or district council is different to the same role in a regional council due to the different range of services delivered and the proximity to communities.

If you are elected to a Māori ward or constituency, you may find being a voice for Māori concerns becomes a critical role. You will have council staff who can help you manage your roles, such as assistance with organising hui and providing information. Many councils now have Māori advisors or a Māori advisory unit to support this important mahi.



Community board member (Mema poari hapori)

Community boards give neighbourhoods and distinct communities, such as rural areas, a voice within their councils. The role can vary depending on the level of responsibility their council has delegated.

The primary role of a community board member is to represent and advocate for the interests of their communities, liaise with community organisations and government agencies, and maintain an overview of the local services provided by the council. Community boards can also make written and oral submissions to their council on local issues.

Local board member (Mema poari ā-rohe Tāmaki Makaurau anake)

Established as part of the Auckland co-governance model in 2010, local boards have a significant and wide-ranging role. They make decisions on a range of local and neighbourhood matters, provide local leadership, and build strong local communities. Local boards provide important local input into region-wide strategies and plans. Every year they negotiate an agreement with the governing body covering the delivery and funding of services in their local areas in the context of their own three-year plans.

Although exclusive to Auckland, at the moment, local boards can be established in any unitary council.

Behaviours expected of elected members >

To be effective in representing your community means being able to work constructively with people whose views and attitudes may differ from your own. Councils need to provide a safe environment within which people can express their opinions and ask challenging questions without being personally denigrated or bullied. This is the role of your council's Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct, which should be reviewed after each election, sets out principles and behaviours intended to promote good governance and a safe environment for elected members. The LGNZ Code of Conduct template, which is available for councils to adopt, asks members to agree to:

- 1.** Treat all people fairly
- 2.** Treat all other members, staff, and members of the public, with respect
- 3.** Share with the local authority any information received that is pertinent to the ability of the local authority to properly perform its statutory duties
- 4.** Operate in a manner that recognises and respects the significance of the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- 5.** Make it clear, when speaking publicly, that statements reflect their personal view, unless otherwise authorised to speak on behalf of the local authority
- 6.** Take all reasonable steps to equitably undertake the duties, responsibilities, and workload expected of a member
- 7.** Not bully, harass, or discriminate unlawfully against any person
- 8.** Not bring the local authority into disrepute
- 9.** Not use their position to improperly advantage themselves or anyone else or disadvantage another person
- 10.** Not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority
- 11.** Not disclose information acquired, or given, in confidence, which they believe is of a confidential nature.

What are Māori wards and constituencies?

He aha te rohe pōti Māori?

Like the Māori Parliamentary seats, Māori wards in territorial authorities and Māori constituencies in regional councils, establish areas where only those on the Māori Parliamentary electoral roll vote for the candidates in that ward. The Māori wards/constituencies sit alongside the general wards and constituencies of each city, district or region.

The aim of Māori wards and constituencies is to ensure Māori have an opportunity to be represented in local government, as is the case with the Māori seats in Parliament. They enable councils to better honour the principle of partnership in Te Tiriti o Waitangi and provide greater opportunities for Māori to contribute to the decision-making processes of the local authority.

Once elected, all elected members, including Māori ward/constituency members, make a formal declaration to the effect that they will represent the entire community.

Te Maruata – supporting Māori members

Te Maruata is a network of elected and appointed members who identify as Māori. The network promotes Māori participation, advocates on behalf of Māori members and provides a forum for members to get to know each other and provide support.

How much do elected members get paid?

E hia te nui o te utu mō tētahi mema pōti?

Elected members receive salaries that vary depending on the size of each council. The agency responsible for setting salaries is the Remuneration Authority. Remuneration is based on the population the council represents and its annual expenditure, and is adjusted annually based on changes to population and expenditure. As an elected member you cannot decline your salary.

Elected members are classified as self-employed. You will need to pay Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) levies from your own income, but you can reclaim some expenses from the Inland revenue Department (IRD). Councils will also reimburse you for some expenses, such as mileage. There is no superannuation programme, and remuneration cannot include any contribution to a member's Kiwisaver scheme.

- > [Learn more about being self-employed.](#)
- > [Learn more about remuneration for local government.](#)
- > [Check out our tax guide for elected members.](#)

How do I find out more about my council?

Me pēhea au e kimi ai i ētahi atu kōrero?

If you would like to find out more information about your council, consider looking at its Pre-Election Statement (which summarises its financial position and can be found on your council's website), its Annual Plan and its Long-Term Plan. These documents show what the council is doing and what it plans to do over the next ten years. In addition, the council's Annual Report will also provide details on both the financial and non-financial performance of the council over the previous year. These documents are available on your council's website or in the local library.

Also on the council's website will be its 30-year Infrastructure Strategy and its Governance Statement. The Infrastructure Strategy gives you an insight into the state of the council's infrastructure and what renewals and replacements will be required over the next three decades. The Governance Statement explains how a council works, including how decisions are made and the nature of its committee structure, if any. There are links to all the local authority websites at the end of this guide for more information.

SECTION THREE >

I've decided to stand



Thank you for taking this step. It takes a unique kind of person to put their hand up for one of these roles. To be eligible to stand for election you must be:

- > a New Zealand citizen
- > enrolled on the parliamentary electoral roll (anywhere in New Zealand), and
- > have lived at your current address for at least one month. However, you do not need to live in the area in which you wish to stand.

You do not need any special qualifications to stand, and a criminal conviction will not usually affect your nomination. However, you cannot stand if you are currently serving a prison term of three years or more. If you are elected and subsequently convicted of an offence punishable by imprisonment of two years or more, you automatically lose office.

Key dates and next steps >

Ngā rā matua me ngā hipanga whai i muri

If you wish to stand for a position in the forthcoming local elections (pōtitanga ā-rohe) you will need to have registered your nomination before midday on 1 August 2025 with the relevant electoral officer. Nominations will open on 1 July 2025.

Key dates for the 2025 local elections

1 July

- > Candidate nominations open/roll open for inspection
- > Enrolment update campaign starts – Electoral Commission

11 July

- > Campaign expenditure monitoring period begins

15 July

- > Electoral roll open for inspection

1 August

- > Candidate nominations close (12 noon) and electoral roll closes

6 August (or soon after)

- > Public notice of candidates' names

9-22 September

- > Voting documents delivered

9 September-11 October

- > Special voting period
- > Scrutiny and early processing



11 October

- > Voting closes 12 noon
- > Preliminary results
- > Collation and analysis of results – LGNZ

16 October onwards

- > Declaration of results

November

- > Councillor swearing-in ceremonies

Mid-December

- > Return of election expenses forms – Electoral Officer

What is the nomination process?

He aha te pūnaha tautapa?

Nominations open 1 July and close at 12 noon on 1 August 2025. Nomination forms will be available from your local council. Please note the following:

- > You need two people to nominate you using the official nomination form from your council. They must be over 18 years old and enrolled to vote in the area you wish to stand in. You cannot nominate yourself
- > Once completed, send your nomination form to your council's electoral officer
- > You must agree to your nomination going forward by signing the nomination form.

When you submit your nomination form you should also provide the electoral officer with a recent photograph of yourself and a 150-word profile statement. These will be published in a booklet and sent out with the voting documents.

You will also need to pay a \$200 (including GST) deposit when you send in your forms. This may be refunded if:

- > the number of votes you receive is greater than 25 per cent of the lowest successful candidate for that election (for First Past the Post elections) or
- > the number of votes you receive is greater than 25 per cent of the final quota as determined in the last iteration (for Single Transferable Voting elections).

You can find a list of all the local authority websites at the end of this guide.

What are the elected roles can I stand for?

He aha ngā tūranga pōti e wātea ana māku?

There are several roles within local government that you can stand for – these are outlined in more detail below.

- > Mayor
- > Councillor
- > Local board member
- > Community board member.

You can also stand for your local licensing trust if your district or city has one. While you can stand for more than one role, there are rules around which roles can be held simultaneously.

Can I stand for more than one position?

Ka āhei ahau ki te whakataetae mō ētahi tūranga nui ake i te kotahi?

Yes, however there are some positions which you cannot stand for at the same time because they are more likely to result in a 'conflict of interest' and are therefore not legally permitted. There are also situations where you may stand for two positions at the same time but if elected to both, you must give up one – usually the less senior position.

- > You can stand for Mayor and another position in the council at the same time, but if you are elected to both you must give up your position as councillor (or community or local board member), which is then filled by the next highest polling candidate
- > You can stand for election for both a local council and a local board or community board at the same time, but if you are elected to both you must vacate your position on the local board or community board
- > You cannot stand for both a regional council and a local council or community board position in the same region
- > You cannot stand for election in more than one ward constituency or electoral subdivision (this also applies to candidates for a Māori ward or constituency) if the council elects its members under the ward system
- > You cannot stand as both a ward candidate and an at-large candidate in councils that elect their members under a combined ward and at-large system (this also applies to candidates for Māori wards)
- > You cannot be a member of more than one local board.

Can I stand for more than one local board?

Ka āhei ahau ki te tū mō ētahi poari nui ake i te kotahi?

Yes, but you may only be elected to one. If you stand for more than one local board, you must provide written notice to the electoral officer to specify all the local boards you are standing for, and rank each in order of priority should you be elected to more than one.

This will be used to determine which board you will be declared elected to, should you be successful in more than one local board election.

You must submit a candidate profile statement for each local board election and state the ranking in each of your statements. Example: I am standing for election in the following Boards. This Board is my first/second/third preference.

Standing for Māori wards and constituencies

Ngā rohe pōti Māori

Where Māori wards or constituencies have been established, any eligible person is able to stand for either Māori or general wards/constituencies – a person does not need to be of Māori descent or be on the Māori electoral roll to stand for a Māori ward or constituency (but must still meet standard nomination requirements as outlined below).

Only voters on the Māori electoral roll can vote for candidates standing for a Māori ward or constituency. Just like how only those on the general electoral roll can vote for those candidates standing for a general ward or constituency.

In the case of a territorial authority, a person on the Māori roll can vote for:

- > The Mayor
- > Any members elected “at large” from the district as a whole
- > Members elected from a Māori ward
- > Local or community board members

In the case of a regional council, a person on the Māori roll can vote for members standing in a Māori constituency.

As a result of legislation in 2024, those councils which established Māori wards or Māori constituencies after 2020, without a poll, must hold a poll at the 2025 local elections to determine whether those wards and constituencies will continue beyond the 2028 local elections. The councils running an electoral contest for Māori wards and Māori constituencies, and a poll in 2025 are set out in Appendix 1.

I'm a council employee. Can I still stand in the elections?

He kaimahi Kaunihera ahau. Ka āhei ahau ki te tū ki ngā pōtitanga?

Yes. However, if you are elected as a councillor or local board member in the local authority for which you work, you must resign your position as an employee before taking up your position as an elected member. This does not apply to council employees elected to community boards.

You may need to talk to your employer about your intentions to stand for election, including the implications of being successful. In some cases, you may need to take leave from work while you campaign.

How do I run a successful campaign?

Me pēhea taku whakahaere whakatairanga whaihua?

Being a successful candidate involves promoting yourself, your vision, and your position on issues that matter. One of the most common reasons people don't vote is because they don't know who the candidates are or what they stand for, so making it easy for people to understand your views on local or regional matters is critical to your success.

Be positive but pragmatic. Voters like candidates who can communicate a vision for the future of their communities but are also realistic enough to know that promises must be affordable as well. There are many methods of campaigning and sharing your vision, including:

- > telephoning people you know
- > creating an online and social media presence
- > creating video content
- > distributing leaflets and pamphlets
- > door-knocking
- > contacting local organisations
- > meeting people in public areas like shopping centres
- > preparing articles for local newspapers
- > paying for press advertisements and publications
- > providing a profile of your background to the local paper
- > giving interviews to a local radio station
- > podcast
- > holding public hui.

You can also prepare a candidate statement to be included with your council's voting papers. It's an opportunity to sum up the policies and values that you stand on. Focus on the issues that matter to voters – you only have 150 words.

Helping candidates connect with voters online >

Policy.nz is an independent organisation that provided a free and comprehensive source of information about local candidates to voters for the 2022 local body elections. Local Government New Zealand is hopeful that this resource will again be offered to candidates and voters, this time for the Vote 2025 campaign.

To have your election priorities and other information included on the [Policy.nz](#) tool, all you need to do is complete the Policy.nz email questionnaire. This will be sent out following the confirmation of nominations in August. At the last local elections, the majority of candidates nationwide completed this questionnaire.

To make sure the Policy.nz questionnaire reaches you, please confirm with your local Electoral Officer that you are happy to have your contact details shared with media.

Are there rules I need to follow when campaigning?

He aha ngā ture hei whai mō te whakatairanga?

Campaigning is subject to rules designed to ensure that political contests are fair and accessible. Some rules are set in legislation, such as rules on donations and expenditure limits, while others are set locally, such as rules about where billboards can be erected on public land and their sizes.

Talk to your local electoral officer to learn more about the regulations that apply in your area.

How much can I spend on my campaign?

The Local Electoral Act 2001 sets out the maximum amount that you can spend on your campaign, this amount varies according to the population of the council you are standing for. The limits apply to expenditure during the three-month campaign period.

The maximum amount you spend must not exceed the prescribed limit. If a candidate is standing for more than one position, such as Mayor and councillor, the higher limit applies (not a combination of both). Please note that the amounts are GST inclusive.

Council population	Expenditure limit
Under 5000	\$3,500
5,000 – 9,999	\$7,000
10,000 – 19,999	\$14,000
20,000 – 39,999	\$20,000
40,000 – 59,999	\$30,000
60,000 – 79,999	\$40,000
80,000 – 99,999	\$50,000
100,000 – 149,000	\$55,000
150,000 – 249,999	\$60,000
250,000 – 1,000,000	\$70,000
1,000,000 or more	\$100,000 (plus 50c for each elector)

Please keep track of all your expenses, as you will need to submit them after the completion of the campaign if you're successful.

How does the electoral process work?

He pēhea te mahi o ngā ritenga pōti?

Local elections are held every three years and, currently, all are conducted by postal vote. This year, the day of the election is Saturday 11 October 2025, and all votes must be received by 12 noon on that date.

Your council will have an electoral officer to run the election. This person is either a council employee or an independent contractor working on behalf of the council to conduct its election. Neither sitting elected members, nor candidates standing for election, can be an electoral officer.

The preliminary electoral roll is open for inspection shortly after 4 July 2025. People who are enrolled to vote as of Friday 1 August 2025 will be included in the final electoral roll and sent their voting papers in the mail. An enrolment campaign will also be run by the Electoral Commission, beginning on 9 June to encourage people to enrol. The campaign also allows people to check, or update, their enrolment details. Enrolment forms are available from your local council. You can [check your details online](#).

Voting documents will be sent to all eligible voters by post between Tuesday 9 and Monday 22 September 2025. Voters will have three weeks to complete and return their voting documents. Polling places for issuing special voting documents and receiving completed voting documents will be available from 9th September until 12 noon on Saturday 11 October 2025. Contact your local council for information on the location of polling places in your city or district.

Preliminary results will be announced by the electoral officer as soon as practicable after voting closes, to be followed by the official results within a few days. The electoral officer will also write to all candidates once the final election result is known. The term of office is three years.

Most local government elections are conducted using the “First Past the Post” system (FPP), so the candidate with the highest number of votes wins. For the 2025 local elections, 15 councils will use the [Single Transferable Voting system \(STV\)](#), which requires voters to “rank” their candidates.

The following councils will use STV in 2025 local elections.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| > Kaipara District Council | > Marlborough District Council |
| > Tauranga City Council | > Dunedin City Council |
| > Ruapehu District Council | > Far North District Council (first time) |
| > New Plymouth District Council | > Gisborne District Council (first time) |
| > Palmerston North City Council | > Hamilton City Council (first time) |
| > Kāpiti Coast District Council | > Nelson City Council (first time) |
| > Porirua City Council | > Central Otago District Council. |
| > Wellington City Council | |
| > Greater Wellington Regional Council | |

The local government elections are conducted under the provisions of the Local Electoral Act 2001, the Local Electoral Regulations 2001, and the LGA 2002.



Successful elected members >

Successful elected members take up office on the day after the official declaration is publicly notified. However, before they can make any decisions, elected members must swear an oath of office (declaration). The oath for Mayors and councillors is made at the first hui of the new council and the oath for board members at the first hui of the community or local board. This first meeting of the governing body is usually held within two weeks of the official declaration of election results.

Newly elected councillors will all be welcomed into the LGNZ whānau and invited to an LGNZ Induction hui in the first month of office.

APPENDIX ONE >

Elections for Maori wards
or constituencies in 2025

These councils will be holding elections for Māori wards and constituencies in 2025.

- > Bay of Plenty Regional Council
- > Central Hawke's Bay District Council
- > Far North District Council
- > Gisborne District Council
- > Greater Wellington Regional Council
- > Hamilton City Council
- > Hastings District Council
- > Hauraki District Council
- > Hawke's Bay Regional Council
- > Horizons Regional Council
- > Horowhenua District Council
- > Hutt City Council
- > Kāpiti Coast District Council
- > Kawerau District Council
- > Manawatu District Council
- > Masterton District Council
- > New Plymouth District Council
- > Marlborough District Council
- > Matamata-Piako District Council
- > Napier City Council
- > Nelson City Council
- > Northland Regional Council
- > Ōpōtiki District Council
- > Ōtorohanga District Council
- > Porirua City Council
- > Palmerston North City Council
- > Rangitikei District Council
- > Rotorua District Council
- > Ruapehu District Council
- > South Taranaki District Council
- > South Wairarapa District Council
- > Stratford District Council
- > Taranaki Regional Council
- > Tararua District Council
- > Tasman District Council
- > Taupō District Council
- > Thames-Coromandel District Council
- > Waikato District Council
- > Waikato Regional Council
- > Waipā District Council
- > Wairoa District Council
- > Wellington City Council
- > Whakatāne District Council
- > Whanganui District Council
- > Whangārei District Council
- > Western Bay of Plenty District Council

APPENDIX TWO >

Council websites

North Island >

Te Ika-a-Māui

- > Auckland Council
- > Bay of Plenty Regional Council
- > Carterton District Council
- > Central Hawke's Bay District Council
- > Far North District Council
- > Gisborne District Council
- > Greater Wellington Regional Council
- > Hamilton City Council
- > Hastings District Council
- > Hauraki District Council
- > Hawke's Bay Regional Council
- > Horizons Regional Council
- > Horowhenua District Council
- > Hutt City Council
- > Kaipara District Council
- > Kāpiti Coast District Council
- > Kawerau District Council
- > Manawatu District Council
- > Masterton District Council
- > Matamata-Piako District Council
- > Napier City Council
- > New Plymouth District Council
- > Northland Regional Council
- > Ōpōtiki District Council
- > Ōtorohanga District Council
- > Palmerston North City Council
- > Porirua City Council
- > Rangitikei District Council
- > Rotorua Lakes Council
- > Ruapehu District Council
- > South Taranaki District Council
- > South Waikato District Council
- > South Wairarapa District Council
- > Stratford District Council
- > Taranaki Regional Council
- > Tararua District Council
- > Taupō District Council
- > Tauranga City Council
- > Thames-Coromandel District Council
- > Upper Hutt City Council
- > Waikato District Council
- > Waikato Regional Council
- > Waipa District Council
- > Wairoa District Council
- > Waitomo District Council
- > Wellington City Council
- > Western Bay of Plenty District Council
- > Whakatāne District Council
- > Whanganui District Council
- > Whangarei District Council

South Island >

Te Wai Pounamu

- > Ashburton District Council
- > Buller District Council
- > Central Otago District Council
- > Chatham Islands Council
- > Christchurch City Council
- > Clutha District Council
- > Dunedin City Council
- > Environment Canterbury
- > Environment Southland
- > Gore District Council
- > Grey District Council
- > Hurunui District Council
- > Invercargill City Council
- > Kaikōura District Council
- > Mackenzie District Council
- > Marlborough District Council
- > Nelson City Council
- > Otago Regional Council
- > Queenstown Lakes District Council
- > Selwyn District Council
- > Southland District Council
- > Tasman District Council
- > Timaru District Council
- > Waimakariri District Council
- > Waimate District Council
- > Waitaki District Council
- > West Coast Regional Council
- > Westland District Council

HELPFUL LINKS

www.votelocal.co.nz – for information on the 2025 local authority elections for candidates, Voters and councils by Taituarā and Local Government New Zealand

www.vote.nz – to enrol to vote in New Zealand's elections, maintained by the Electoral Commission

www.legislation.govt.nz – for information about legislation

www.stv.govt.nz – for information about single transferable voting

www.iod.org.nz – the Institute of Directors offer a range of courses and resources to people in Governance roles

www.remauthority.govt.nz – for more information on pay rates and remuneration

Government reforms – for information on the programme of reform underway visit www.lgnz.co.nz/reforms/

Resource Management Act reform – <https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/key-initiatives/resource-management-system-reform/overview/>.

Ko Tatou
LGNZ.