

# 2016 local elections FAQs

#### Frequently Asked Questions relating to the Taranaki Regional Council elections

Gen	eral Information		
Q1	What is a regional council?	A	A regional council is one type of local authority and generally looks after region-wide issues rather than local issues.  It is different from a territorial authority (which is either a city or district council), but there are no differences in the way that they operate.
Q2	What do regional councils do?	Α	Regional councils' responsibilities include:
			<ul> <li>managing the effects of using freshwater, land, air and coastal waters;</li> <li>developing regional policy statements and the issuing of consents;</li> <li>managing rivers, mitigating soil erosion and flood control;</li> <li>regional emergency management and civil defence preparedness;</li> <li>regional land transport planning and contracting passenger services;</li> <li>harbour navigation and safety, oil spills and other marine pollution.</li> </ul>
Q3	How many regional councils are there?	Α	11 nationwide.
Q4	When is the next Taranaki Regional Council election?	A	Election day is Saturday 8 October 2016 and voting closes at midday on that day. The voting period starts on Friday 16 September 2016.
Q5	Who is running the election?	A	The Taranaki Regional Council's electoral officer has overall responsibility for the election, but the conduct of the election is undertaken by each constituent territorial authority's electoral officer.  The constituent territorial authorities are:  New Plymouth District Council South Taranaki District Council Stratford District Council
Q6	What is the name of the electoral officer?	A	The Taranaki Regional Council's electoral officer is:  Dale Ofsoske, Independent Election Services Ltd Electoral Office: Level 2, 198 Federal Street, Auckland Phone: or 0800 922 822 Email: dale.ofsoske@electionservices.co.nz

Dale Ofsoske is also the electoral officer for the three constituent territorial authorities (New Plymouth District Council, South Taranaki District Council and Stratford District Council) and for the Taranaki District Health Board.

#### Q7 What type of electoral system is used?

The FPP (first past the post) electoral system is used for the Taranaki Regional Council and the three constituent territorial authorities (New Plymouth District Council, South Taranaki District Council and Stratford District Council).

## Q8 What issues (elections) can we vote for?

A Electors will be able to vote for the Councillors representing the constituency in which they live.

There are 11 Councillors being elected from the following 4 constituencies:

Constituency	Councillors
New Plymouth	5
North Taranaki	2
South Taranaki	3
Stratford	1
TOTAL	11

Most electors will also be voting for the respective territorial authority issues (Mayor, Councillors etc.) and the Taranaki District Health Board Members.

## Q9 What is the role of the Chairperson and Councillors?

The Chairperson is elected by the Councillors following the election. The role of Chairperson is:

- presides at Council meetings;
- attends and participates at meetings of committees and working parties;
- reads agenda and other materials before meetings;
- leads the Council and co-ordinates Council political activity;
- speaks on behalf of the Council;
- represents the Council on related organisations, where appointed;
- attends and participates at conferences and seminars;
- attends to complaints and enquiries from members of the public;
- presides at civic ceremonies;
- hosts visiting groups, including overseas delegations;
- attends and speaks at local functions, sometimes opening them;
- declaring a state of civil defence emergency in the region if the need arises.

The role of Councillors is:

 participate in strategic and long-term planning for the whole region;

- develop policy across a wide range of activities and services;
- represent the region at functions as required;
- review and develop bylaws for the region;
- advocate on a wide range of issues;
- coordinate and form partnerships with other spheres of government and other agencies;
- participate in the appointment and performance review of the Chief Executive;
- act on all these matters within a legislative and regulatory framework, and setting a budget and rates:
- monitor the performance of the Council organisation.

#### **Candidates**

Q10 I want to be a candidate in these elections. What do I need to do?

A You must be a New Zealand citizen and your name must be on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll (anywhere in New Zealand).

You will need to have two electors registered in the area of the election you are standing for to nominate you – e.g. if you stand for the South Taranaki Constituency, the nominators will need to be registered within that constituency. (Note the candidate does not need to reside in the area in which he/she is standing, but will need to disclose that fact in his/her candidate profile statement).

The nominators must also be on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll at the address they are listed on the nomination paper (which must be in the constituency that they are nominating the person for).

Nominations open on Friday 15 July 2016. If you would like a nomination paper and candidate information handbook sent out, please contact the electoral office closer to this date. Nomination papers will also be available on Council's website (<a href="www.trc.govt.nz">www.trc.govt.nz</a>) from 15 July 2016, with the candidate information booklet available in early 2016.

Q11 How much will it cost me to stand?

You will need to pay a nomination deposit of \$200 GST inclusive. This deposit applies to each issue (election) you stand for.

Your nomination deposit can be paid by cash, cheque, EPTPOS or electronic bank transfer. However, if you pay the deposit by cheque and if it is dishonoured after nominations close, your nomination will not be accepted.

If you poll greater than 25% of the lowest polling successful candidate (for FPP elections) you will receive your nomination deposit back.

		Your nomination must be received by the close of nominations (12 noon on Friday 12 August 2016).
Q12 What qualifications and experience do I need?	Α	Nothing formal. Elected members come from all walks of life and generally have a will/desire to serve the community.
Q13 Does a criminal record affect a person standing as a Council candidate?	Α	No, not for the Taranaki Regional Council election.
Q14 How long is the term of the elected member?	Α	Three years.
Q15 Do I need to be resident in the area I am standing for?	Α	No, but you must be on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll (anywhere in New Zealand) and be a New Zealand citizen. You will however need to disclose whether or not you reside in the constituency you are standing for in the candidate profile statement.
		The two people who nominate you must be on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll within the constituency you are standing for.
Q16 How many positions can I stand for?	Α	You can stand in only one constituency of the Taranaki Regional Council.
		You can also stand for the Taranaki District Health Board but you cannot stand for more than one district health board in New Zealand.
		You cannot stand for both the Taranaki Regional Council and one of its constituent territorial authorities (New Plymouth District Council, South Taranaki District Council and Stratford District Council).
Q17 I am a serving police officer. Can I stand for Council and continue to work as a police officer?	A	Yes, there are no restrictions on police officers standing for local authority elections, apart from the normal eligibility criteria.
Q18 How much can I spend on my campaign?	Α	There is a limit on what you can spend on your campaign and it relates to the population of the area you are standing for.
		The maximum amount that can be spent by a candidate cannot exceed the limits set out below:

Local government area	Expenditure limit
population	
Up to 4,999	\$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 – 149,999	\$55,000
150,000 – 249,999	\$60,000
250,000 – 1,000,000	\$70,000
1,000,000 or more	\$100,000*

<sup>\*</sup> plus 50 cents for each elector

The populations for each constituency (as at June 2014) and respective expenditure limits are:

Constituency	Population	Limit
New Plymouth	53,700	\$30,000
North Taranaki	24,500	\$20,000
South Taranaki	27,500	\$20,000
Stratford	9,110	\$7,000

If you stand for more than one position (eg Taranaki Regional Council and Taranaki District Health Board), the amount you can spend is the highest amount for **one** position. You cannot add positions together to allow you to spend more than the limit.

All candidates are required to lodge an electoral donations and expenses return within 55 days after the day on which the successful candidates are declared to be elected.

If a candidate is outside New Zealand on this day, the return must be filed within 76 days after election result day.

If a return is not submitted within the required time period, the non-return will be advised to the New Zealand Police for enforcement.

The return needs to be received before a candidate nomination deposit is refunded if appropriate.

#### **Enrolment**

Q19 Where can I view the electoral roll that will be used for this election?

The preliminary electoral roll is compiled by each constituent territorial authority and will be available for public inspection for a one-month period from Friday 15 July 2016 to Friday 12 August 2016.

The preliminary electoral roll for each constituent territorial authority will be available for inspection at:

- Taranaki Regional Council offices, 47 Cloten Road, Stratford
- each constituent territorial authority office and library.

### Q20 How do I enrol to vote in these elections?

A Is this your main place of residence?



Have you lived at your current address for more than one month?

→ Yes

Are you on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll at an address in the Taranaki Regional Council area?

→ Yes

You will automatically appear on the relevant constituent territorial authority's electoral roll that is used for these elections.

or

Is this your main place of residence?

→ Yes

Are you on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll at an address in the Taranaki Regional Council area?

→ No or Don't Know

You need to complete an enrolment form for this. You can either:

- enrol online at <u>www.elections.org.nz</u>
- ring 0800 36 76 56
- send your name and address to Freetext 3676
- download a form at www.elections.org.nz
- pick a form up at your local New Zealand Post Shop

Is this your main place of residence?



Are you on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll at an address in another region?

→ Yes

If you own a property in this region and it is not your main residence you may be able to enrol as a non-resident ratepayer elector on the relevant constituent territorial authority's electoral roll. (Refer to ratepayer enrolment advice in Q25).

- Q21 I am a student and spend my time in different places. Where should I enrol?
- You should enrol where you spend the greater part of your time.
- Q22 I am a New Zealand Māori; do I need to enrol on the Māori roll?
- Not necessarily. If you are enrolling for the first time you can decide whether you want to go on the Parliamentary

Māori Electoral Roll or the Parliamentary General Electoral Roll by signing the appropriate panel on the parliamentary elector enrolment form.

However, if you have already made that choice you will have to wait until the next Māori Option period to change, which occurs following the next census, likely in 2018/19. The last Māori Option period was 25 March to 24 July 2013.

#### Q23 How do I know whether I am enrolled?

The Electoral Commission will be undertaking a roll update campaign at the end of June 2016 for the Parliamentary Electoral Roll which forms the basis of the electoral roll for the relevant constituent territorial authority elections.

If you do not receive a letter in the post during late June/early July 2016 the chances are you are not enrolled or your details are incorrect. You will then need to complete a Parliamentary Electoral Roll enrolment form.

You can check to see if you are enrolled at <a href="https://www.elections.org.nz">www.elections.org.nz</a> or by phoning 0800 36 76 56.

#### Q24 I turn 18 on election day. Can I vote?

Yes, but you need to make sure you have enrolled which you can do provisionally from the age of 17 and it automatically changes when you turn 18.

You will also need to apply for a special vote during the voting period (Friday 16 September 2016 to 12 noon, Saturday 8 October 2016).

For special vote availability, see Q41.

#### Q25 We own a business in the Taranaki Regional Council area and pay rates, but we don't live in the Taranaki Regional Council area – do we get a say in the Taranaki Regional Council elections?

A Yes, subject to being eligible as a non-resident ratepayer elector and becoming enrolled on the relevant constituent territorial authority's electoral roll.

A non-resident ratepayer enrolment form is available:

- from your relevant constituent territorial authority;
- or by phoning 0800 922 822.

The non-resident ratepayer enrolment form should be returned to the relevant constituent territorial authority electoral officer or electoral official by 12 August 2016 and absolutely no later than 7 October 2016 in order to vote.

If it is after Friday 12 August 2016, a special voting document will need to be requested from the relevant constituent territorial authority and will be issued on 16 September 2016, the start of the voting period.

Q26 I own a property in the Taranaki Regional Council area but it is not my fulltime residence. How do I get on the Ratepayer Electoral Roll? A Is your name on the rates notice?

→ Yes

You may be eligible to be on the relevant constituent territorial authority's ratepayer electoral roll. Contact the electoral office on 0800 922 822 and request a ratepayer enrolment form. This should be returned to the respective constituent territorial authority electoral officer or electoral official by 12 August 2016 and absolutely no later than 7 October 2016 in order to vote. If it is after Friday 12 August 2016, a special voting document will need to be requested from your territorial authority and will be issued on 16 September 2016, the start of the voting period.

If it is easier you can call at a special voting venue during the voting period (Friday 16 September 2016 to 12 noon Saturday 8 October 2016) and complete the ratepayer enrolment form and have your special vote at the same time.

For special vote availability, see Q41.

In no case does this allow you to have two votes the Taranaki Regional Council election.

Is your name on the rates notice?



You may not be eligible to be on the relevant constituent territorial authority's ratepayer electoral roll. Contact the electoral office on 0800 922 822.

#### **Voting**

Q27 Is it a postal vote and will I be sent my voting documents in the mail?

All local authority elections will be conducted by postal vote. Voting documents will be delivered by NZ Post between Friday 16 September 2016 and Wednesday 21 September 2016 by the relevant constituent territorial authority.

Q28 I got my voting document but my partner didn't receive theirs.

Is it before Wednesday 21 September 2016 and I believe I am correctly registered on electoral roll?

→ Yes

Please wait until the mail has been delivered on Wednesday 21 September 2016. If your voting document is not received then please call the electoral office (0800 922 822).

Is it after Wednesday 21 September 2016 and I believe I am correctly registered on electoral roll?

→ Yes

You will need to apply for a special vote. Please call the electoral office on 0800 922 822. For special vote availability, see Q41.

		Is it after Wednesday 21 September 2016 and I believe I am not correctly registered on electoral roll?  → No  You will need to complete a Parliamentary Electoral Roll enrolment form. These are available at any New Zealand Post Shop, or you can enrol online at <a href="www.elections.org.nz">www.elections.org.nz</a> or ring 0800 36 76 56 or send your name and address to Freetext 3676.
		You will also need to contact the electoral office for a special vote on 0800 922 822.
Q29 I didn't get my voting document so I called and got a special vote. Now I have two voting documents. Which one should I use?	A	Use the original one and destroy the special vote.
Q30 I received a voting document for a member of my family (e.g. child, parent) and have Power of Attorney for that person. Can I vote for that person?	A	No – Power of Attorney does not apply to voting for that person.
Q31 I received a voting document for a member of my family (e.g. child, parent) who does not live here. What should I do with the voting document?	A	If they are overseas, you could fast post them to the person or destroy them if that is not practicable.  If they are for an elderly parent who is incapable of voting please destroy them by ripping/cutting them up. You cannot vote on their behalf unless instructed by them.
Q32 I received a voting document that does not belong to me and I don't know this person or where this person has gone.	A	Write GNA (Gone No Address) on the envelope and put it back in the mail.
Q33 What is that barcode that I can see through the return envelope or on the front of the voting document?	A	It is a legal requirement to scan the barcode to mark the electoral roll that you have returned your vote so we can ensure that we do not receive two votes from the same person.
Q34 How do you ensure the secrecy of my vote?	A	Returned envelopes containing a voting document cannot be opened until there is a JP present. The JP is required to sign off that the processes used by the electoral officer met the legal requirements.
		Note that the voter's name is not shown on the voting document.
		When the envelope is opened the only thing the electoral office is looking for is that the vote for each election is valid.
		This means that for FPP elections we are making sure that the voter's intention is clear and the voter has not ticked

		or marked more than the number of candidates than there are vacancies.
Q35 Do I have to vote? I don't know any of these candidates.	Α	No you don't have to vote, but we do encourage you to vote and exercise your democratic right.
		You don't have to vote for all candidates or for all elections. But your vote is important because the people elected will be responsible for making decisions about what happens in your region for the next three years.
		To help you get to know about the candidates:
		<ul> <li>there may be candidate meetings being held if you wish to go and hear what policies the different candidates are advocating for;</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>there is a candidate profile booklet that comes with the voting document in which there is a photo and a statement from each candidate. This information will also be available on the Council's website (www.trc.govt.nz) after nominations close (expected 19 August 2016);</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>candidates may have their own website page, social media page(s), advertise in local newspapers or send out information to letterboxes in your area;</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>local newspapers are likely to cover information about the election.</li> </ul>
Q36 Do I have to post my voting document back?	Α	You can post it but make sure you have it in the mail by Wednesday 5 October 2016 to make sure it gets back to us in time (by 12 noon Saturday 8 October 2016).
		However, you can also hand deliver your voting document to a ballot box during the voting period (Friday 16 September 2016 to 12 noon Saturday 8 October 2016).
		For ballot box locations see Q41.
Q37 I have lost my return envelope.		You can use an envelope of your own and put the return address and Freepost number on it. (You will not need to put a stamp on the envelope if you write the Freepost number on the envelope).
		Freepost number 4170 The Electoral Office PO Box 5135 Wellesley Street Auckland 1141
Q38 I am on the Unpublished Parliamentary Roll and I want a special vote please.	Α	You will need to call the electoral office on 0800 922 822 for a special vote to be sent.
Q39 I didn't receive my voting document; how do I obtain a special vote?	Α	Are you on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll for the address you want to vote for?  → Yes

You will need to apply for a special vote. Please call the electoral office on 0800 922 822 or visit one of the special voting venues listed in Q41.

Are you on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll for the address you want to vote for?

#### → No/Don't Know

If you are not enrolled or not enrolled correctly on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll, you will need to complete an enrolment form for this. You can pick one up at any New Zealand Post Shop, or you can enrol online at <a href="https://www.elections.org.nz">www.elections.org.nz</a> or ring 0800 36 76 56 or send your name and address to Freetext 3676. This form needs to be with the Registrar of Electors before close of business Friday 7 October 2016.

You will also need to contact the electoral office for a special vote on 0800 922 822.

For special vote availability, see Q41.

## Q40 I spoiled my voting documents / I have made a mistake on my documents. What can I do?

If you can amend it so that your voting intention is clear, then do so.

If necessary, we can issue you with a special voting document (phone 0800 922 822), but this will take time and require you to complete a declaration.

#### Q41 Where can I have a special vote?

- A Special votes can be obtained from the following constituent territorial authority offices:
  - New Plymouth District Council, Civic Centre, Liardet Street, New Plymouth
  - South Taranaki District Council, Administration Building, Albion Street, Hawera
  - Stratford District Council, Miranda Street, Stratford
  - or by phoning 0800 922 822.

## Q42 I am going away and will not be here when the voting documents are posted out.

You will need to contact the electoral office for a special vote on 0800 922 822.

## Q43 Do I have to vote for all the candidates for any issue? If I don't vote for all the candidates or all the issues on my voting document, will all my votes be informal?

Under FPP you can vote for as many candidates as you want to but not more than the number of positions available on the voting document. So if you are electing two Councillors then you can vote for **up to** two candidates. Remember, for FPP you tick the candidates you want to elect.

You can decide not to vote for one or more of the different elections on your voting document. This does not invalidate votes for other elections on your voting document.

A A	You can only vote for the elections relevant to the area in which you live. You cannot vote for a candidate who is standing in another constituency because you are not an elector of that other constituency.  You will need to call the electoral office on 0800 922 822.  You will need to call the electoral office on 0800 922 822.  No, your vote remains secret under the required separate roll scrutiny and vote counting procedures.  Under the Local Electoral Act 2001, you cannot interfere or
A A	You will need to call the electoral office on 0800 922 822.  No, your vote remains secret under the required separate roll scrutiny and vote counting procedures.
A	No, your vote remains secret under the required separate roll scrutiny and vote counting procedures.
	roll scrutiny and vote counting procedures.
Α	Under the Local Electoral Act 2001, you cannot interfere or
	influence any person as to how they can vote.
	If authorised by a voter who is physically impaired, visually impaired or for whom English is a second language, a person can assist them to vote as directed by the voter.
Α	They are delivered to the New Plymouth District Court and kept for 21 days so that the Court can access them should there be any application for a recount or petition for inquiry.
	After 21 days, the Court is responsible for destroying them.
Α	This is the first past the post voting system. The candidate or candidates that gets the most votes wins.
	You should mark those you want to vote for with a tick in the circle. Do not vote for more than the number of candidates shown in the instructions.
Α	Progress results will be announced as soon as practicable after 12 noon on Saturday 8 October 2016 (expected around 2pm).
	Preliminary results will be announced late on Saturday night once all votes received at constituent territorial authority offices (up until 12 noon) have been delivered to the electoral office in Auckland and processed.
	The official results will be announced when special votes have been checked, expected to be Thursday 13 October 2016.
	A

#### **Q52** How will I find out? **Candidates** Will be advised as soon as practicable after the progress results and preliminary results are known. This will be by email. Voters Progress and preliminary results will be released to the media and placed on Council's website (www.trc.govt.nz) as soon as practicable after noon on Saturday 8 October 2016. Q53 What do I need to do if I want to Under legislation a candidate can challenge the declaration of results through either a judicial recount or a challenge the results of the election? judicial inquiry. A candidate will have to provide reasons for the challenge and a deposit of \$750 with the application to the New Plymouth District Court. A candidate may wish to call the electoral office on 0800 922 822 to discuss this. **Members** Elected members take up office the day after the official Q54 When do elected members take up result has been declared by public notice. However, their roles? members cannot act until they have sworn the oath of office which is usually at the first meeting of Council. This first meeting is usually held as soon as practicable after the final election results are known. Ultimately the elected members' final responsibility is to Q55 Who are elected members responsible the local community. The Minister of Local Government to? and the Auditor-General do have a role in ensuring that Council follows the law. Q56 Do elected members get paid and if so This is set by the Remuneration Authority immediately following the 2016 elections. Some expenses are also how much? reimbursed. Being an elected member is a busy job that often involves Q57 Would being an elected member take meetings, events and speaking with community members up much time? outside of normal business hours. Flexibility and the ability to prioritise and manage time effectively are essential. This includes balancing a high volume of reading, paperwork and emails with a schedule of meetings and public commitments. As a consequence, the Chair is considered a fulltime job and Councillors are generally part time jobs. There are 11 Councillors, elected from 4 constituencies. Q58 How many elected members are there?

Complaints		
Q59 I have a complaint about electoral signage.	Α	You will need to call the electoral office on 0800 922 822.
The signs don't have the required authorisation on them.	Α	You will need to call the electoral office on 0800 922 822.
The signs have been pulled over or damaged.	Α	It is the responsibility of each candidate to maintain their election signs.
		However, if a sign is a public safety matter, you will need to call the respective territorial authority:
		New Plymouth District Council:
		Council's Manager Consents on 06 759 6060
		South Taranaki District Council:
		Council's Planning Team on 0800 111 323
		Stratford District Council:
		Council's compliance officer on 06 765 6099.
The signs are bigger than they should be.	Α	You will need to call the electoral office on 0800 922 822
What locations can signs be erected?	Α	Locations for election signs are set by each constituent territorial authority:
		New Plymouth District Council:
		Check their website - http://www.newplymouthnz.com/NR/rdonlyres/A19C5B
		9-D213-40D2-9954-
		11103FA5AB87/0/Part07SignsBylaw2008.pdf
		South Taranaki District Council:
		Check their website -
		http://www.southtaranaki.com/uploaded_files/Bylaws-plans-policys-and-strategies/Bylaws/STDC%20-
		%20Public%20Places%20Bylaw%202014%20-
		%20adopted%20version.pdf
		Stratford District Council:
		Check their website -
		http://www.stratford.govt.nz/images/ bylaws%20control%20od%20advertising%20signs.pdf
When can they be erected and when must they be pulled down?	Α	Election signs can be displayed at any time and may remain in place up to and including election day.