



# LESSON FOUR WEB CONTENT: Elections and representation

## Elections and representation

Everything you need to know about elections including: the difference between local and general elections, how the elections process works, why you should vote and how representation works.

## Local versus general elections

Let's look at the difference between local and general elections.

### General elections

General elections decide who represents all New Zealanders in Parliament.

They are run by the Electoral Commission, which is independent from the government.

General elections are held every three years, but do not have a set date.

The Prime Minister is responsible for announcing the date of the general election and must do it before the three-year term is up.

All eligible New Zealanders can vote.

### Who can vote in the New Zealand general elections

- People who are 18 years or older.
- People who are New Zealand citizens or permanent residents.
- People who have lived in New Zealand for 12 months or more at some time in their life.

### Why you need to enrol

You might be eligible to vote but this doesn't mean you're automatically enrolled. So, you still need to enrol.

Find out more about [enrolling to vote in the general election](#).

### How to enrol to vote

This video explains how to enrol quickly and easily online.

[How to enrol to vote](#).

### When voting opens

Voting in the general election opens around two weeks before election day.

You can cast an early vote or wait to vote at the polling stations on election day.

### You get two votes

Everyone gets two votes in the general election:

- an electorate vote
- a party vote.

### Electorate vote

Use your electorate vote for the candidates you want to represent the area you live in.

There are currently 22 electorates in Auckland. This means there are 22 Members of Parliament or 'MPs' who represent Auckland.

### Party vote

- Use your party vote for the political party you want to represent you in parliament.
- Leader of the party that gets the largest proportion of votes will become the Prime Minister.

## Local elections

Local elections are a little bit different from general elections.

Like the general election, they are held every three years but unlike the general election, local elections have a set date.

Under the [Local Electoral Act 2001](#), local elections must be held on the second Saturday in October every three years. Go to the [VoteAuckland website](#) for more information on the next Auckland Council election.

### Who can vote in Auckland local elections

- If you are on the electoral roll and live in the Auckland region, you are enrolled to vote in our local elections.
- If you live outside of Auckland but own property in Auckland, you are also eligible to vote.

To check if you are enrolled, visit the [electoral commission website](#).

### How local elections are run

Councils run their own local elections and they are administered by postal vote.

This means that there are no polling stations like the general elections.

You vote to elect the members who make up your local council.

Because Auckland has a unique governance model you can cast multiple votes to decide who will represent you and your community.

## Local elections in Tāmaki Makaurau

In Tāmaki Makaurau, you vote for:

- the mayor
- ward councillors
- local board members.

### Local elections, local issues

When you vote in the local election, you are voting for candidates from your local area.

### One mayor for Auckland

The only candidates that will be the same for all Aucklanders are those who are running for mayor.

Because the mayor represents all Aucklanders, every Aucklander gets to have their say on who this will be.

### Know your ward councillors from your local board members

- Ward councillors are elected from the 13 different wards in Auckland and together with the mayor, they make up the Governing Body.
- Local board members are the elected members for the 21 local boards.



### Vote for licensing trusts

If you live in an area of Auckland that has licensing trusts, then you will also have a vote for who you want to represent you on their boards.

Licensing trusts are publicly owned businesses, with privileges under the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012.

## Why voting matters

Why vote? Voting in local elections is a way to make sure that you have your say on issues affecting our region, city and your local community. A democracy works best when all voices are heard and represented at the decision-making table.

### Staying accountable

Elected members are accountable to their community through elections, so it is important that you are familiar with candidates' aspirations and proposals for how they will act on your behalf.

Because your vote is so important for shaping the future of Auckland and what happens day-to-day within your local community, make sure you know what your local candidates stand for and how they will represent the community.

Once all the candidates have been officially announced, you can find out more about them in the candidate profiles that will be published once nomination period is over.

## What your vote influences

In the [Introduction to Auckland Council](#) section, we learnt all about Auckland Council’s services and responsibilities.

Voting in local elections is important if you want to have your say on what matters to you.

Your vote influences who is elected to make decisions for Auckland, so your vote helps shape what Auckland is like now and in the future.

The people you vote for will decide on the funding and maintenance of critical infrastructure that makes Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland such a great place to live.

Your vote can make a difference!

We deliver many services to our communities across the Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland region:



### Transport

- Vital transport infrastructure
- Making it safer for cyclists and pedestrians around the city



### Water, wastewater and stormwater

- The quality of water from your tap and at your local beaches



### Parks and community

- Libraries, recreation centres and pools or hiring a community hall
- Play spaces for children in your local parks



### City centre and local development

- How development can encourage a thriving community



### Economic and cultural development

- What cultural, family and sporting events take place near you



### Environmental management and regulation

- Having a say on how we monitor and protect our local environment

# How local elections work

Every three years Auckland Council runs our own local elections, and the Electoral Commission works with us by always keeping the electoral rolls up to date. This is important, because the information packs that you receive are tailored to your local area and the candidates who are nominated in it.



## Make sure you're enrolled

The first step before any local election is to check that you are enrolled to vote, and that your details are correct.

You can [check or update your details online](#), or call 0800 36 76 56.

Visit the [Electoral Commission website](#) to find out other ways to enrol.

Did you know?

You can enrol to vote when you are 17 so that the next time an election comes around, you are well prepared to get out and vote.

## Get your voter information pack

Local elections are held by postal vote.

By enrolling or checking that your details are up to date, you are making sure that you will receive your voter information pack in the mail.

Your pack will include:

- your local area candidate information booklet
- your voting papers
- the envelope to return your voting papers.

The postage is paid on the return envelopes, so all you need to do is go to your nearest post box or voting box and drop them in before the due date.

[See Key dates for the next local election in Auckland.](#)

### How to return your completed voting papers to us

The easiest way to return your voting papers is to post them in the envelope provided in your voter information pack.

There are also a few other ways that you can get this done.

### Mobile voting boxes

These will be collection boxes for voting papers at your local spots like libraries, supermarkets, and transport stations.

All you need to do is drop in your completed voting forms and you're done! Make sure to keep an eye out for these boxes appearing in your neighbourhood.

### One Stop Shops

At One Stop Shop locations, you can:

- enrol to vote
- vote
- hand in your completed voting papers.

We will publish the locations of One Stop Shops soon.

### Assisted participation

Phone voting is available on request for persons who are blind, low vision or has another physical disability and is unable to mark the voting document without assistance. .

Find out more about [\[Assisted voting\]](#)



## How we ensure all Aucklanders are represented

So, you might be asking yourself who decides who your local candidates are? To answer this question let's look at representation arrangements in Auckland.

## How local representation is arranged

Much like the 22 electorates for the general election, your local board and ward areas are determined by where you're registered to vote.

You can only vote for local board candidates and ward councillors from the area your address is registered to. There are 21 local boards and 13 wards in the Auckland region.

Because the mayor's role is Auckland-wide, the list of mayoral candidates will be the same for all Aucklanders.

## How local board and ward boundaries are decided

The boundaries for the local boards and wards are related to population.

We conduct a review of ward boundaries and population every six years by 'representation review'.

### What is a representation review

Representation reviews take a close look at the population within each ward and the subdivisions within them, compared to the number of elected representatives for that area.

These reviews may change the ward boundaries to reflect changes in population and achieve a fair ratio of elected members.

### How we keep things fair

It isn't all down to numbers though. There are exceptions for communities that have either a low or high population within them but share a common community aspect – meaning that rearranging these areas would misrepresent the communities.

These exceptions usually apply to island or isolated communities and rural areas. It is important for communities to feel that they are accurately represented by their elected members.

### What representation reviews do

Auckland Council's local board boundaries can only be reviewed through a representation review every six years.

Representation reviews offer a chance for us to look at the current local boards and wards and make sure that they are represented fairly and effectively.