

STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor and Councillors
FROM: Electoral Officer
REFERENCE: E307
DATE: 18 October 2007
SUBJECT: 2007 Triennial Elections

The 2007 Triennial Elections were conducted under the Local Electoral Act 2001 and the Local Electoral Regulations 2001.

The following details are now provided for Councillors' information.

ELECTORAL ROLL

Residential Electoral Roll

The residential electoral roll received from the Electoral Roll Centre consisted of 32,038 residential electors (ie people who are registered as parliamentary electors and reside in the Tasman District). The corresponding figures for previous elections are: 1995 was 25,739, 1998 was 27,543, 2001 was 28,787 and 3004 was 30,947.

Ratepayer Electoral Rolls

The ratepayer electoral roll consists of people who reside outside the District who have enrolled or been nominated as an elector in respect of a property within the District. There were 227 on the ratepayer roll compared with 194 in 2004.

VOTING PAPERS

The number of voting papers issued to residential and ratepayer electors and the returns for each election was as follows:

Election	Papers Issued		Papers Returned		% Returned	
	2004	2007	2004	2007	2004	2007
Mayor	30,947	32,265	15,864	17,232	51.26%	53.41%
Golden Bay Ward	3,559	3,602	2,380	2,236	66.87%	62.08%
Lakes/Murchison Ward	1,612	2,300	710	1,016	44.04%	44.17%
Motueka Ward	7,451	7,589	3,780	4,128	50.73%	54.39%
Moutere/Waimea Ward	8,242	8,139	4,049	4,173	49.13%	51.27%
Richmond Ward	10,083	10,635	4,955	5,679	49.14%	53.40%

Note: The increase in Lakes/Murchison and reduction in Moutere/Waimea Wards was as a result of the Ward Boundary adjustments made by the Local Government Commission.

The voter turnout for the last five elections is shown below

1995	66.1%
1998	64.0%
2001	58.9%
2004	51.26%
2007	53.41%

PRINTING

All voting papers, envelopes and profile statements were produced by Moore Gallagher (a Datamail company in Wellington) and as part of this process all voting papers were sorted by computer into postal order.

PROGRESSIVE PROCESSING

We commenced opening and processing the voting papers from Tuesday 25 September 2007. The actual time involved varied; from two hours to six hours per day. One person was employed during this period with assistance from four internal

staff members. A Justice of the Peace was present at all times during the early processing of voting papers.

Both the first and second counts were completed during this time which meant that on election day we only had to process one day's mail and all the papers hand delivered up to 12 noon. This included the clearing of boxes at the Council's three service centres.

The preliminary results were emailed to all candidates and the media soon after 1.30 pm.

Overall the election software worked extremely well and the use of barcode readers increases the accuracy of the counting process as well as making it a lot quicker.

RETURN OF ENVELOPES

Papers were delivered from Friday 21 September 2007 and were returned as follows:

First Week	2001	2004	2007
Monday	861	371	-
Tuesday	2 553	1 701	2 164
Wednesday	1 627	1 412	1 400
Thursday	1 156	1 146	1 090
Friday	919	898	745
Week 1 Total	7 116	5 528	5 399
Second Week			
Monday	1 229	1 488	1 259
Tuesday	1 027	1 145	1 202
Wednesday	681	863	864
Thursday	626	831	677
Friday	685	596	760
Week 2 Total	4 248	4 923	4 762
Final Week			
Monday	756	912	1 064
Tuesday	1 373	865	1 197
Wednesday	687	823	988
Thursday	844	774	1 211
Friday	822	893	1 390
Saturday	1 024	1 146	1 221
Total Returns	16 870 (58.9%)	15 864 (51.2%)	17 232 (53.4%)

Initially the returns were down on 2004 however the last week was up by over 2600 on the previous election, resulting in a small overall percentage increase.

SPECIAL VOTES

A total of 228 special votes were issued and of these 169 were completed and returned with 132 voting papers being subsequently allowed and included in the official count.

DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD

For the third time the District Health Board (DHB) Elections were conducted in conjunction with the local authority elections although our role with this was relatively minor as the Board is now elected at large (no constituencies) and therefore all nominations etc were handled by Nelson City.

All we were required to do once the voting document were opened, was to detach the DHB papers and deliver them daily to the Nelson City Council.

The issue electors experienced three years ago with having to tick one paper and rank in order the other, did not appear to have caused as much confusion. There were still many blank DHB voting papers but this is more likely to be a result of not knowing the candidates or having little interest in this election.

PUBLICATION OF FINAL RESULTS

All results were published in The Nelson Mail on Saturday 20 October 2007.

INFORMAL VOTES/UNEXERCISED VOTES

For the second time the informal votes (those where the voter's intention is not clear) and the blank votes (where issues are left completely blank) were recorded separately.

Historically, many electors have always chosen to limit their votes to those issues in which they are interested, or where they know the candidates.

The attached copy of the public notice shows the number of informals and blanks for each issue.

COSTS

As charges are still coming to hand, it will be some time before the final cost of the election is known. The final cost is expected to be within the original estimate. Costs will also be offset by a contribution from the Nelson Marlborough District Health Board.

COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION

The Justice of the Peace who was appointed to observe the processing on receipt of the returned voting documents signed a certificate confirming that he was satisfied that the relevant sections of the legislation were complied with in full.

CONCLUSION

The 2007 Triennial Elections went very smoothly and using Progressive Counting over the period of voting again meant that the pressures normally associated with Election Day were minimal and staff again adapted well to the system and produced the results well ahead of schedule.

Finally I would like to thank all the staff who helped in any way with the election for the excellent work they did and in particular Sandra Hartley for accepting greater responsibilities and ensuring the new election software was fully operational.

L L Kennedy
Electoral Officer

<http://tdctoday:82/shared documents/meetings/council/full council/reports/2007/rcn071025 report 2007 triennial elections.doc>