



SOLGM Electoral Working Party Newsletter

March 2007

This newsletter is to update electoral officers on the following election-related topics:

1 Contract with New Zealand Post

The Electoral Working Party has recently concluded negotiations with New Zealand Post regarding the contract to be entered into with individual electoral officers for the delivery and return of the voting documents for the 2007 elections.

Although the Working Party has been unable to renegotiate the rates proposed by New Zealand Post for either the delivery of the voting packs, or the return of the completed voting documents, we have been able to negotiate significant improvements to the standard contract, with the result that it now includes specific provision for the delivery of the voting documents, as opposed to New Zealand Post's normal letter delivery arrangements. We have also managed to get some performance measures included in the contract, plus some compensation provisions, and an agreement to deal with news media inquiries if any serious delivery issues arise.

The contract will provide for a rate of 36.19 cents (inc GST) for the delivery of the voting packs, and a rate of 40 cents (inc GST) for the returned voting documents. New Zealand Post have advised that these rates will cover the following additional services which have also been provided at previous elections, but which were not previously included in their pricing:

- A dedicated postal services project team, comprising a project manager, process owner, elections coordinator and rural delivery coordinator.
- The transport and embargo of the voting packs to ensure that no packs are delivered before Friday 21 September 2007
- An increase in New Zealand Post transport and delivery resources during the election period, to ensure that all voting packs are delivered within the statutory timeframe.

The revised contract is recommended for acceptance by electoral officers, when they are approached by their local New Zealand Post account manager.

2 Process and Counting Assurance

In our last newsletter, we advised that it was likely that independent certification of software and independent auditing of overall election systems and processes would be mandatory for the 2007 elections. The Working Party is currently seeking advice from the Minister of Local Government as to whether such certification and assurance will be mandatory. In the meantime, as advised at the Electoral Officer Training days, election software certification and process quality assurance should be obtained as a matter of good practice.

Where electoral officers are contracting out the election, or the processing of the returned voting documents, they can assume that their election contractor will be responsible for undertaking the certification of their election software packages, and the auditing of their election processing systems.

Where an electoral officer is planning to make their own arrangements for the in-house processing of the returned voting documents (either in whole or in part) two things are now recommended:

- (a) The election software to be used should be certified by an independent party qualified to provide such certification, such as KPMG, Gemtech, PriceWaterhouse Coopers or Deloitte. Electoral officers in this situation should check with their election software supplier in the first instance.

The individual contacts in each firm are:

Gemtech	Jim Obren (Wellington)
KPMG	Rupert Dodds (Wellington)
Deloitte	Warren Marrett (Christchurch)
PriceWaterhouse Coopers	Mick Bennett (Wellington)

- (b) The election processes from receipt of the returned voting documents to the provisional results should be assured. This will require the processes undertaken to be capable of reconciliation at each stage, so assurance can be given by the electoral officer that what comes in (ie, the completed voting documents) matches what comes out (ie, the results).

If you require a set of the Electoral Processing and Counting Assurance Guidelines please contact Lara Sarich – lsarich@solgm.org.nz.

Electoral officers planning to process in-house are invited to seek assistance from Barry Rollo, the New Plymouth City Council and Taranaki DHB's Electoral Officer. Barry is a member of the Working Party, and will again be undertaking the processing of both the FPP and STV voting documents in-house, using election management software (EMS) owned by Independent Election Services Ltd. Barry is developing comprehensive descriptions of the associated procedures employed in the processing of the returned voting documents. If electoral officers are prepared to utilise the same procedures for the processing of their own voting documents, this will allow the cost of obtaining the required assurance to be shared. However, if an electoral officer processing in-house decides to employ different procedures, then he or she will be required to obtain full assurance at their own cost. Barry can be contacted at rollob@npdc.govt.nz, or by phone (06) 759 6109.

3 Review of Memoranda of Understanding for District Health Board, Regional Council and Licensing Trust Elections

The review of the Memoranda of Understanding for these elections is continuing, and should be completed by the end of April. New MOU's will then be included in part three of the reviewed Code of Good Practice.

4 Further Update of Representation Reviews

The Local Government Commission has issued determinations for the following reviews:

- Buller District
- Grey District
- New Plymouth District
- North Shore City
- Palmerston North City
- Rotorua District
- South Wairarapa District
- Waitakere City
- Western Bay of Plenty District
- West Coast Region

Determinations can be found on www.lgc.govt.nz

Hearings have also been held in respect of reviews carried out by the following local authorities:

- Auckland City
- Auckland Regional
- Bay of Plenty Regional
- Canterbury Regional
- Central Otago District
- Gore District
- Hastings District
- Hawke's Bay Regional
- Horizons Regional
- Horowhenua District
- Hurunui District
- Hutt City
- Masterton District
- Napier City
- Otago Regional
- Porirua City
- Rangitikei District
- Rodney District
- Southland Regional
- Tasman District
- Waikato Regional
- Waimate District
- Wanganui District
- Wellington City
- Wellington Regional
- Whangarei District

Remaining determinations will be released progressively between now and 11 April.

5 Electoral Officers' fees

The current Electoral Officers' scale of fees (issued on 1 July 2004) will be revised by SOLGM later this year in conjunction with *Local Government New Zealand*, to take in to account CPI increases since the scale was last revised. It is intended to do this after the CPI figures for the March 2007 quarter become available.

It is also likely that separate fees will be payable to District Health Board Electoral Officers. Discussions regarding this are continuing with the Ministry of Health, in association with the review of the DHB MOU, and all electoral officers will be advised of the eventual outcome.

6 Provision of Names of Persons Returning Completed Voting Documents

Candidates or candidates' scrutineers may request, before the close of voting, the electoral officer to provide a list of names of persons from whom voting documents have been returned. This information can be supplied in either hard copy or electronic form, but a reasonable charge may be made (section 68(6) Local Electoral Act 2001).

Many electoral officers will have started work on updating the candidate information booklets used in 2004. When doing so, those electoral officers who have contracted out the roll scrutiny work to either Independent Election Services Ltd or electionz.com Ltd are requested to note for the information of intending candidates that a standard charge of \$30 plus GST will be made by both companies for the supply of such lists, with a separate charge of \$30 plus GST being made for each list supplied (bearing in mind that some candidates and/or their scrutineers ask for this information to be supplied on a daily basis).

7 Candidate Information Booklets

The Working Party has been working with Datamail to improve the layout and wording of the candidate information booklets to be used in 2007. All candidate information booklets will be produced in the same format, after each electoral officer has supplied Datamail with the candidates' photographs and profile statements using the Votext software.

8 Layout of Candidate Profile Statements

As in 2004, candidates should again be required to supply their profile statements in plain text, ie, without bullet points or bolding.

9 Representation Arrangements Review & Election Timetable

A revised representation arrangements review and election timetable is attached.

10 Kids Voting

The following is a copy of a recent article on Kids Voting, which is promoted by *Local Government New Zealand*:

What is Kids Voting?

Kids Voting is designed to raise awareness amongst young people about New Zealand's political processes. Kids Voting gives Year 9 school students the opportunity to participate in an authentic voting experience. Students vote for real candidates, on a real ballot paper, and compare the results from the Kids election with the results of the real election. Kids Voting has run successfully in Auckland City for several years and will be available nationwide for the first time for the 2007 local government elections. So get involved and support Kids Voting in your community.

Why are we running Kids Voting?

In New Zealand, as in most developed democracies, voter turnout is falling. Levels of political engagement are low amongst young people and working through schools is one way to target young people. Building interest, skills and first-hand experience of active participation by young people will increase their personal understanding, belief and confidence in electoral participation. Kids Voting aims to encourage young people to learn about, and participate in, democratic activity at community, regional and national levels. If you want to increase the participation of young people in local issues and local democracy then Kids Voting is for you!

Councils are often looking for new ways to engage with young people in their communities and to increase electoral participation. Kids Voting is a great opportunity for you to get involved with schools and young people in your area and to support their learning about what councils do and how elections work. Kids Voting has many benefits in terms of enhancing student interest in, and comfort with, the electoral process. It has been shown to increase political engagement and participation of both students and their parents. In addition, Kids Voting can have a range of wider benefits including facilitating relationships between Councils and local schools and increasing student interest in local issues and local decision making.

You can contribute by working with your local schools to provide information and support for Kids Voting.

Who could be involved from council?

- Democratic Services and electoral officers
- Community Development and Youth Advisers
- Communications Staff
- Elected Members

What do you need to do?

You can register for Kids Voting on our website www.kidsvoting.org.nz from 1 April. The website will provide you with information about Kids Voting and how you can be part of it for the 2007 Local Government elections. Or you can contact Victoria Owen at Local Government New Zealand for more information (victoria.owen@lgnz.co.nz or 04 924 1221)

Who is managing Kids Voting?

Kids Voting is being made available nationwide as part of the Growing Active Citizens project. Growing Active Citizens is co-ordinated by Local Government New Zealand with support from a range of local and central government partners. This project aims to increase active participation in decision making locally, regionally and nationally by developing a range of resources to support citizenship education for young people in schools.

11 Resolutions Regarding Early Processing and the Ordering of Candidates' Names

A reminder that each electoral officer needs to seek approval from their Councils for the use of early processing during the voting period, and a decision on whether the names of the candidates are to be arranged on the voting documents in alphabetical order, pseudo random order, or random order. Separate resolutions will be required regarding both these topics from District Health Boards, Regional Councils, and Licensing Trusts for their own elections.

12 Reminders: Ratepayer Rolls and Electoral Officers' Declarations

A reminder of the need for:

- Ratepayer roll enrolment confirmation forms to be sent out prior to Monday 30 April 2007 (Regulation 16, Local Electoral Regulations)
- Electoral Officers to complete their declarations (Section 14, Local Electoral Act)

13 Citizenship Requirements for Candidates

As electoral officers will be aware, the Local Electoral Act requires any person standing as a candidate at a local election to be a New Zealand citizen. A person wishing to stand for election who is not a New Zealand citizen, must apply for a grant of citizenship. To find out about the requirements for a grant contact the Citizenship Office on 0800 22 51 51, or explore the citizenship pages on the Department of Internal Affairs' website: www.dia.govt.nz.

It is important to note that the citizenship process takes several months. Therefore it is important that prospective candidates contact the Citizenship Office and put their applications in as soon as possible.

An applicant does not become a citizen merely by receiving a letter from the Department of Internal Affairs advising that their application has been approved. The applicant must have attended a citizenship ceremony and taken the oath or affirmation of allegiance. It is only after taking the oath or affirmation that the person becomes a New Zealand citizen and receives a citizenship certificate.

14 STV Calculator

The Department of Internal Affairs advises that it is a requirement for the use of the STV calculators by a local authority or other providers that a licence for its use is obtained from the Department. DIA will be contacting electoral officers for local authorities which will be using the calculator for the first time, about licensing arrangements. There is no cost involved in obtaining a licence. Licences issued prior to the 2004 local elections remain in force and no action is required in respect of those. Where another local authority or one of the commercial electoral providers is processing STV voting documents on your behalf it is not necessary for your local authority to obtain a licence. A licence is only required by the organisation actually using the calculator.

For further information contact:

Donald Riezebos
Manager, Local Government Services
Department of Internal Affairs
Phone: (04) 460 2241
Email: donald.riezebos@dia.govt.nz

15 Trial Runs Essential if voting documents to be processed in-house.

Those electoral officers who are proposing to carry out in-house processing of the returned voting documents (as opposed to contracting out to either Independent Election Services or electionz.com) are strongly advised to hold a full scale trial run well in advance of the voting period, in sufficient time to allow any unexpected software or processing glitches to be identified and rectified.

16 Updating of Code of Good Practice

The Working Party has now completed the work involved in updating the Code of Good Practice for the Management of Local Elections and Polls. The revised drafts are currently being peer reviewed by Simpson Grierson, and the revised code will be available in April to all electoral officers on www.solgm.co.nz and www.localgovt.co.nz (Resource Library) once the peer review has been completed.

Regards



Peter Guerin
Chairperson
SOLGM Electoral Working Party