

Local Government New Zealand working paper

Description and analysis of the overall profiles of elected members following the 1998, 2001 and 2004 local government elections

September 2005

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Introduction

This report presents a description and analysis of the changes of the overall profile of local elected members following the 1998, 2001 and 2004 local government elections. The purpose of the report is to:

- inform the sector and the community on the overall profile of elected membership of local government
- provide input to policy work on the profiles of elected members
- and to provide the public and other interested parties with more information about local authorities and the process of democracy.

The information and analyses provided in this report are based on the surveys conducted by *Local Government New Zealand* following 1998, 2001 and 2004 elections. The surveys covered elected members in 12 regional councils and 74 territorial authorities (district councils and city councils). The surveys of elected members in this report do not include the elected members of District Health Boards and Community Boards.

The number of respondents to the surveys varied. In 1998, out of 1098 elected members, returns were received from 863 of them, a return rate of 79%. In 2001, there were 940 respondents out of 1083 elected members, a return rate of 86.7%. In 2004, returns were received from 889 of the 1024 elected members. This is a return rate of 86%. The percentages which are used in this report have been rounded off in all cases and are based on the returned questionnaires.

This report also uses some statistics from The Department of Internal Affairs and the Justice and Electoral Select Committee (refer to page 11 for References).

The presentation of overall characteristics of local representatives in the last three local elections consists of the following aspects:

Gender Age	Main Source of Income Position on Council
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Ethnicity	Previous experience as a Member of Parliament
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(Yanjie Shi undertook this research for Local Government New Zealand as part of her Masters Degree in Public Policy.)

1. Gender

This section focuses on the representation of women following the 1998, 2001 and 2004 local authority elections and their positions on councils.

Representation of women

Election statistics gathered by the Department of Internal Affairs after the 1998, 2001 and 2004 elections revealed that an overwhelming majority of males were elected during this period and that women have accounted for less than 30% of the total number of elected members (Table 1).

Table 1. Women elected members - 1998, 2001 and 2004

	1998	2001	2004
Regional Councillors	37	35	34
City Councillors	81	86	72
District Councillors	178	168	155
Mayors	19	12	14
Total women members	315 (out of 1098)	301 (out of 1080)	275 (out of 1024)
Percentage of Women members	29%	28%	27%

*(Sources: Local Authority Election Statistics 1998, p. 10, DIA, 1999;
Local Authority Election Statistics 2001, p. 19, DIA, 2003;
Local Authority Election Statistics 2004 (Draft), DIA, 2005)*

Although the proportion of female elected members has not experienced a dramatic change during this period, there has been a decline of 1% every election.

Compared to the previous two elections, in 2004 fewer women were elected members across the board with the exception of mayoral elections (14 women mayors were elected - 2 more than that in 2001), although there were 19 women mayors in 1998.

Position of women on councils

Surveys of elected members conducted by *Local Government New Zealand* following the last three elections indicate that male elected members were much more likely to have senior positions on councils than their female counterparts. Females contributed to a very small proportion of senior places on councils (Table 2).

In the 1998 incumbency, there was only one female regional council chair. Following the 2001 elections this number doubled and the number remained the same (2 in 12) for the first six months after the 2004 elections. (Following a resignation, Environment Waikato is now the only regional council with a woman chair.)

Table 2. Female members' position on councils - 1998, 2001 and 2004

	1998	2001	2004
Female Chairs	1/12 (8%)	2/12 (16.7%)	1/12 (16.7%)
Female Mayors	19/74 (26%)	12/74 (16%)	14/74 (19%)
Female Deputy Mayors/Chairs	22/80 (28%)*	29/86 (34%)	23/86 (26%)

(Source: Elected Members Survey Results, LGNZ, 1998, 2001 and 2004)

* Missing 6 respondents of deputy mayors/chairs of 1998 election

Of the 74 city and district mayors, 19 were female in 1998, 11 in 2001 and 14 in 2004. 1998 had the highest proportion of women mayors, 26% compared to 16% in 2001 and 19% in 2004.

Relatively, higher proportions of female members were serving as deputy mayors/chairs compared to the two positions above. They made up 28%, 34% and 26% of total deputy mayors/chairs respectively. 2001 saw the most female deputy mayors/chairs - 29 out of 86 councils.

Summary of changes

The number and proportion of female members has declined in the last three local government elections. The total number of representatives has also declined, although the decrease was marginal.

There are differences between the proportion of female representatives in regional and territorial authorities and elected representatives (including councillors of District Health Boards and community boards). The proportion of females on community boards following the 1998, 2001 and 2004 elections was 31%, 31% and 30% respectively (Report from the Justice and Electoral Select Committee, 2005, p.30).

Female mayors had their "golden time" following the 1998 election.

2. Age

This section provides information about age distributions of elected members in three incumbencies by using data from *Local Government New Zealand* surveys and statistics from the Department of Internal Affairs (Figure 1).

Description

A common feature of three incumbencies is that most of the elected members are over 51 years of age. People in this age group made up 71% of elected members in 1998,

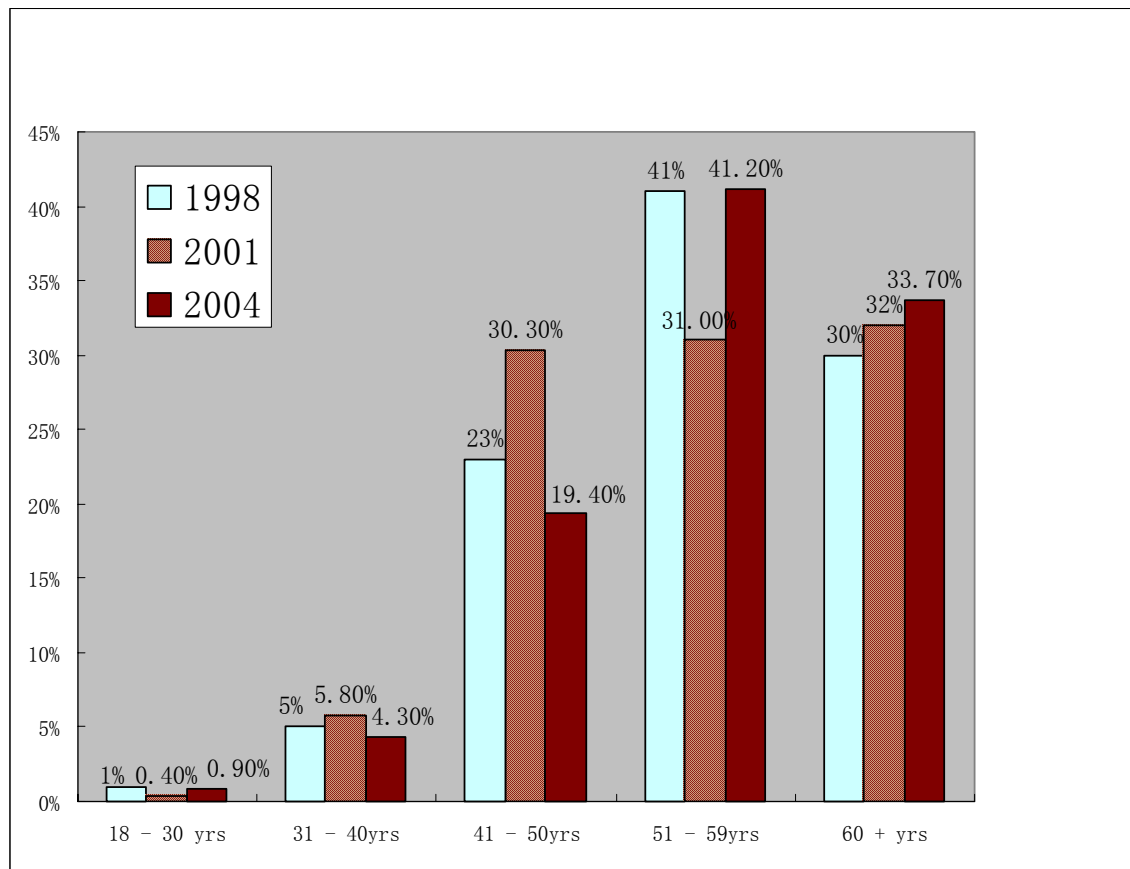
63.4% in 2001 and 74.9% in 2004. The number of elected members aged over 60 years has kept relatively stable in the last three elections (around a third of the total of elected members).

Another notable phenomenon is that candidates aged from 51 to 59 years were most likely to be elected, contributing to 41% and 41.2% of elected members in 1998 and 2004 incumbencies. This was not the case in 2001 which was 10 percent less at around 31%.

Following the 2001 election, the percentage of elected members aged from 51 to 59 years was similar to those aged from 41 to 50 years and those aged over 60 years of age (31%, 30.3%, and 32% respectively).

The 2001 election produced the highest proportion of elected members in their forties - about 10 percent more than the 1998 and 2004 elections (30.3%, and 23% 19.4% respectively).

Figure 1. Age distribution of elected local members - 1998, 2001 and 2004



(Sources adapted from:

1. Elected Members Survey Results, LGNZ, 1998, 2001 and 2004;
2. A survey of Local Authority Election Candidates in the 2001 Local Authority Elections, DIA, 2002, p. 18)

As for the elected members elected in 1998, aged 60 years or more, 27% of elected members were in their sixties and 3% were over 70 years of age. In the 2004 election, 28.7% of elected members were in their sixties and 5% were over 70 years (Elected Members Survey results, *Local Government New Zealand*, 1998 and 2004). The 2001 data does not indicate the number of elected members who were aged from 60 to 70 years of age and those over 70 years.

Young elected members, those aged under 40 years, made up a small proportion of elected members (less than 6%), for each of the three elections.

Summary of changes and trends

Representatives in 2001 were younger than those in 1998 and 2004. In 2001 fewer members were aged over 51. During this time many more elected members were in their forties. The 2001 incumbency also had the greatest proportion of elected members (5.8%) aged between 31 and 40.

It seems, older candidates were more likely to be elected in the 1998 and 2004 elections. The graph shows that both elections produced a greater proportion of local representatives who were over 60 years than those aged less than 50 years. This contrast was especially clear in 2004.

The trend of age distribution of these three elections presents a V shape - the 2001 election had a higher proportion of younger elected members than in 1998 and 2004. The reason for this could be the changes in proportion of retired members or the rate of re-election. The relevance of these two aspects to the age profile of elected members will be revealed in sections 5 and 6.

3. Ethnicity

This section describes and reveals the ethnicity distribution of elected members (Table 3). The section also presents some analyses of the diversity of elected representatives.

Table 3. Ethnicity of elected members - 1998, 2001 and 2004

	1998	2001	2004
NZ European	93%	92%	94%
NZ Maori	5.5%	5.3%	4.3%
Other ethnicity	1.5%	2.7%	1.7%

(Source: Elected Members Survey results; 1998, 2001 and 2004, LGNZ)

Description and comparison

The surveys conducted by *Local Government New Zealand*, asking for a self-description of ethnicity, show that in the last three local elections, the majority of elected members belong to the New Zealand European ethnic group, constituting, 93%, 92.% and 94% respectively. The proportion of Maori elected members has fluctuated between 4% and 5.5%. Elected members from minority groups (including Fijian, Chinese, Indian, Cook

Island Maori, Lebanese, Kurdish, etc) had the smallest proportion - 1.5%. 2.5% and 1.4% respectively.

Analysis of the diversity of representation on local councils

Compared to the national population, Maori and other ethnicities were under-represented on councils following the last three elections. According to the census of the usually resident population in 2001, Maori constituted 14%, Europeans 75% and other ethnic groups 11% (Source: Statistics New Zealand). Some caution is required, however, before comparing local government and national statistics as ethnic populations are not distributed proportionally across council jurisdictions.

Compared to the last three parliamentary elections, based on the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) voting system, since 1996, local elections have shown a less diverse characteristic. For example, the 2002 parliament consisted of nineteen Maori (16%), three Pacific Islanders (2.5%) and two Asian (1.6%) Members of Parliament (MPs) (Source: <http://www.decisionmaker.co.nz>). The percentage of Maori MPs was consistent with the proportion of the national Maori population.

An issue for further research is whether the electoral mechanism of First Past the Post (FPP) contributed to proportionally fewer Maori councillors. It is perhaps noteworthy that the proportion of Maori MPs increased in 2002 even though the number of Maori voters fell. This implies that a new electoral system might enhance the principle of “fair and effective representation”. In its report *Inquiry into the 2004 Local Authority Elections* (Report from the Justice and Electoral Select Committee, 2005), the Committee assesses that one of the advantages of Single Transferable Vote (STV) is its ability to enhance the diversity of representation to reflect the local community. STV is seen as a catalyst for increasing numbers of Maori elected members (Drage, J, 2003).

In the local government sphere, the voter turnout in the 2004 local elections continued a general downward trend and fell to the lowest level since 1989 (Report of the Justice and Electoral Select Committee, 2005). Hence, technical issues were only part of the reason for declining rates of representation from Maori and other ethnic groups. Local government is facing a major challenge to encourage broader participation in local politics.

4. Main source of income

This section presents information about the main sources of elected members’ income. Table 4 shows the distribution of main income sources of elected members in three terms and Table 5 shows how the most popular sources of income varied from election to election.

Table 4. Main source of income of elected members - 1998, 2001 and 2004

	1998	2001	2004
Elected member salary	29%	9.6%	19.10%
Agricultural, farming, etc	20%	22.5%	20%
Professional & salaried	13%	15.5%	16.10%

Business & self-employed	11%	19%	20.10%
Retirement earnings	9%	8.6%	11.10%
Sales work	3%	2.23%	2.60%
Others	3%	14.10%	7.7%
Unknown	11%	8.2%	2.9%

(Source: *Local Government New Zealand*, Elected Members Survey results; 1998, 2001 and 2004)

Table 5. Top four main sources of income in each incumbency - 1998, 2001 and 2004

1998	2001	2004
Elected member salary (29%)	Agriculture & farming (22.5%)	Business & self-employed (20.10%)
Agriculture & farming (20%)	Business & Self-employed (19%)	Agriculture & farming (20%)
Professional employees (13%)	Professional employees (15.5%)	Elected member salary (19.10%)
Business & self-employed (11%)	Elected members salary (9.6%)	Professional employees (16.1%)

Description

In 1998, the most common source of income for elected members was their elected member salary - 29% of elected members received their primary income from this source. The next most common source of income was agriculture and farming (20%) while 13% of elected members were working as professional employees. Over a tenth of elected members (11%) described their occupation as business and self-employed, followed by 9% of members who received their main income from retirement earnings.

Occupation distribution changed noticeably in 2001. The most common occupation listed by elected members was agriculture and farming (22.5%). The next most common occupation was business and self-employed (19%), while 15.5% of respondents identified themselves as professional employees. Only 9.6% of elected members stated that their elected member salary was their primary income. There were 14.1% of elected members who claimed that they were getting their incomes from "other occupations" not listed, such as consultant, student and contractors, etc.

The 2004 election resulted in a new distribution of income sources. The top three income sources - business and self-employed, agriculture and farming and elected member salary, were sharing similar proportions - 20.1%, 20% and 19.1% respectively. By contrast, the top three main income sources in the previous two elections were more varied (Table 5). 2004 had the highest proportion of elected members who identified their main source of income as either "professional and salaried" or "business and self-employed" out of the three elections.

Retirement earnings made up a small percentage of main sources of income in the last three elections - 9%, 8.6% and 11.1% respectively. Very few elected members have

received their income from sales work across the three incumbencies - 3% in 1998, 2.23% in 2001 and 2.6% in 2004.

Notable changes and trends

- (1) A dramatic change happened in the number of elected members whose main income source was elected member salary between the 1998 and 2001 elections. In 1998, 29% of elected members received their primary source of income from their elected member salary. However, the number declined drastically from 19.4% to 9.6% in 2001. Although there was an increase in 2004, the percentage was still less than that in 1998. This trend appears as an imbalanced V shape at its base, in the 2001 figures, which show the right hand (19.10% in 2004) was much lower than the left (29% in 1998). The changes in this area were consistent with the age profiles of elected members. In 2001, overall, elected members were younger than their 1998 and 2004 counterparts and consequently a greater percentage had other jobs from which to receive their main income.
- (2) There have been two obvious climbing trends in main income sources from 1998 to 2004 (as were shown in bold in Table 4). One was the steady rise in the proportion of elected members who identified themselves as professional employees. Those who were “Professionally employed” contributed to 16.1% of main income sources in 2004, though it was not one of the three most popular sources of income in 2004. Another was the percentage of people who identified themselves in the category of “business and self-employed”. The proportion of elected members in this category increased strongly across all three elections, up to 20.1% in 2004.
- (3) A fifth of elected members received their main income from agriculture and farming. Agriculture and farming has been the most stable main source of income and the only one that has remained in the top three sources of income from 1998 to 2004.
- (4) The trend in the proportion of elected members relying on their retirement income as their main source of income has remained relatively static. Not surprisingly, the 2001 triennium which had the youngest age profile, had the lowest proportion of elected members relying on an retirement income.

5. Previous positions on council

This section looks at how many elected members were returning sitting members of previous councils in 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001 and 2004.

Table 5. Proportion of re-elected councillors, 1992 - 2004

	1992	1995	1998	2001	2004
Regional Council Candidates	NA	38%	32%	36%	35%

Councillors	57%	69%	61%	80%	69%
City Council					
Candidates	NA	32%	27%	30%	34%
Councillors	58%	68%	63%	69%	68%
District Council					
Candidates	NA	41%	37%	38%	41%
Councillors	61%	64%	62%	63%	63%
Proportion of total re-elected councillors	59%	67%	62%	71%	67%
City council mayors	73%	67%	47%	75%	67%
District council mayors	73%	66%	68%	55%	54%
Proportion of total re-elected mayors	73%	67%	58%	65%	61%

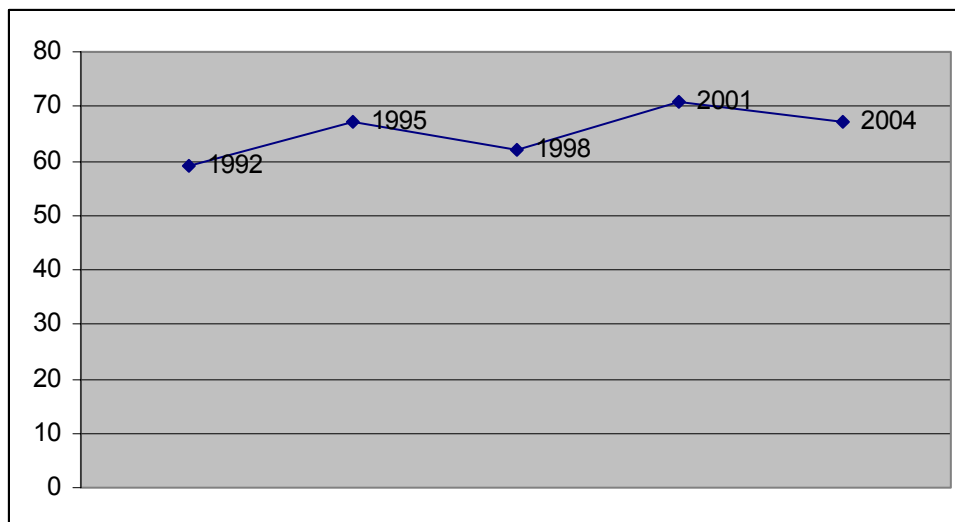
(Sources: Report of the Justice and Electoral Select Committee, Inquiry into the 2004 Local Authority elections, August 2005)

As revealed in Table 5, on the whole, sitting councillors who stood for re-election were more likely to be elected than other candidates. This was a continuous trend from 1998 to the 2004 elections. A considerable proportion of elected members had been sitting councillors; this was particularly true following the 2001 election when 80% of regional councillors and 71% of the total number of elected members had served in the previous term.

Next to 2001, 2004 also had a high rate of re-elected members, with two-thirds of elected members having been sitting members on the previous council. In contrast, a greater proportion of sitting members lost their seats in 1998. However, the 1998 election did not have the lowest proportion of re-elected members during the 1990s. Figure 2 shows the changes of the proportion of elected local members who had served in the previous terms from 1992 to the 2004 election.

Most of the new mayors who were elected in the last three elections had been members of the previous council. Compared to the 1998 and 2004 elections, the 2001 election produced the greatest proportion of returning mayors (65%). However this level was less than that in the 1992 and 1995 mayoral elections (Table 5).

Figure 2. The trend of average proportion of re-elected local members 1992 - 2004



Interestingly, a dramatic contrast can be perceived in that the 2001 election had the highest percentage of returning members as well as the youngest elected member out of the last three local elections.

6. Previous experiences as a Member of Parliament

This section looks at the previous political experiences of elected members. In 1998 and 2001, 14 elected members had been (or still were) Members of Parliament (MPs). Three years later this number had increased to 18, and accounted for 2% of the total number of elected members.

Table 6. Previous experiences as MPs

	1998	2001	2004
Proportion of previous experiences as MPs	1.6%	1.5%	2.0%

(Source: Elected Members Survey results; 1998, 2001 and 2004, *Local Government New Zealand*)

The 2004 *Local Government New Zealand* survey of elected members showed that 699 newly elected members have held positions in Local Government (75%). No similar information with regard to the 1998 and 2001 elections was available.

Conclusion

The main focus of this report has been to give an overall profile of local representatives and changes to the make-up of elected members over three terms. Most of the trends in

changes to the profiles of elected representatives are not linear, but rather fluctuate over time.

This report also tries to determine whether some sections of the community are under represented in terms of age, sex, or particular ethnic or income groups. This report reveals some useful information about the changing profiles and make-up of local government representatives that may provide the basis for further discussion in a number of areas. For example:

- the balance and proportion of female and male local representatives
- the balance and proportion of older representatives (over 60 years old) and younger representatives (under 50 years old)
- the proportion of representatives of Maori, Pacific or Asian descent in relation to their growing populations
- the influences on local democracy from an increasing number of 'white-collar' elected members - professionals, those working in business or the self-employed.

References:

Drage Jean, "The Impact of New Local Governmental Legislation on Political Representation", Public Sector, Vol. 26, No.2, Page11)

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The Department Internal Affairs: A survey of Local Authority Election Candidates In the 2001 Local Authority Elections, 2002

The Justice and Electoral Select Committee, *Inquiry into the 2004 Local Authority Elections*, 2005.

<http://www.decisionmaker.co.nz>

<http://www.stats.govt.nz/census/cultural-diversity-tables.htm>

Local Government New Zealand, Elected Members Survey results, 1998

Local Government New Zealand, Elected Members Survey results, 2001

Local Government New Zealand, Elected Members Survey results, 2004.

Appendix 1

Elected Members Survey Results 1998

Following the local body elections in October 1998, *Local Government New Zealand* surveyed all newly elected members in order to build an accurate knowledge base on the profile, in aggregate, of those in local government.

The purposes of the Elected Members' Survey are:

- to inform the sector and the community on the overall profile of elected membership of local government
- to provide input to policy work on the profiles of elected members.

Below are the [results](#) of the 1998 Elected Members Survey. Of the 1098 elected members, returns were received from 863 of them. This is a return rate of 79%.

The survey requested the following information:

- [Gender](#)
- [Position on council](#)
- [Ethnicity](#)
- [Age](#)
- [Main source of Income](#)
- [Experience as a Member of Parliament](#)

Some of the more interesting results include:

- an increase in the percentage of women in local government from 27% to 29%
- an increase in the percentage of Maori in local government from 3.5% to 5.5%
- only one person aged under 20
- 20% say their main source of income is farming or agricultural
- 14 have been (or still are) MPs.

Summary of Results

Gender

- Male 71%
- Female 29%.

Position on council

- 1 female Chair 8%
- 19 female Mayors 26%
- 22/80 Deputy Mayors/Chairs are women 28%
- 90/288 Committee Chairs are women 31%.

Ethnicity

- NZ European 93%
- NZ Maori 5.5%
- Other (Fijian, Chinese, Indian, Cook Island Maori, Lebanese, Kurdish) 1.5%.

Age

- 18-29 = 1%
- 30-39 = 5%
- 40-49 = 23%
- 50-59 = 41%
- 60-69 = 27%
- 70+ = 3%.

Main source of income

- elected member salary = 29%
- agricultural, farming etc = 20%
- professional technical = 13%
- administrative, managerial work = 11%
- not adequately defined = 11%
- retirement earnings = 9%
- sales work = 3.0%
- production, transport, equipment operators and labourers = 1.5%
- service work = 0.75%
- clerical work = 0.75%.

Note: Of the elected members whose main source of income is from their position on council, 27.5% are aged 60 and over.

MP Experience

- 14 elected members have been (or still are) MPs = 1.6%.

Appendix 2

Elected Members Survey Results 2001

Following the local body elections in October 2001, *Local Government New Zealand* surveyed all newly elected members in order to build an accurate knowledge base on the profile, in aggregate, of those in local government.

The purposes of the Elected Members' Survey are:

- to inform the sector and the community on the overall profile of elected membership of local government
- and to provide input to policy work on the profiles of elected members.

Below are the [results](#) of the 2001 Elected Members Survey. Of the 1080 elected members, returns were received from 940 of them. This is a return rate of 86 percent.

The survey requested the following information:

- [Gender](#)
- [Position on council](#)
- [Ethnicity](#)
- [Age](#)
- [Main source of Income.](#)

Summary of Results

Gender

- Males 685 /72%
- Females 255 /27.9%.

Position on council

- 2 /12 Female chairs (1%)
- 11 / 74 Female Mayors (14%)
- 29/86 Deputy Mayors/Chairs are women (34%).

Ethnicity

- NZ European 92.1%
- NZ Maori 5.3%
- Other (Fijian, Chinese, Indian, Cook Island Maori, Lebanese, Kurdish) 2.5%.

Ages

- 18-25 = 2 0.2%
- 26-30 = 2 0.2%
- 31-35 = 17 1.8%
- 36-40 = 38 4%
- 41-45 = 91 9.7%
- 46-50 = 194 20.6%
- 51+ = 596 63.4%.

Main source of income

- elected member salary = 9.6%
- agricultural, farming etc = 22.5%
- professional, medical = 5.5%
- business, self employed = 19%
- salaried/managers = 10%
- not stated = 8.2%
- retirement earnings = 8.6%
- sales work = 2.2%
- others = 14.1%.

Appendix 3

Elected Members Survey Results 2004

Following the local body elections in October 2004, *Local Government New Zealand* surveyed all newly elected members in order to build an accurate knowledge base on the profile, in aggregate, of those in local government.

The purposes of the Elected Members' Survey are:

- to inform the sector and the community on the overall profile of elected membership of local government
- and to provide input to policy work on the profiles of elected members.

Below are the results of the elected Members Survey. Of the 1024 elected members, returns were received from 889 of them. This is a return rate of 86%. The percentages have been rounded off in all cases and are based on the 889 returned questionnaire.

The survey requested the following information:

- Gender
- Position on council
- Ethnicity
- Age
- Main source of income
- Previous experience as a Member of Parliament.

Summary of Results

Gender

- Males 636 = 62%
- Females 253 = 24%.

Position on council

- 2 /12 Female Chairs (1%)
- 14 /74 Female Mayors (18.9%)
- 23 /86 Deputy Mayors/Chairs are women (26%).

Ethnicity

- NZ European 837 = 94%
- NZ Maori 39 = 4.3%
- Other (Indian, Chinese, Pacific Island) 13 = 1.4%.

Ages	Percentages
• 18 -25 = 4	0.4%
• 26 -30 = 5	0.5%
• 31-35 = 13	1.4%
• 36-40 = 26	2.9%
• 41-50= 173	19.4%
• 51-55 = 190	21.3%
• 56-60 = 177	19.9%
• 61-65 = 170	19.1%
• 66-70 = 86	9.6%
• 71+ = 45	5.0%.

Main source of income

• elected member salary = 170	19.1%
• agricultural, farming etc = 178	20.0%
• business, self employed = 179	20.1%
• professional & salaried = 143	16.1%
• retirement earnings = 99	11.1%
• sales work = 24	2.6%
• other and unknown = 95	10.7%.

Previous Experience in Local Government

699 Members have held positions in Local Government (75%).

Previous Experience as a Member of Parliament

18 members have had previous experience as an MP (2%).