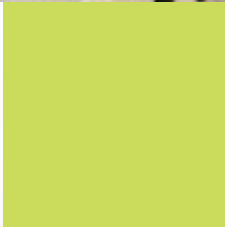


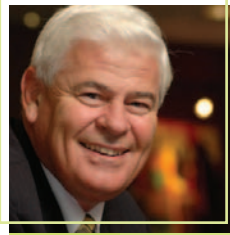
MAKING A STAND MADE EASY

a candidate's guide to local government



2007





Kia ora

Welcome to local government.

I'm pleased that you are interested in becoming an elected member. Elected members include councillors, mayors, community board and district health board¹ members, all of whom make a significant difference to shaping their community.



¹ For more information on standing as a district health board member see www.moh.govt.nz



Councils exist to provide for the well-being of their communities and must lead, nurture and respond to community views. They need to fully represent their communities and operate effectively and efficiently. The key principle for local democracy is that the power of decision-making should rest as close as possible to the communities that those decisions affect.

Local Government New Zealand believes that local democracy is about:

- having the right mix of people, elected locally, to best represent each community
- ensuring services are provided to the community in the best way possible
- taking a collective approach to meeting community needs
- creating a sense of local identity and place.

Elected members come from all walks of life and we want to ensure that this diversity continues so councils and community boards are representative of New Zealand communities.

All you need to be an elected member, apart from being a New Zealand citizen and enrolled on the electoral roll, is a willingness to participate and a commitment to serve your local community. Elected members take an oath to faithfully, impartially and according to their best skill and judgement, execute and perform their duties in the interests of the community, city, district or region.

The role of an elected member can be very demanding at times, but it is also very rewarding. We are pleased that you are considering standing for election and hope this publication gives you valuable information to help you on your way. If you would like more information please check out our website at www.lgnz.co.nz or speak to the electoral officer of the local council in the area you want to stand in.

Good luck.

Yours sincerely

Basil Morrison

President

Local Government New Zealand



What is local government?

Regional and territorial authorities and their functions

Local government provides communities with a wide range of services and facilities which contribute significantly to quality of life. We often associate councils with the three “Rs” – roads, rates and rubbish – but councils play a vital role in enabling local communities to grow and develop.

Councils plan for the future of their communities, they determine what developments and activities are permissible and regulate activities such as subdivisions, housing developments, business activities, and animal and environmental protection.

Councils’ primary source of funding comes from property taxes or rates as they are more commonly known. Rates fund around 60 per cent of all council activities.

In New Zealand, regional and territorial authorities have different functions and responsibilities. New Zealand is divided into 12 regions. Each of these regions has a regional council which manages the natural resources of an area. This includes:

- biosecurity control (including pest control and noxious plants)
- resource management (quality of water, soil, coastal planning, etc)
- flood and river management

- civil defence (natural disasters, marine oil spill)
- regional transport planning and passenger transport services.

New Zealand has 73 territorial authorities including 16 city councils and 57 district councils.

The functions of territorial authorities (district and city councils) include:

- community well-being and development
- environmental health and safety (including building control, civil defence, and environmental health matters)
- infrastructure (roading and transport, sewerage, water/stormwater)
- recreation and culture
- resource management including land use planning and development control.

Four of the territorial authorities are known as ‘unitary authorities’, as they have the responsibilities of both territorial authorities and regional councils. The unitary councils are Nelson City Council, Tasman District Council, Marlborough District Council and Gisborne District Council.

The Local Government Act 2002 gave councils new flexibility to transfer functions between regional and territorial authorities. In the future these functions may vary.



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Council responsibilities

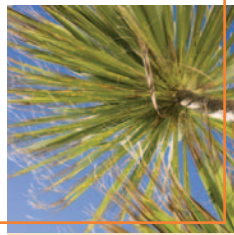
Councils are required to make decisions and set directions for promoting the social, cultural, environmental, and economic well-being of their communities. They contribute to the good governance of their communities.

A council must:

- provide directly or on behalf of central government, adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community
- ensure that the services provided are managed efficiently and effectively
- exercise community leadership
- exercise its functions in a manner that is consistent with and actively promotes the principle of cultural diversity
- manage, protect, develop, restore, enhance and conserve the environment
- account for and manage assets for which it is responsible
- facilitate involvement of councillors, members of public, users of facilities and services and council staff in the development, improvement and co-ordination of local government
- raise funds for local purposes by way of rates, charges and fees and investments, loans and grants
- keep the local community informed about its activities
- ensure that in the exercise of its regulatory functions it acts without bias
- act as a responsible employer.



Councils' primary source of funding comes from property taxes or rates



What is governance?

Governance, in a council sense, is providing leadership for the good of the community. It is about balancing views, resources and needs and making decisions that are best for the community. It is not about implementing decisions - that is the responsibility of council management and staff.

Councils have two major governance roles:

- a law-making and regulatory role
- being the governing body for the council organisation.

The key governance responsibilities of councils are to:

- connect with the community
- set policies
- monitor and review the performance of the organisation.

The governing body in each local authority is the council, also known as the 'committee of the whole'

Council structures

The governing body in each local authority is the council, also known as the 'committee of the whole'.

A council has the discretion to appoint any standing committee, special committee or subcommittee it considers appropriate. Standing committees (or permanent committees) are responsible for much of the work the council does. They are responsible for a council's regulatory services, planning, recreation and safety, as well as promoting economic benefits, although some councils now operate without committees.

In addition, many councils have community boards. New community boards can be set up by cities or districts to make sure that a community's interests are represented and to bring decision-making closer to the community (depending on the functions and responsibilities delegated to them by the council).



Who is responsible for council functions?

Councillors are responsible for making policy decisions on matters such as the services the council will provide, the level of rates it will charge and what bylaws it will make. Councils have a chief executive and other staff to provide advice and implement these decisions.

Is the public entitled to attend council meetings?

Absolutely. The public is entitled to attend all meetings of council and council committees, and community boards. Public meetings provide an opportunity for the council to make available detailed information on complex issues and to enable the public to provide feedback to the council.

Councils and community boards do have the right to discuss some matters in private such as matters of privacy or commercial sensitivity. They may also elect to hold workshops to debate and find out more about an issue and these are usually held in private.

Council roles

There are a number of clearly defined roles within council:

- chairpersons and mayors
- deputy chairpersons and deputy mayors
- committee and subcommittee chairpersons
- councillors
- community board chairperson
- community board members.

The public is entitled to attend all meetings of council and council committees, and community boards



What roles do elected members fulfil?

Mayor

The role of mayor is very important as the ceremonial head of the council providing leadership to other elected members. The job is varied, involves long hours, and a wide range of duties including opening buildings, taking a stand on local issues and always being available to the constituents. The size of the job differs depending on the size of the town/city and the size of the council itself. The mayor is elected by the district as a whole and has the same responsibilities as other members of council along with additional duties.

One of the most challenging aspects of being mayor is ensuring the orderly conduct of business during council meetings. By keeping order and providing sound leadership you help ensure the council decision-making process works at its best.

The mayor advocates on behalf of the community in an effort to ensure the views of the community are represented. In this role the mayor is often the spokesperson for the council.

In addition to these roles, the mayor also fulfils the responsibilities of a Justice of the Peace (while holding office).

Chairperson of regional council

The chairperson is elected by the members of the regional council at the first meeting following the local elections. As an elected

member, the chairperson shares the same responsibilities as other members of the council. In addition to this, the chairperson has a number of other roles, including, the ceremonial head of the council, the presiding member at council meetings and responsibility for ensuring meetings are conducted in an orderly manner.

The chairperson advocates on behalf of the community by promoting and representing its interests and providing leadership and feedback to fellow elected members on teamwork and chairmanship of committees. In addition to these roles the chairperson also fulfils the responsibilities of a Justice of the Peace (while holding office).

Councillor

The role of councillor can, at times, be very demanding. You will have to balance a number of competing interests and wear a number of hats, as councillors can be required to act simultaneously as community leaders, representatives and board members.

For the three year term councillors need to juggle work, the community's demands, your own priorities, the policies of your political party (if you have one) and the challenges facing your council.

Being a councillor is a very public role. Whenever councillors appear in public,



even though it may not be in an official capacity, they are usually seen by the public as a ‘councillor’ and judged accordingly. This role is not a 9am-5pm job.

The role and responsibilities of a councillor fall into two main categories:

- being a member of the governing body of the council
- being an elected representative of the community.

Community board members

Most, but not all, councils have community boards, which are elected in tandem with the election of the mayor and councillors. The role of community board members will vary depending on the level of responsibility delegated to them by their parent council. Many community boards make recommendations to councils on policies, bylaws, and strategies which reflect the view of the communities that they represent.

The primary role of a community board member is to represent and advocate for the interests of their communities, liaise with community organisations, central government, government departments, regional or environmental councils, and to maintain an overview of the services provided by the council. Community boards also make written and oral submissions to council on various issues.

What are the responsibilities of an elected member?

Governance

As a member of the governing body you are required to participate in the decision-making processes that guide and govern the affairs of the council. This includes:

- establishing a policy framework
- deciding on financial resources to be raised for delivery of determined programmes
- ensuring council is fulfilling its regulatory functions in an appropriate manner
- developing a management plan for conduct of the council’s activities
- regularly reviewing the council’s performance.

Representing the community

As an elected representative you represent the interests of your community. An elected member is required to:

- represent the interests of the residents and ratepayers
- provide leadership and guidance to the community
- facilitate communication between the council and the community
- promote the overall interests of the council to external stakeholders.



An elected member may be concerned with a wide range of important issues, such as the level of investment in community infrastructure, provision of community services, direction of social change and support for particular political values.

Within this aspect of your role you will be expected to speak on behalf of individuals and organisations in your community and this may include people who didn't vote for you. You won't be able to please all the people all of the time, because you will often need to make decisions taking into account a wider context (and this may not please everyone in your community).

What is important is that elected members attempt to understand the needs and demands of people in the community and explain to them the reasons for a decision.

Political accountability

Elected members are accountable to their communities for the decisions they make and the way in which they make them. Communities exercise rights through the triennial election as well as by participating in consultation opportunities as required by law. Parliamentary officers, such as the Ombudsman, ensure that councils operate in an open and transparent manner.

Leadership

Elected members are expected to show a level of leadership if their communities are to be successful and meet and survive challenges. The Local Government Act 2002 requires that councils identify community outcomes. Elected members will need to exercise leadership to work with other agencies in order to achieve their community's outcomes.

Being an effective leader requires effective communication skills. Elected members need to communicate their vision to fellow elected members and gain their support.

Elected members will also show leadership through the adoption and implementation of the council's annual plan which identifies the council's proposed activities for the year, the annual report which provides accountability to the community, and by ensuring the chief executive implements council's policies and strategies.

Finding a balance

Generally elected members hold particular views on certain issues and often campaign on them. It is these views that are endorsed by the community at election time. However, after the election, elected members are required to recognise and consider the views of all residents and ratepayers when they make



decisions. In making decisions they must have an open mind with no bias.

Elected members must find a balance between the mandate provided by their electors and the need to make decisions on behalf of the whole community and future generations.

Day-to-day life

Life as an elected member is largely dictated by the frequency of, and preparation for, meetings. At times the sheer volume of business papers can seem daunting.

Although the time required attending meetings may only occupy a few hours there are always informal duties such as interviewing constituents, talking to the media, attending functions and speaking engagements, as well as managing the rest of your life.

It is essential that people in the community have an opportunity to contribute their views and ideas. Elected members are expected to be accessible and will spend a lot of time meeting with representatives of the community. Even more time will be spent reading and responding to correspondence from community representatives. Some of the work may impact on an elected member's personal or family life, such as phone calls at all hours, meetings after hours and if a member has children, they could be teased at school etc.

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How much does an elected member get paid?

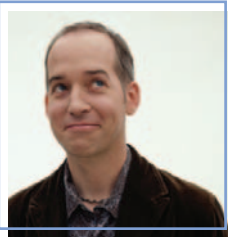
Elected members are paid in two ways. Depending on the council, payment will be by a salary or a part salary plus meeting allowances. Salaries and allowances vary depending on the size of each council. The Remuneration Authority determines remuneration levels for each council and approves each council's approach to reimbursing elected members. Some expenses, such as mileage, are also paid.

Community board members receive a salary and do not receive meeting allowances. However, they may receive mileage reimbursement and other expenses as determined by the council with approval from the Remuneration Authority.

How much time is involved in being an elected member?

The time commitments vary markedly depending on the position you are elected to. Many mayors find that the commitment is a fulltime one. Most councils have monthly meeting cycles, but elected members are usually placed on one or more council committees. The amount of time per week that an elected member spends on council duties will depend on the number of responsibilities they have in their role and the size of the council.

The work of community board members will also vary according to the size of the board, the amount of consultation required for decision-making with the community, and the number meetings and delegated responsibilities they have.



What skills and qualities will I need?

Skills

The following are some of the skills you need to be an effective elected member.

Time management

The most important resource you have is your time. Being an elected member is a busy enough job in itself, let alone if you are also involved in other projects and trying to find time for family and friends.

Don't let paperwork and emails spiral out of control. Learn to prioritise. You should use your time to reflect your priorities. If you can manage your time effectively you may have more time to catch up on reading and policy issues.

Listening

Listening is hard work and the least valued of all skills, yet it's the most important.

Listen to what people say and watch the way they say it, people will give out all sorts of information by what they do and don't say.

Relationship building

Building productive relationships with others is a critical skill. Be pragmatic and strategic about networking. Think in advance about the kinds of people you want to work with. They may have skills you don't have or they may have access to people or information that will be useful. Everyone can benefit from networking.

Good networking means building working relationships with all types of people. Try and understand other people's points of view. Listen with respect, be polite and courteous.

Influencing and negotiating

Successful local government politics is increasingly due to successful negotiating and influencing behind the scenes. To get things done you need to win hearts and minds and winning over people relies on selling your ideas.

Media skills

Being an elected member is a public role and it is likely you will need to work with the media at some stage. Working with the media will require good preparation and it can be quite time-consuming. However, think of the media as an opportunity to put your point of view across.





Councillors should work hard to promote issues or actions that they believe are right for the public good

Qualities

In January 2001, the Local Government Commissioner for Rodney prepared a Code of Governance based on best practice. The following code is based on commonly accepted values and statutory obligations of councillors. This is a good set of values for all elected members.

Faithful

Councillors must act in the interests of the community within their powers. Councillors should always promote the integrity of the council's decision-making process and should not take part in any activity that conflicts with their governance duties.

Impartial

Councillors must listen carefully to advice and weigh up the pros and cons before making recommendations or decisions. Councillors need to take into account the interests of the whole community rather than one small group.

Just

Councillors must make sure that everyone and all groups get a 'fair go'.

Prudent

Available resources often don't meet the expectations of the community. Existing resources must be managed prudently and councillors should consider sustainability when making decisions.

Responsible

Councillors should work hard to promote issues or actions that they believe are right for the public good.

Efficient

Councillors have an obligation to perform duties to the best of their ability.

Open

Councillors should be proactive in giving out information about council decisions and activities.

Representative

Councillors need to establish a balance between acting on the wishes of individuals and groups and their own view of what is best for the whole community.

Temperate

In debate, councillors should argue the issue under discussion rather than attack the competence or ethics of the opposition.

Sincere

A councillor's words and actions should be a sincere representation of their purpose so as to maintain the public trust in the integrity of the democratic process.



How do I put my nomination in?

If you are interested in standing for election you need to meet the following requirements and complete the nomination process.

What are the requirements?

To be eligible to stand for election you do not need any special qualifications. You must be a New Zealand citizen and enrolled on the parliamentary electoral roll (anywhere in New Zealand) and have lived at your current address for at least one month. You do not need to live in the area you want to stand for election in.

You can stand for any of the following:

- your local council (mayor, councillor, community board member)
- your regional council
- your local district health board.

Combinations allowed

You can stand for your local council (including a community board) and for a district health board at the same time. Or you can stand for regional council and a district health board at the same time.

The law prevents you from standing for both a regional council and a local council, or a regional council and a community board

position at the same election. However, you can stand for election for both a local council and a community board at the same time but if you are elected to both you must vacate your position on the community board. You can also stand for a district health board and a regional council or a local council (including a community board) and a district health board.

And, if you wish, you can stand for mayor and for council. If you are elected as mayor the position of councillor is filled by the next highest polling candidate.

You cannot stand for election in more than one ward, if the council elects its members under the ward system. If the council elects some of its members under the ward system and some under the at-large system you cannot stand as both a ward candidate and an at-large candidate.

You may stand for election if you are an employee of a council. However, if you are elected to a councillor position on the local authority for which you work, you must resign your position as an employee of that local authority before taking up your position as an elected member.

If you are employed you may need to talk to your employer about your intentions to stand for election. In some instances you may need to take leave from work while you campaign.



What is the process for nomination?

You will need two people to nominate you (on the official nomination form) and send your completed form to the Electoral Officer for your local council. You must consent to your nomination going forward (by signing the nomination form) but you cannot nominate yourself. The people who nominate you must be over 18 years old and enrolled to vote in the area you wish to stand in. When you send in the nomination form you will need to pay a \$200 (incl GST) deposit.

The deposit may be refunded depending on how many votes you receive in the election and the particular type of election. The deposit is refunded if the number of votes you receive is greater than 25 per cent of the lowest successful candidate for that particular election (for First Past the Post elections) or greater than 25 per cent of the final quota as determined in the last iteration (for Single Transferable Vote elections).

When you submit your nomination forms you can also provide the electoral officer with a recent photograph of yourself and a 150 word profile statement. These will be published in a booklet and sent out with the

voting documents. After that, all you need to do is convince people to vote for you. It's over to you to campaign in the community.

Nominations open on Friday 27 July 2007 and close at noon on 24 August 2007.

Nomination forms will be available from your local council's electoral office. Your council will also be able to provide you with detailed candidate information booklets from late June when they are available.

Will a criminal conviction affect my being an elected member?

A criminal conviction will not usually affect your nomination. The only exception to this is that people currently serving a prison term of three years or more cannot stand.

If you are elected and subsequently convicted of an offence punishable by imprisonment for two years or more, you automatically lose office. However, if you are planning to stand for a district health board position, there are additional restrictions (see clause 17, schedule 2, New Zealand Public Health & Disability Act 2000).

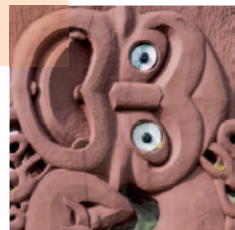
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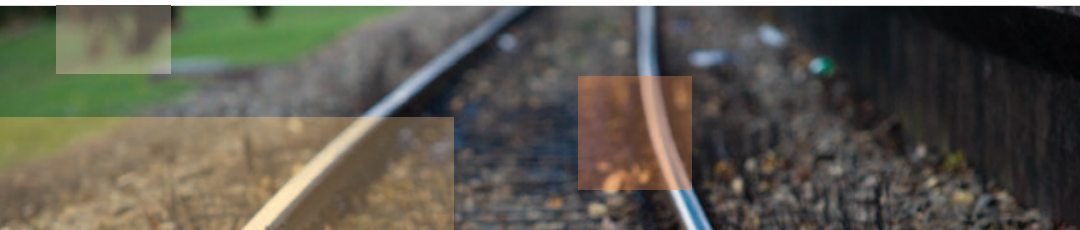
How does the election process work?



The local government elections will be conducted under the provisions of the Local Electoral Act 2001, the Local Electoral Regulations 2001, the Local Government Act 2002, the New Zealand Public Health & Disability Act 2000 and their amendments. Most local government elections are conducted using the 'First Past the Post' system (FPP) so the candidate with the highest number of votes wins. This year eight councils, in addition to all 21 district health boards, will use the Single Transferable Vote system (STV).

Elections for all local body authorities throughout New Zealand are held every three years and are all conducted by postal vote. This year, Election Day will be Saturday 13 October 2007 and all votes have to be received by 12 noon on this date.





Your council will have an electoral officer to run the election. This person is usually a council employee, although some councils employ contractors to conduct their elections. Existing councillors, elected members and anyone standing for election cannot be an electoral officer.

Voting documents will be sent to all eligible voters by post from Friday 21 September 2007. Voters will have three weeks to complete and return their voting forms. Completed voting documents must be returned to the electoral officer by 12 noon on Saturday 13 October 2007.

A polling place for the issuing of special voting papers and for the receiving of completed voting papers will be available from Friday 21 September 2007 to 12 noon Saturday 13 October 2007. Contact your local council for information on local polling places.

Election results will be announced by the electoral officer as soon as practicable after voting closes. The electoral officer will also write to all candidates once the final election result is known. The term of office is for three years.

Successful elected members take up office on the day after the official declaration is publicly notified. However, before they can make any decisions, elected members must swear an oath of office. The oath for councillors and the mayor is made at the first meeting of the new council and the oath for community board members, at the first meeting of the community board. This meeting is usually held within two weeks of the official declaration of election results.

**This year, Election
Day will be Saturday
13 October 2007**



How can I find out more?

Ashburton District Council
www.ashburtondc.govt.nz

Auckland City Council
www.aucklandcity.govt.nz

Auckland Regional Council
www.arc.govt.nz

Buller District Council
www.bullerdc.govt.nz

Carterton District Council
www.cartertondc.co.nz

Central Hawkes Bay
District Council
www.chbdc.govt.nz

Central Otago
District Council
www.codc.govt.nz

Chatham Islands
District Council
www.cic.govt.nz

Christchurch City Council
www.ccc.govt.nz

Clutha District Council
www.cluthadc.govt.nz

Dunedin City Council
www.cityofdunedin.com

Environment Bay of Plenty
www.ebop.govt.nz

Environment Canterbury
www.ecan.govt.nz

Environment Southland
www.envirosouth.govt.nz

Environment Waikato
www.ew.govt.nz

Far North District Council
www.fndc.govt.nz

Franklin District Council
www.franklin.govt.nz

If you would like further information about your council, you might want to look at its current Annual Plan or its Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) which will show what the council is doing and will generally include other useful information such as names and contact details of elected members and senior staff. The latest Annual Report will contain information on the finances of council and how the council performed. Your local library should have copies of these documents, or you can get copies from your council.

If you would like more information on the STV or FPP voting systems please contact the Department of Internal Affairs or visit their website www.dia.govt.nz.

For more detailed information on material in this booklet please contact your local council.

Gisborne District Council
www.gdc.govt.nz

Gore District Council
www.goredc.govt.nz

Greater Wellington Council
www.gw.govt.nz

Grey District Council
www.greydc.govt.nz

Hamilton City Council
www.hamilton.co.nz

Hastings District Council
www.hastingsdc.govt.nz

Hauraki District Council
www.hauraki-dc.govt.nz

Hawkes Bay Regional Council
www.hbrc.govt.nz

Horizons Regional Council
www.horizons.govt.nz

Horowhenua District Council
www.horowhenua.govt.nz

Hurunui District Council
www.hurunui.govt.nz

Hutt City Council
www.huttcity.info

Invercargill City Council
www.icc.govt.nz

Kaikoura District Council
www.kaikoura.govt.nz

Kaipara District Council
www.kaipara.govt.nz

Kapiti Coast District Council
www.kapiticoast.govt.nz

Kawerau District Council
www.kaweraudc.govt.nz

Mackenzie District Council
www.mackenzie.govt.nz

Manawatu District Council
www.manawatu.govt.nz

Manukau City Council
www.manukau.govt.nz



Marlborough District Council
www.marlborough.govt.nz

Masterton District Council
www.mstn.govt.nz

Matamata-Piako District Council
www.mppdc.govt.nz

Napier City Council
www.napier.govt.nz

Nelson City Council
www.ncc.govt.nz

New Plymouth District Council
www.newplymouthnz.com

North Shore City Council
www.northshorecity.govt.nz

Northland Regional Council
www.nrc.govt.nz

Opotiki District Council
www.odc.govt.nz

Otago Regional Council
www.orc.govt.nz

Otorohanga District Council
www.otodc.govt.nz

Palmerston North City Council
www.pncc.govt.nz

Papakura District Council
www.pdc.govt.nz

Porirua City Council
www.pcc.govt.nz

Queenstown Lakes District Council
www.qldc.govt.nz

Rangitikei District Council
www.rangitikei.com

Rodney District Council
www.rodney.govt.nz

Rotorua District Council
www.rdc.govt.nz

Ruapehu District Council
www.ruapehudc.govt.nz

Selwyn District Council
www.selwyn.govt.nz

South Taranaki District Council
www.stdc.co.nz

South Waikato District Council
www.swktodc.govt.nz

South Wairarapa District Council
www.swdc.govt.nz

Southland District Council
www.southlanddc.govt.nz

Stratford District Council
www.stratford.govt.nz

Taranaki Regional Council
www.trc.govt.nz

Tararua District Council
www.tararuadc.govt.nz

Tasman District Council
www.tdc.govt.nz

Taupo District Council
www.taupodc.govt.nz

Tauranga City Council
www.tauranga.govt.nz

Thames-Coromandel District Council
www.tcdc.govt.nz

Timaru District Council
www.timaru.govt.nz

Upper Hutt City Council
www.uhcc.govt.nz

Waikato District Council
www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz

Waimakariri District Council
www.wmk.govt.nz

Waimate District Council
www.waimatedc.govt.nz

Waipa District Council
www.waipadcc.govt.nz

Wairoa District Council
www.wairoadc.govt.nz

Waitakere City Council
www.waitakere.govt.nz

Waitaki District Council
www.waitaki.govt.nz

Waitomo District Council
www.waitomo.govt.nz

Wanganui District Council
www.wanganui.govt.nz

Wellington City Council
www.wellington.govt.nz

West Coast Regional Council
www.wcrc.govt.nz

Western Bay of Plenty District Council
www.wbopdc.govt.nz

Westland District Council
www.westland.govt.nz

Whakatane District Council
www.whakatane-dc.govt.nz

Whangarei District Council
www.wdc.govt.nz

This booklet has been prepared by Local Government New Zealand for the 2007 local elections.



Local Government New Zealand
te pūtahi matakokiri

