

8. LOCAL ELECTORAL ACT REVIEW SEMINAR: COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATION

RR 10682

Officer responsible Returning Officer	Author Max Robertson
Corporate Plan Output: Public Accountability: Elections	

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for Councillor representation at a one day Local Electoral Act review seminar to be held in Wellington on Friday 29 October 1999.

BACKGROUND

Following the 1998 elections, the Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM) formed a working party to review the Local Elections and Polls Act 1976, which is now badly out of date. The Christchurch City Returning Officer is a member of this working party, which has made significant progress in the drafting of new legislation designed to rectify the present deficiencies and anomalies. Both Labour and National have recently indicated their support for new legislation. Labour has also stated that if elected it will investigate and legislate for a wider range of voting systems, including the STV option.

PROPOSED LOCAL ELECTORAL ACT REVIEW SEMINAR

To allow it to obtain political input before proceeding further with the drafting of the legislation, SOLGM has now arranged a one day local Electoral Act review seminar to be held in Wellington on Friday 29 October 1999. Key speakers will include well known political scientists, and several significant issues will be addressed, including:

- Term (should three year term be retained, or a longer term introduced)
- Boundaries
- Need for special provision for Maori representation
- Qualifications for electors
- Qualifications for candidates
- Eligibility to be elected to several positions (e.g. Council and Community Board)
- Methods of voting
- Provisions for death/incapacity of candidates during the election period
- Deposits by candidates
- Circulation of candidate profiles with/at the same time as voting papers
- Imposition of limits on campaign expenditure

ESTIMATED COSTS

Including registration fees and return airfares, the costs of attending the seminar are estimated at approximately \$600 per delegate. To give a representative range of views, it would in my view be advisable for two or possibly three Christchurch City Councillors to attend.

It was requested that staff report back to the Committee on the key outcomes of the seminar.

Recommendation: That Councillors Close, Sheriff and Stewart represent the Council at the seminar to be held in Wellington on Friday 29 October.