

REPORT OF THE ELECTORAL OFFICER

1. TRIENNIAL ELECTIONS - 13 OCTOBER 2007

1. SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

The following candidates were declared elected at the 2007 Christchurch City elections:

MAYOR PARKER, Bob (Independent)

COUNCILLORS

Banks Peninsula Ward REID, Claudia (Working for Us – Independent)

Burwood/Pegasus Ward SHERIFF, Gail (Independent)
WILLIAMS, Chrissie (Christchurch 2021)

Fendalton/Waimairi Ward BUCK, Sally (Experienced, Enthusiastic, Energetic Independent)
WALL, Mike (Independent Citizens)

Hagley/Ferrymead Ward COX, David (Independent)
JOHANSON, Yani (Christchurch 2021)

Riccarton/Wigram Ward BROUGHTON, Helen (Independent Citizens)
SHEARING, Bob (Independent Citizens)

Shirley/Papanui Ward WITHERS, Norm (Independent)
BUTTON, Ngaire (Independent Citizens)

Spreydon/Heathcote Ward WELLS, Sue (Independent)
CORBETT, Barry (Independent)

COMMUNITY BOARDS**Akaroa/Wairewa****(Akaroa Subdivision):**

RICHARDSON, Pam (Independent) } Elected
RYDER, Eric (Independent) } unopposed

(Wairewa Subdivision):

MILLER, Stewart (Independent)
MORGAN, Bryan (Independent)

Burwood/Pegasus

LOMAX, Tina (Christchurch 2021)
EAST, David (Independent)
DIXON, Nigel (Independent)
SINTES, Tim (Independent)
STEWART, Linda (Independent)

Fendalton/Waimairi

CARTER, Val (Independent Citizens)
GOUGH, Jamie (Independent Citizens)
COLLEY, Cheryl (Independent Citizens)
YOON, Andrew (Independent Citizens)
BURKE, Faimeh (Christchurch 2021)

Hagley/Ferrymead

TODD, Bob (Christchurch 2021)
CARTER, Tim Maurice Philip (Independent)
CAMERON, Rod (Independent for Common Sense)
LOWE-JOHNSON, Brenda (Christchurch 2021)
FREEMAN, John (Independent)

Lyttelton/Mount Herbert

KOTTIER, Dawn Te-Riaki (Community – First)
AGAR, Jeremy (Independent)
JOLLIFFE, Ann (Independent)
COUCH, Douglas Falcon Herewini (Independent)
SMITH, Paula (Independent)

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Riccarton/Wigram	LALOLI, Peter (Independent Citizens) MORA, Mike (Christchurch 2021) KIRK, Judy (Christchurch 2021) CHEN, Jimmy (Christchurch 2021) DUNN, Beth (Independent Citizens)
Shirley/Papanui	EVANS, Megan (Independent) KEOWN, Aaron (Christchurch City Vision) PALMER, Yvonne (Independent) MORRIS, Matt (Christchurch 2021) COTTER, Pauline (Christchurch 2021)
Spreydon/Heathcote	CLEARWATER, Phil (Christchurch 2021) MENE, Chris (Christchurch 2021) ALPERS, Oscar (Christchurch 2021) SCANDRETT, Tim (Independent) POTTER, Karolin (Christchurch 2021)

2. **EXTRAORDINARY VACANCY – AKAROA/WAIREWA COMMUNITY BOARD**

As only two nominations were received for the three positions to be filled, Pam Richardson and Eric Ryder were declared elected as Akaroa members of the Akaroa-Wairewa Community Board, with effect from polling day.

Nominations will be called shortly for the resulting extraordinary vacancy. If more than one nomination is received, an election will be held in February 2008.

3. **ELECTORAL ROLLS**3.1 **Residential Electors**

The residential electoral rolls used for local authority elections are drawn from the Parliamentary rolls, utilising data supplied to each local authority by the Electoral Enrolment Centre in Wellington. The Electoral Enrolment Centre undertook a national campaign earlier this year to ensure that the rolls were as up to date as possible for the local body elections, sending individual letters to each elector to ensure that their details were correct, and encouraging the enrolment of other persons not previously enrolled.

As at 24 August 2007 (when the roll closed) the number of residential electors enrolled in each ward was:

Banks Peninsula Ward	-	7,047
Burwood/Pegasus Ward	-	41,473
Fendalton/Waimairi Ward	-	39,058
Hagley/Ferrymead Ward	-	38,330
Riccarton/Wigram Ward	-	42,812
Shirley/Papanui Ward	-	42,926
Spreydon/Heathcote Ward	-	39,527
		<u>251,173</u>

This represents an increase of 15,471 in the number of electors on the residential electors' roll for the 2004 elections.

3.2 **Ratepayer Electors**

The franchise also extends to:

- persons owning property in the city, but residing elsewhere;
- corporate bodies (who are entitled to appoint a "nominal occupier");
- persons living within the city who own other city property in other communities elsewhere to their place of residence (electors in this category being entitled to claim additional Community Board votes only).

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Persons and organisations in this category are not automatically sent voting documents. Instead, they must make application for enrolment. 877 persons were enrolled as non-resident ratepayer electors for this year's elections.

4. **INFORMAL VOTES/BLANK VOTES**

In some cases, votes cannot be counted because:

1. The voter's intention is unclear (classed as informal votes); or
2. The voter has left the issue completely blank.

Separate records were kept of votes which fell into either of the two foregoing categories. These statistics disclose that (with the exception of the Canterbury District Health Board) there were few truly informal votes.

In all cases, votes were allowed where the voter's intention was clear, notwithstanding that they had marked the voting document in a way which was different to that prescribed.

However, it was necessary to disallow District Health Board votes where the voter had voted using ticks, instead of ranking their preferred candidates by number.

5. **PROCESSING OF VOTING DOCUMENTS ON RECEIPT**

I would like to thank the Council for again allowing me to utilise the provisions of the Local Electoral Act 2001 permitting the processing of the voting documents throughout the voting period. As well as providing considerable logistical advantages, it will result in substantial financial savings.

6. **ROLL SCRUTINY, PRELIMINARY COUNT AND OFFICIAL COUNT**

This year, I again engaged an independent election services provider (electionz.com) to undertake the following processes:

6.1 **Roll Scrutiny**

This process involves marking electors' names off the roll as the voting documents are returned, to ensure that no elector votes more than once (this could occur through, for instance, an elector exercising an ordinary vote and then also exercising a special vote). This part of the election process is carried out electronically, by "reading" the bar code shown on the returned voting document. This is done through the window of the return envelope, and the envelopes are not opened nor the voting documents extracted until after the roll scrutiny has been completed.

6.2 **Preliminary and Official Counts**

After the return envelopes had been put through the roll scrutiny process, they were then opened and the voting documents extracted. The votes cast were then recorded electronically.

A progress result (which included approximately 98% of the votes) was released at 12.54pm on election day, with the final preliminary result being released at 11.43am on the Sunday. The declaration of the results of the official count was published on Monday 22 October 2007.

All the candidates who were successful in the preliminary count were declared elected as a result of the official count.

7. **SPECIAL VOTERS**

Special voting documents and accompanying special voting declarations were issued to 1,361 persons. Of these, 859 were completed and returned prior to the close of the voting period, with 710 being subsequently allowed and included in the official count.

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8. **CHRISTCHURCH CITY VOTING STATISTICS**

	1989	1992	1995	1998	2001	2004	2007
Electors on Rolls	200,915	208,533	215,621	223,832	227,793	235,930	252,050
Voters	121,680	105,982	107,450	116,511	110,068	91,027	102,495
Percentage Voted	60.56%	50.82%	49.83%	52.05%	48.32%	38.6%	40.81%

The percentage of electors returning voting documents again varied between wards, with a low of 37.02% being recorded in the Hagley/Ferrymead Ward, compared with a high of 54.53% in the Banks Peninsula Ward.

Many Councils experienced a dramatic reduction in voter participation. Declining voter participation in national, state and local elections is a world-wide trend. The reasons for the reduced participation in New Zealand local government elections will be closely examined by (inter alia) Local Government New Zealand and the Justice and Electoral Select Committee. However, there are some points which I think are worth making:

- Claims that a return to booth voting would increase turnout are fallacious. This is illustrated by the Hutt City Council's decision to revert to booth voting for the 1992 Hutt City elections, where the turnout was 26%, a reduction of more than **20%** in the turnout at the previous elections in 1989.
- Extensive national and local advertising was arranged through a variety of media, encouraging people to enrol and to vote for this year's elections.
- Research commissioned following previous elections disclosed that young electors are the least likely to vote. A campaign targeting young voters was therefore put in place for this year's Christchurch elections, funded from the election budget.

It has also been claimed in some quarters that the use of two voting systems on the one voting document contributed to the low turnout.

9. **COSTS**

As many charges are not yet to hand, it will be some time yet before the final cost of the elections is known. At this stage, I expect the nett cost to the City Council to be well within the budget provision of \$549,806.

10. **CONCLUSION**

This year's elections will be closely scrutinised by a variety of agencies, including the Local Government Commission, the Department of Internal Affairs and Local Government New Zealand. It is probable that there will be some resulting changes in the relevant legislative provisions and administrative arrangements for future elections.

Max Robertson
ELECTORAL OFFICER
 18 October 2007