



27. 10. 2004

## REPORT OF THE ELECTORAL OFFICER

### 1. TRIENNIAL ELECTIONS - 9 OCTOBER 2004

#### 1. SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

The following candidates were declared elected at the 2004 Christchurch City elections:

**MAYOR** MOORE, Garry (Christchurch 2021 - the Positive Choice)

#### COUNCILLORS

**Burwood/Pegasus Ward** EVANS, Carole (Independent)  
SHERIFF, Gail (Independent)

**Fendalton/Waimairi Ward** HARROW, Pat (Independent Citizens)  
BUCK, Sally (Making it Happen - Independent)

**Hagley/Ferrymead Ward** COX, David (Independent)  
CRIGHTON, Anna (Labour for Christchurch 2021)

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

**Shirley/Papanui Ward** WITHERS, Norm (Independent)  
CONDON, Graham (Independent)

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

#### COMMUNITY BOARDS

**Burwood/Pegasus Ward** ROWLANDS, Don (Labour for Christchurch 2021)  
BURT, Glenda (Independent)  
HAMMOND, Carmen (Independent)  
KELLAWAY, Caroline (Labour for Christchurch 2021)  
LOMAX, Tina (Labour for Christchurch 2021)

**Fendalton/Waimairi Ward** WALL, Mike (Independent Citizens)  
CARTER, Val (Independent Citizens)  
COLLEY, Cheryl (Independent Citizens)  
YOON, Andrew (Independent Citizens)  
BURKE, Faimeh (Christchurch 2021)

**Hagley/Ferrymead Ward** TODD, Bob (Labour for Christchurch 2021)  
JOHANSON, Yani (Labour for Christchurch 2021)  
SMITH, Brendan (Independent)  
FREEMAN, John (Independent)  
LOWE-JOHNSON, Brenda (Labour for Christchurch 2021)

**Riccarton/Wigram Ward** KEAST, Lesley (Labour for Christchurch 2021)  
MORA, Mike (Labour for Christchurch 2021)  
LALOLI, Peter (Independent Citizens)  
BENNETT, Neville (Independent Citizens)  
SUTCLIFFE, Tony (Independent Citizens)

**Shirley/Papanui Ward** EVANS, Megan (Independent)  
PALMER, Yvonne (Independent)  
BUTTON, Ngaire (Independent Citizens)  
BUSH, Bill (Independent)  
BARRY, Myra (Christchurch 2021)

**Spreydon/Heathcote Ward** MENE, Chris (Progressive for Christchurch 2021)  
CLEARWATER, Phil (Progressive for Christchurch 2021)  
ALPERS, Oscar (Christchurch 2021)  
DE SPA, Paul (Independent)  
WOODS, Megan (Progressive for Christchurch 2021)

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2. **VACANCIES AND CANDIDATES**

Attached as Appendix A is my official declaration showing the number of votes received by each candidate.

Elections were also held for the following issues:

**Canterbury Regional Council (ECan)**

Election of eight Christchurch City members, with two members being elected within each of the following Christchurch constituencies:

Christchurch North	Christchurch South
Christchurch East	Christchurch West

**Canterbury District Health Board**

Election of seven members of the Canterbury District Health Board, elected at large across the entire area covered by the CDHB.

This year's Christchurch City elections proved to be the second largest in New Zealand, as the following statistics show:

	<b>Christchurch</b>	<b>Auckland</b>
Number of residential and ratepayer electors on roll	235,930	269,441
Number of voting documents returned	91,567	130,098
Percentage of residential and ratepayer electors who voted	38.8%	48.3%

3. **CANDIDATE ELECTED TO BOTH COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY BOARD**

Bob Shearing was elected both as a Councillor and as a member of the Riccarton/Wigram Community Board. Under Section 88A of the Local Electoral Act, Mr Shearing automatically vacated his position as a member of the Board in favour of the next highest polling candidate, being Mr Tony Sutcliffe.

4. **ELECTORAL ROLLS**4.1 **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.

This year, for the first time, the EEC also created a "dormant" file containing the names of those electors whose enrolment confirmation envelopes had been returned marked "gone no address". This resulted in a substantial reduction in the number of voting envelopes which were returned unused.

As at 20 August 2004 (when the roll closed) the number of residential electors enrolled in each ward was:

Burwood/Pegasus Ward	-	39,066
Fendalton/Waimairi Ward	-	38,808
Hagley/Ferrymead Ward	-	37,485
Riccarton/Wigram Ward	-	40,289
Shirley/Papanui Ward	-	41,036
Spreydon/Heathcote Ward	-	39,018
		<u>235,702</u>

This represents an increase of 7,909 in the number of electors on the residential electors' roll for the 2001 elections.

A total of 91,383 (or 38.7%) of residential electors voted.

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4.2 **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).

Persons and organisations in this category are not automatically sent voting documents. Instead, they must make application for enrolment on the ratepayer electoral roll. Only 228 persons were enrolled as ratepayer electors for this year's elections. Of these, 184 electors (or 81%) voted.

5. **INFORMAL VOTES/BLANK VOTES**

In previous elections, a vote was deemed to be informal if:

1. The voter's intention was unclear.
2. The voter had left the issue completely blank.

This year, for the first time, 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 very 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.

6. **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 also result in substantial financial savings.

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

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

7.1 **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.

7.2 **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 and assembled in batches. The votes cast within that batch were then scanned and recorded electronically.

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The preliminary election results were released at 9.12pm on election day. The official count was finished on Sunday 17 October, with the declaration of the results of the official count being published on Wednesday 20 October 2004.

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

8. **SPECIAL VOTERS**

Special voting documents and accompanying special voting declarations were issued to 805 persons. Of these, 558 were completed and returned prior to the close of the voting period, with 479 being subsequently allowed and included in the official count.

9. **CHRISTCHURCH CITY VOTING STATISTICS**

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

The percentage of electors returning voting documents again varied between wards, with a low of 37.12% being recorded in the Shirley/Papanui Ward, compared with a high of 40.57% in the Fendalton/Waimairi Ward.

Christchurch City was not alone in experiencing a dramatic reduction in voter participation. With the exception of a few areas, this pattern was repeated nationally. Declining voter participation in national, state and local elections is a world-wide trend. The reasons for the dramatically reduced participation in this year's 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 several points which I think are worth making:

- One of the main factors encouraging greater participation is a hard fought mayoral election (eg Auckland City was one of the few metropolitan areas which experienced an increase in participation, ie 48.3% in 2004, compared with 42.8% in 2001).
- Claims that a return to booth voting would increase turnout are fallacious. This is starkly 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. In addition, I made arrangements for persons who had not received voting documents (because they were not on the roll) to request a special vote via a text message, using their cell phones. It was hoped that this latter measure would encourage the participation of young persons, as research has indicated that they are the group least likely to vote.

It has also been claimed in some quarters that STV voting, the use of two voting systems on the one voting document and the random listing of candidates' names on the voting documents were all factors contributing to the low turnout.

10. **COMPLAINTS**

Two formal complaints were lodged by candidates, affecting three other candidates. As required by the Act, these complaints were passed on to the police for investigation.

From what I hear from other Electoral Officers, nearly all other councils experienced greater difficulties than usual in enforcing their rules regarding the erection of signs and hoardings. Because each council has its own rules in this regard, consideration is currently being given to the possible introduction of national guidelines for the erection of signs and hoardings in future parliamentary and local body elections.

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11. **CANTERBURY DISTRICT HEALTH BOARD ELECTION**

Councillors will be aware that those Council and District Health Board Electoral Officers who engaged electionz.com as their election services provider encountered major and unexpected difficulties in obtaining the results of the STV elections. These difficulties were largely attributable to a software fault involving Datamail Ltd, a subcontractor engaged by electionz.com.

The results for the Canterbury District Health Board election were still awaited at the time of writing this report.

It should be emphasised that these difficulties relate to only a small part of the overall election process - the electoral processes worked smoothly for all FPP elections and all STV elections, other than those with which electionz.com and Datamail were involved. The processes utilised by these two companies are being scrutinised by independent auditors KPMG (on behalf of Datamail) and by the Office of the Auditor-General (on behalf of the affected local authorities and district health boards) to provide assurance that the results which finally emerge are sound, and that the process has had integrity. The delays which have been encountered do not involve a failure of the legislation, the electoral system, local authorities, electoral officers, or the use of STV. They are simply performance issues relating to two particular companies contracted to undertake parts of the election process on behalf of local authority electoral officers.

12. **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 \$573,319.

13. **MISCELLANEOUS**

13.1 **Lodging of Nominations, Deposits, Candidate Profile Statements and Photographs**

Formerly, candidates were required to lodge their deposit, nomination form, profile statement and photograph with the Electoral Officer at the one time. However, this year the legislation was changed to allow these to be provided/lodged at different times, as long as they were all lodged prior to the close of nominations. One of the reasons for this change was a perception that some candidates deliberately withheld submitting their nominations until the last minute, to avoid giving their opponents a sneak preview of their candidate profile statements. In the event, nearly all nominations were again this year received in a last minute rush over the last two days of the nomination period. The ability to submit different elements of the nomination at different times caused some logistical difficulties for both me and some of the candidates, and I will be supporting any moves to revert to the former situation where all the components of the nomination are required to be submitted at the one time.

Some difficulties were also experienced with some candidates falsely declaring that their photographs were recent, when in fact some were many years out of date. To overcome this, I propose making arrangements at subsequent elections for all candidates to have their photographs taken by a photographer engaged by the Electoral Officer.

13.2 **Candidate Deposit/Electoral Expenses**

This year, candidates' deposits cannot be refunded until they have submitted their returns of electoral expenses and donations. All candidates have been reminded of the need to submit their returns by no later than Tuesday 14 December 2004.

14. **CONCLUSION**

As previously noted, this year's elections will be closely scrutinised by (inter alia) Local Government New Zealand, the Department of Internal Affairs and the Justice and Electoral Select Committee. It is probable that there will be some resulting changes in the relevant legislative provisions and administrative arrangements for future elections.