

31. EARLY PROCESSING AND ORDERING OF CANDIDATES' NAMES ON VOTING DOCUMENTS: ELECTION OF ONE AKAROA MEMBER OF THE AKAROA/WAIREWA COMMUNITY BOARD



General Manager responsible:	General Manager Regulation and Democracy Services, DDI 941-8462
Officer responsible:	Democracy Services Manager
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the early processing of the returned voting documents used on Thursday 10 February 2011 to elect one member of the Akaroa/Wairewa Community Board. A decision is also sought as to the order in which the candidates' names are to be shown on the voting documents used at that election.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Early Processing

2. Section 79 of the Local Electoral Act 2001 permits a local authority to process (but not count) returned voting documents over the voting period.
3. Early processing of voting documents was introduced for the 1998 Christchurch City elections (but restricted to the 84 hours before the close of voting) and was used very successfully throughout the country. Because of the success of early processing in 1998 and the benefits which early processing provides, the early processing period was subsequently increased to the entire three week voting period now provided under the current legislation. The immediate benefit of adopting early processing is that much, if not all, of the cumbersome and time-consuming task of extracting and checking the voting documents is undertaken progressively over the three week voting period (under strict security and under the supervision of a Justice of the Peace). This means a quicker and more accurate result can be achieved on polling day.

Order of Candidates' Names on Voting Documents

4. Clause 31(1) of the Local Electoral Regulations 2001 allows the Council to decide whether the names are to be arranged on the voting documents in alphabetical order of surname, pseudo-random order or random order. In the absence of any Council resolution approving another arrangement, the candidates' names must be arranged in alphabetical order of surname.

5. The features of each arrangement are described below:

(a) **Arrangement 1 - Alphabetical Order of Surname**

This is the order which was used for all local authority elections prior to 2004, and is self-explanatory.

(b) **Arrangement 2 - Pseudo-Random Order***

Under this arrangement, the candidates' names for each issue are placed in a hat (or similar receptacle) mixed together, and then drawn out of the receptacle, with the candidates' names being placed on all voting documents for that issue in the order in which they are drawn. (*Note: Although the term "pseudo random order" is used in the Local Electoral Regulations to describe this arrangement, this is a somewhat imperfect description, in that the term "pseudo random" is understood by mathematicians and/or information technology specialists to have a different meaning.)

(c) **Arrangement 3 - Random Order**

Under this arrangement, the names of the candidates for each issue are shown in a different order on each and every voting document, utilising software which permits the names of the candidates to be laser printed in a different order on each paper.

2. 12. 2010

31 Cont'd

This is the order which was used for all the issues included in the voting documents used for the 2010 Christchurch City elections, ie:

- Election of Mayor
- Election of Councillors
- Election of Community Board Members
- Election of Canterbury District Health Board Members.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6. The cost of printing the voting documents employing Arrangement 1, Arrangement 2 or Arrangement 3 will be identical. Thus, there will be no additional costs should random order be chosen for any or all of the five issues to be contested.

Do the Recommendations of this Report Align with 2009-19 LTCCP budgets?

7. Yes. The total cost of the by-election will amount to approximately \$20,000. This will be accommodated within the provision for the 2010 Triennial Election included in the 2009-19 LTCCP.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

8. The early processing of the returned voting documents is provided for in section 79 of the Local Electoral Act 2001 and clause 101 of the Local Electoral Regulations 2001.
9. The ability to choose between alphabetical order of surname, pseudo-random order or random order for arranging the candidates' names on the voting documents is provided for in clause 31(1) of the Local Electoral Regulations 2001.
10. The regulations provide that if a local authority has determined that pseudo-random order or random order is to be used, the electoral officer must state, in a public notice required to be given, the date, time and place at which the order of the candidates' names will be arranged. Any person is then entitled to attend while the arrangement is in progress.

Have you considered the legal implications of the issue under consideration?

11. Yes, see paragraphs 9 to 11 above.

ALIGNMENT WITH LTCCP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

13. Yes.

Do the recommendations of this report support a level of service or project in the 2009-19 LTCCP?

14. Yes. Democracy and governance - public participation.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES

15. Not applicable.

CONSULTATION FULFILMENT

16. Not required.

2. 12. 2010

31 Cont'd

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended:

- (a) That the returned voting documents for the election to be held on Thursday 10 February 2010, to elect one Akaroa member of the Akaroa/Wairewa Community Board, be processed during the voting period; such early processing to be undertaken in accordance with section 79 of the Local Electoral Act 2001; the Local Electoral Regulations 2001 and the Society of Local Government Managers' Code of Good Practice for the Management of Local Authority Elections and Polls.
- (b) That the names of the candidates be arranged in random order.