

THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

*Te Tari Taiwhenua*

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## Request for Information

### *Early Processing of Votes*

The recent amendments to the Local Electoral Act 2001 (LEA) included significant changes in relation to electoral officer responsibility for the processing and counting of votes and also in relation to the authorisation of early processing of votes.

We want to ensure that all electoral officers and local authorities are aware of these changes and the need for specific actions.

In particular, early processing needs to be considered by all local authorities including regional councils, district health boards and licensing trusts now.

#### ***Amendments to the Local Electoral Act 2001***

An amendment to section 18 of the LEA removed automatic responsibility for the processing and counting of all local authority votes at a triennial election, from the territorial authority electoral officer. All local authority electoral officers (*including regional council, district health board and licensing trust electoral officers*) are now responsible for these tasks. If the electoral officer does not wish to carry out any of these tasks, he or she must delegate the task to someone else e.g. the appropriate territorial authority electoral officer or other electoral service provider.

A consequential amendment was made to section 79 of the LEA. *All local authorities* may determine, by resolution, whether votes are to be processed during the voting period – i.e. if they are going to process votes early.

#### ***Resolutions Required***

Any local authority, which has not already addressed the question of early processing of votes, should do so now. If no resolution is passed there can be no early processing of votes for that local authority.

As electoral officers, you will appreciate the benefits of a standard approach on the matter of early processing of votes in your area, given the use of combined voting documents in one envelope.

A resolution, if not already passed, will need to be passed as soon as practicable. For those local authorities that have not yet considered making resolutions to undertake the early process of votes, information on the use of early processing of votes in the 2001 local authority elections is attached.

### **Information Requested**

To assist the smooth conduct of the October elections, the Department of Internal Affairs is working closely with SOLGM and the Ministry of Health on this issue.

As a first step we require information on the resolutions passed to date by local authorities in relation to early processing.

The Ministry of Health will be working with all DHBs, in respect of their responsibilities.

Can electoral officers of all other local authorities please respond electronically by **5pm TODAY 12 AUGUST** advising:

- Whether their local authority has passed a resolution in relation to early processing and the decision;
- If their local authority has not passed a resolution, when this will be considered and the recommendation to be put to the local authority.

We would appreciate your support with this.

Rosalind Plimmer  
Manager Local Government Policy