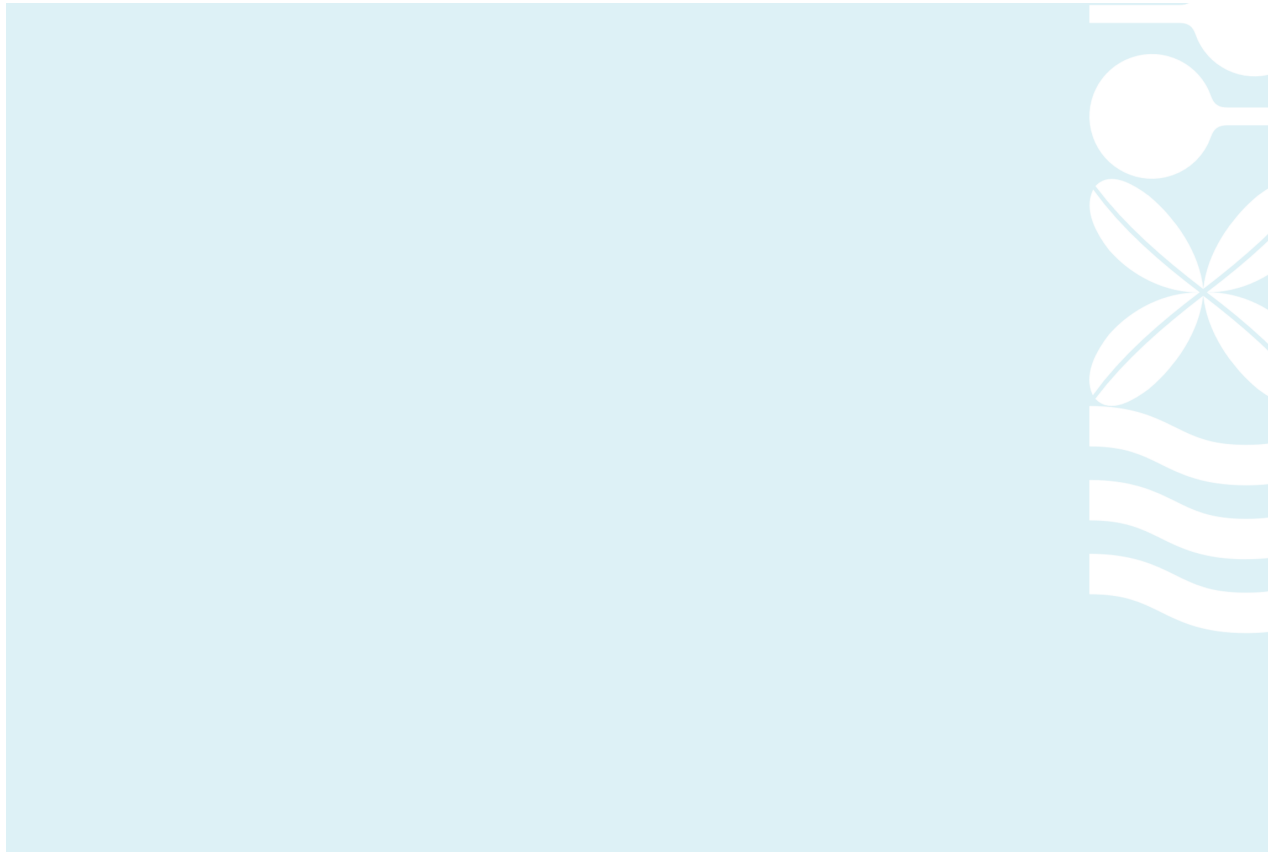


Date: Tuesday 28 May 2024
Time: 10:00am
Meeting Room: Local board office
Venue: 2 Glen Road
Browns Bay

Hibiscus and Bays Local Board
OPEN ATTACHMENTS
ATTACHMENTS UNDER SEPARATE COVER

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LOCAL BOARD SERVICES

E mahi ana mātou i te mahi mō Tāmaki Makaurau

Evaluation of Auckland Council 2022 elections

April 2023

aucklandcouncil.govt.nz



E mahi ana mātou i te mahi mō Tāmaki Makaurau

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Four boards did not provide feedback on this item.

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Albert-Eden Local Board

Resolution number: AE/2023/35

That the Albert-Eden Local Board:

1. provide its feedback, as outlined in resolutions b) – j), regarding the Evaluation of the 2022 Auckland Council Elections.
2. note with concern the low turnout in local body elections and recommends:
 - a. that Auckland Council continue to explore the most effective means of reminding voters throughout the election period to look out for their ballots and return them on time, by targeted as well as broad messages
 - b. that the election period be timed to avoid school and university holidays
 - c. that the Local Electoral Regulations 2001 be amended to allow voters overseas to receive and return their voting documents electronically, as is permitted by clause 45A in the Electoral Regulations 1996
 - d. that the Local Electoral Act 2001 be amended to allow enrolment until the close of voting
 - e. that voting close at 7.00pm on a Saturday, since this is what voters are used to from general elections and some may be caught out by a midday close of voting
 - f. implementation of recommendations for extensive civics education both for school age children and for the community generally so people have both the confidence and the competence to vote
 - g. the Electoral Commission and other agencies should fund impartial, measured coverage of local government decisions noting that the current funding of regional news reporters is already having a beneficial effect in that regard.
3. note that some confusion remains (including among electoral workers) about eligibility for residents on some categories of visa, and recommends further training for electoral workers on eligibility and clear messaging in publicity materials so that all eligible residents are aware they are able to vote.
4. note the success of placing voting boxes at Countdown supermarkets as well as libraries and recommends this initiative continue and be expanded if possible to other supermarket chains.
5. note that there appeared to be more widespread difficulties with voting papers being delivered than in previous local elections, and recommend investigating whether this is indeed increasing, and if so, how it might be addressed.
6. note that postal delays have increased since 2019 and that postal deliveries no longer take place daily, which can lead to delays both for voters receiving voting packs and in returning ballots to the electoral officer, effectively reducing the voting period and meaning that some ballots arrived too late to be counted; and to mitigate this, the board recommends that votes postmarked as having been sent before the close of voting should be accepted and counted if they arrive before the final count is finished.
7. note that requesting a special voting pack by mail is also subject to postal delays, which makes it crucial for electors to be able to obtain a special vote in person until the close of voting, and that

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there were very few places electors could do this (only eight across Auckland, and only one on the isthmus, with most open only during business hours), and the Board recommends:

- a. Providing at least one 'one-stop shop' with weekend and evening hours in each local board area throughout the voting period, where electors can enroll, obtain a special ballot, or seek advice on difficulties such as damaged or missing voting packs
 - b. Establishing and publicising a day on which more pop-up one-stop shops are available across the region
 - c. That these locations be managed similarly to voting booths at general elections, with campaigning and branded party items not allowed within 50 metres
 - d. That staff ensure that ample voting papers are available at one-stop shops, and develop procedures to ensure quick delivery of more papers if they are needed, noting that both in 2019 and in 2022 some voters missed out on casting a special vote because of a shortage of voting papers. The Board notes that the system proposed in Auckland Council's submission (of providing electronic access to staff at special voting centres to print out ballots in case of running out or not having the correct papers for a voter from a different area) is a promising avenue for investigation
 - e. Developing procedures for allowing electors to authorise another person to pick up a special voting pack for them if the elector is unable to (for instance, if they are isolating with Covid).
8. support the introduction of a combination of booth and postal voting with booths set up on voting day to enable people to enroll and vote and support those booths closing at 7.00pm on voting day.
 9. strongly recommend further investigation into giving responsibility for all local government elections to the Electoral Commission.
 10. note that security issues around online voting are at present insurmountable.

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Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board

Resolution number: GBI/2023/26

That the Aotea / Great Barrier Local Board:

1. provide the following feedback on the evaluation of the Auckland Council local elections 2022:
 - a. support a combination of postal and booth voting.
 - b. encourage the introduction of an online voting option.
 - c. advocate for a change to the by-election thresholds that should a newly elected position become vacant prior to the inauguration that the next individual on the list automatically gets the opportunity to take the position.
 - d. advocate for implementation of civic education in schools to encourage future engagement

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Devonport-Takapuna Local Board

Resolution number: DT/2023/44

That the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board:

1. tuhi ā-taipitopito/note the Boards feedback provided at the 7 February 2023 business meeting on the Auckland Council's submission in the Inquiry into the 2022 Local Elections (DT/2023/9)
2. ohia/endorse the evaluation of the Auckland Council local elections 2022.
3. ohia/endorse the option of moving from postal voting to a combination of postal and booth voting

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Henderson-Massey Local Board

Resolution number: HM/2023/46

That the Henderson-Massey Local Board:

1. support the evaluation of the Auckland Council local elections 2022 with a mixture of postal and online voting.

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Hibiscus and Bays Local Board

Resolution number: HB/2023/29

That the Hibiscus and Bays Local Board:

1. kohuki / consider its feedback on the evaluation of the Auckland Council local elections 2022
2. whakaae / agree with the recommendation to have a combination of postal voting and polling booth voting, to allow for greater choice of voting method, although it is noted that this may not greatly increase voter turnout
3. tono / request that all Libraries are used as voting hubs, where trained staff are able to download and provide special voting forms, polling booths are available for the duration of the voting period, and information on the local candidates are displayed
4. tono / request that funding is made available for more meet the candidate events, and in every local board area, and that this funding go towards making these events recorded and published on an Auckland Council elections site
5. tono / request that further investigation is undertaken to understand how to increase the understanding of Auckland's complex governance model, and that this is done with partners such as the local tertiary institutions
6. tono / request that Auckland Council advocate for a more responsive special voting system for those eligible voters who are not in Auckland during the election period
7. tono / request that an alternative term is used to describe postal voting, to reflect the fact that the postal element is now a misnomer.

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Howick Local Board

That the Howick Local Board:

1. recommends the postal voting system be discontinued, noting the following reasons:
 - a. It is inefficient, in many cases voting papers are forgotten, misplaced, or thrown out with junk mail, so this immediately reduces the potential voting return numbers.
 - b. many potential voters did not receive voting papers, or received them late, due to the inadequate postal system.
 - c. there was a low voter turnout in the recent election.
 - d. if the postal voting system was discontinued, recommends a shift towards either an online voting system, which should encourage younger voters more, or run local body elections the same way as parliamentary elections and have one set day where people go to a polling booth to vote, or a combination of both. This would focus voters' attention on the one day they have an opportunity to support their chosen candidates.
2. in regard to candidate information and nominations, notes the following points for input:
 - a. notes there was a lack of support for candidates, especially new candidates.
 - b. notes that the candidate handbook was removed from the website which created confusion, especially regarding authorisation statements and promotional rules.
 - c. notes that compliance is full of grey areas and there needs to be clarity around signage, and other electioneering activities.
 - d. notes that changes made by Parliament through the Local Electoral (Advertising) Amendment Act 2022 were not well communicated or understood.
 - e. recommends that nominations for candidates should be handled by an independent body.
 - f. recommends that work is done to make nomination forms and the related process clearer. There were a number of mistakes in the processing of this information.
 - g. recommends that the application process for candidates should go online and a payment gateway option needs to be provided online also.
 - h. suggest that all potential candidates attend at least two Local Board or Council meetings (whichever is appropriate to their nomination) to give them some idea of the role and matters they would be dealing with.
 - i. suggest potential candidates be offered a familiarisation session where they might learn more about the elected member role including their obligation and restrictions and skills required.
3. in regard to candidate criteria, notes the following points for input:
 - a. recommend that are more prescriptive criteria of candidate suitability is created and communicated. Whilst we are always excited to encourage a wide representation of our diverse communities some potential candidates are of the belief that they wouldn't have the ability to do the role; others need continual help with basic understanding of their role, and

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with using technology. Clear descriptions of each role is important to ensure candidates are confident able to operate at the level required.

- b. recommend that candidates are made aware of the commitment required, noting that they must be available to attend meetings/workshops during daytime hours, and must be able to accommodate the hours set out for the role they are standing for.
4. in regard to the voting system, notes the following points for input:
 - a. requests proper consideration of moving from First Past the Post (FPP) voting to Single Transferable Vote (STV) as allowed by the Local Electoral Act.
 5. in regard to candidate advertising, notes the following points for input:
 - a. recommends consideration of options to further limit the impact of financial advantage on advertising to level the playing field such as limitations on the number of signs / billboards or reviewing the spending limits.
 - b. recommends consideration of partnering with community groups to run well organised and promoted “meet the candidate events”, including recording questions and answers to be published online for those that cannot attend.
 6. in regards to other related matters, provides the following points for input:
 - a. Highlight the importance of political neutrality from Members of Parliament around and during the Local Government election campaign.
 - b. Suggests that the lack of council facilities in the Flat Bush/Ormiston area contributes to the lower turn out. There is no Countdown or Library, therefore no local ballot boxes which made it harder to post votes.

E mahi ana mātou i te mahi mō Tāmaki Makaurau

Kaipātiki Local Board

That the Kaipātiki Local Board:

- a) provides the following feedback on the evaluation of the Auckland Council local elections 2022 (in no particular order):
 - i) support a combination of both postal voting and booth voting:
 - A) agree with the Evaluation that there was a noticeable number of people wanting to vote in the last two days of the voting period, and sizeable queues at some ballot boxes on the last day, indicating a desire for voting at the end of the voting period.
 - B) support the promotion of a single day of booth voting to help galvanise voters and to help prevent people forgetting to post their vote.
 - C) We support a reduction in the voting period from 3 weeks to 2 weeks, to help prevent people deferring voting until it is too late.
 - ii) commend the increase in ballot boxes from previous elections, which were located at Countdown Supermarkets. However as many of the supermarkets are located in close proximity to other ballot box locations, such as at libraries, there wasn't an increase in geographic spread across the local board area. We would like to see more ballot box locations next time with greater coverage of the local board area, especially considering the decline in postboxes in recent years.
 - iii) we noticed that many ballot boxes were full in the lead-up to the end of the voting period and boxes were not removed immediately at the end of the voting period. Ballot boxes needed to be cleared more regularly and removed from sight at the close of voting..
 - iv) the most significant obstacle to voting for North Shore residents was the lack of local special voting booths. Many residents did not receive their voting papers, or their papers were damaged by wet weather. Those who needed replacement papers were told to travel to Orewa or the City, which was inconvenient and not always possible. Casting a special vote should be easy. We recommend that there is at least one special voting booth per local board area, or at the very least one per electoral ward.
 - v) would like to see greater and swifter enforcement of the rules around billboards and candidate brochures. There were many instances of billboards being located outside of the designated site, or not carrying an authorisation statement. There were also instances of candidate brochures not including authorisation statements.
 - vi) suggest that one way to help supply more candidate information to voters would be to offer the opportunity for candidates to each supply a flyer (of specified size) to accompany the standard voter booklet.
 - vii) support the subject of compulsory voting being explored by the Electoral Review Panel as a means to increase voting turnout and transforming it from a right to a duty.
 - viii) strongly support the teaching of Civics at schools, including on the voting system, structure and purpose of Auckland Council, and the role of Local Boards.

