



SOLGM ELECTORAL WORKING PARTY NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2014

On line Voting Update

The announcement last week by the Government of qualified support to proceed with a trial of online voting in local elections was very welcome news. We have a part to play now in providing support as appropriate for a further report in March 2015 to indicate to the Government that it can have sufficient assurance about security, accessibility and personation risks to approve a trial. A final decision will be made by the Government by November 2015.

As Raymond has advised the proposed model transfers virtually all of the financial risk, and much (but not all) of the political risk to the participating local authorities.

SOLGM will advise of Ministerial decisions when known.

If Electoral Officers are approached by media about online voting they can respond with this information and whether their local authority is interested in participating in any on line voting trials that may eventuate.

Some members of the EWP, together with officials from DIA and representatives of NZ Post and election providers, observed the on line component of two electorate by-elections held by the New South Wales Electoral Commission on 25 October 2015. Voters pre-registered, voted online and the votes were printed off and counted manually a change of providers would mean that the manual counting would not occur at the upcoming state elections in March 2015. Those observing noted that it was useful to understand the process undertaken to build trust. It will be important in New Zealand to undertake a robust education campaign to ensure a high degree of public trust in any on line voting process.

Representation Reviews

The EWP was updated with information relating to representation reviews and the progress of some of the 23 councils undertaking reviews at present.

Working Party Vacancy

The vacancy on the SOLGM Electoral Working Party has been filled by the appointment of Marguerite Delbet, Manager Democracy Services, Auckland Council.

SOLGM Good Practice for the Management of Local Authority Elections and Polls

All parts of the Code of Good Practice that have not been reviewed since the 2013 elections have been allocated to EWP members to lead reviews during 2015 so that the Code is in top shape to guide EOs at the next triennial elections.

FAQs for Electoral Officers and the Electoral Officer Readiness Checklist will also be updated early next year.

NZ Post 2016 Pricing

NZ Post has sent a communication to all EOs covering 2016 price estimates for both postage and voting packs. These estimates are important for inclusion of budgets in LTPs that are currently being developed around the country. EOs are asked to update regional council and district health board of these 2016 cost estimates for inclusion in their budgets.

Local Government Commission Update

The Local Government Commission has announced the creation of a unitary authority to be made up of the nine authorities in Wellington and the Wairarapa including local boards in its draft proposal. Submissions will be open until March 2015 and the Commission will then decide whether to issue a final proposal. It is estimated this will be about June 2015.

A position paper has been issued for Hawkes Bay and one is being prepared for Northland. The Commission has decided not to consider a proposal for a Rodney break away from Auckland Council.

Long Term Plans

Another reminder that Electoral Officers should be considering making bids during the development of their Council's long term plans to ensure there is adequate resourcing of

funds to ensure a good election publicity and education campaign and that they have funds available to contribute to agreed national projects.

Season's Greetings

Very best wishes to you all for the festive season and thanks to everyone who has assisted with the work of the Electoral Working Party throughout the year.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darryl Griffin', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Darryl Griffin
Chairperson
SOLGM Electoral Working Party