

Pukapuka Aratohu Kaitono **Candidate Handbook**

All you need to know about being a candidate for
Waikato Regional Council in the 2025 local elections

**VOTE
2025**
LOCAL ELECTIONS

Disclaimer

This handbook sets out what you need to know as a candidate for Waikato Regional Council in the 2025 Local Elections. It contains extracts from the Local Electoral Act 2001 and the Local Electoral Regulations 2001. While every effort has been made to ensure this handbook is accurate and consistent with the Act and Regulations, it is a guide only and candidates or others requiring more detailed information should contact the Waikato Regional Council's electoral officer.

Ngā ihirangi

Contents

He tirohanga whānui o te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato **An overview of Waikato Regional Council**

The role of council	6
The mahi of councils	6
Our region at a glance	8
How council is structured	10

Mō tēnei kōwhiringa **About this election**

Key dates	13
Electoral officer	14
Your key contacts at Waikato Regional Council	14
Electoral principles	14
Constituencies and positions available in this election	15

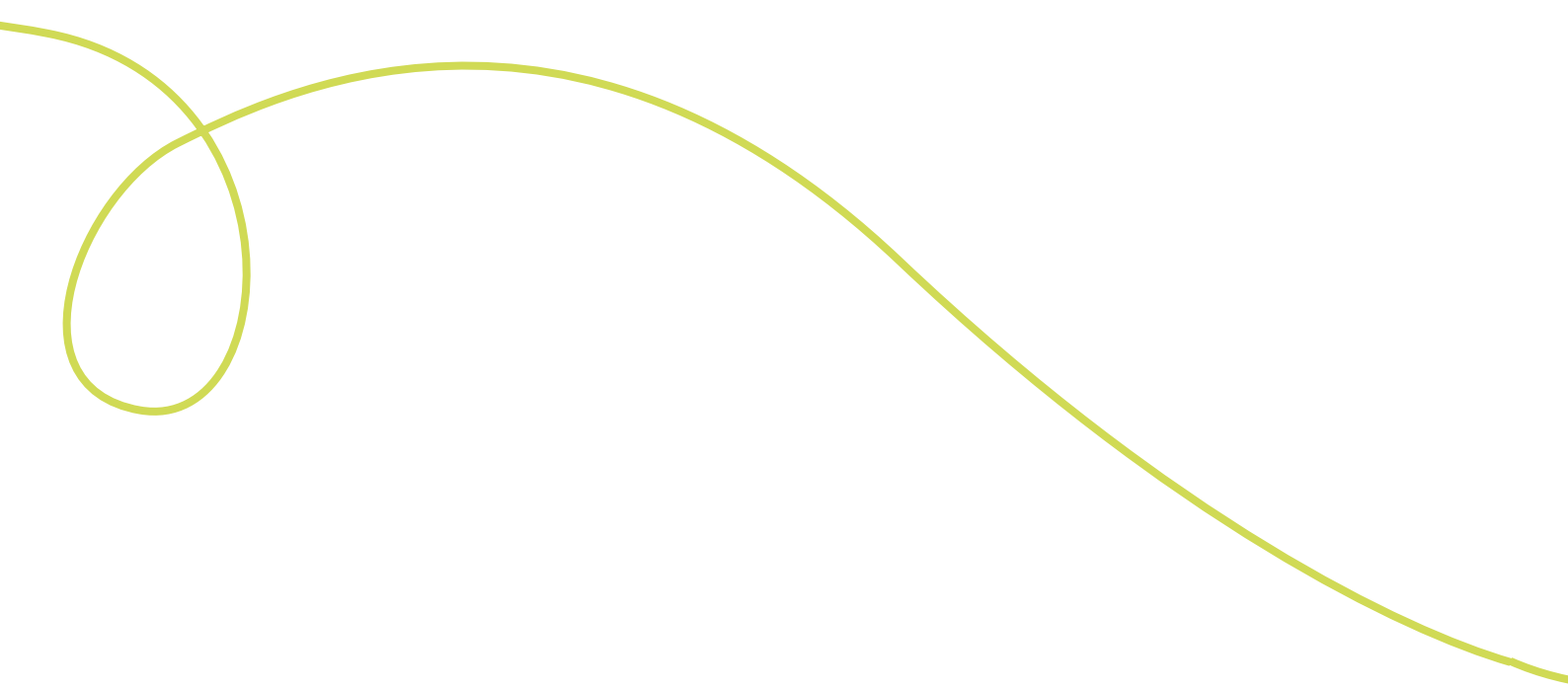
E tū ana mō te kaunihera **Standing for council**

Eligibility	17
Nominations	17
Submitting your nomination	19
Candidate safety	21

Ngā tikanga here me ngā waeture **Rules and regulations**

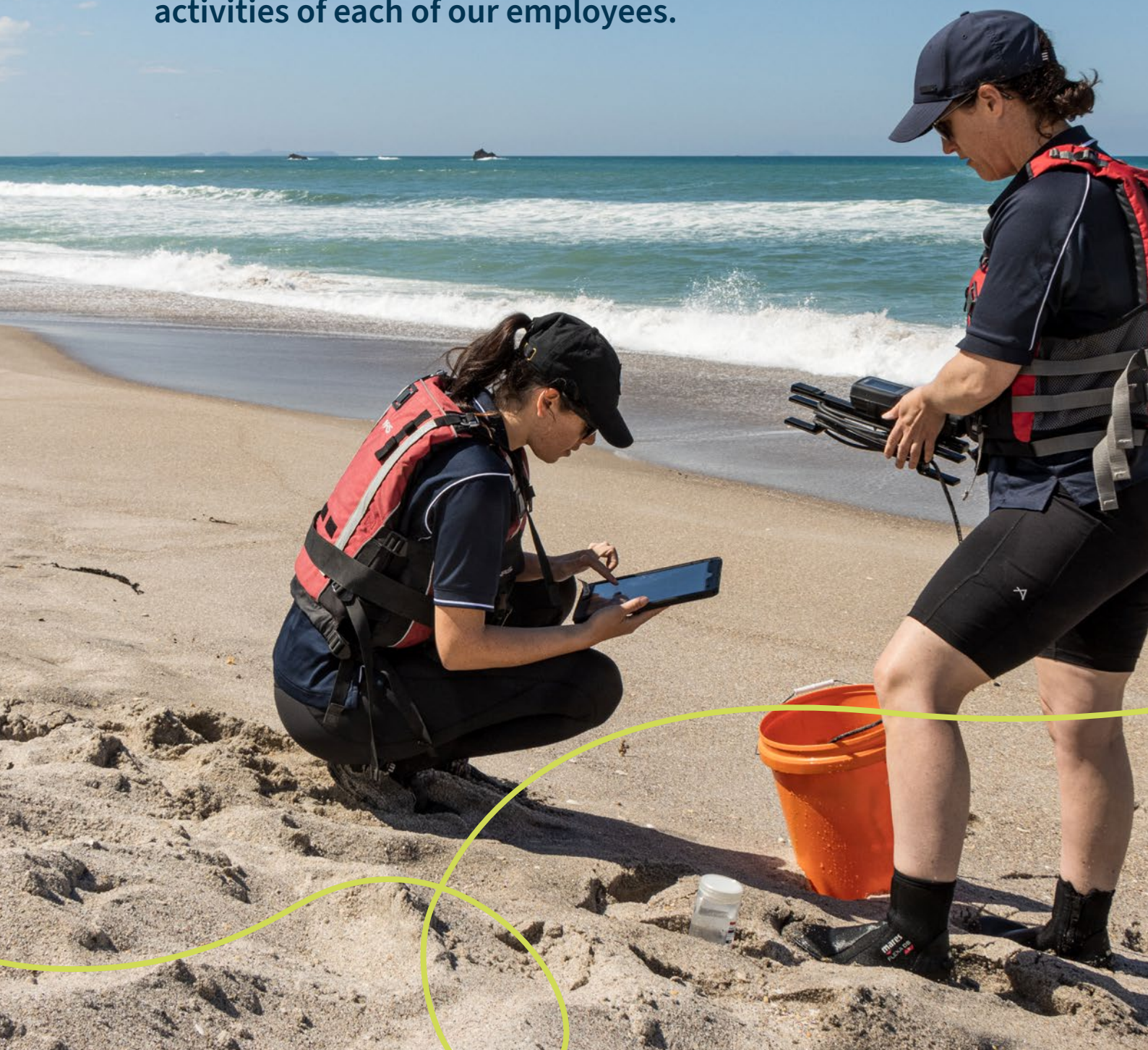
Campaigning	22
Authorisation of advertising	22
Election signage rules	23
Social media	23
Our social media accounts	24
Election expense limits	24
Electoral donations	25
Return of electoral donations and expenses	26
Electoral rolls	26
Electoral offences	27

Te pōtihanga me ōna tatauranga	28
Voting and results	
Voting	28
Scrutineers	29
Results	30
Term of membership	30
Ngā ture kāwanatanga me ētehi atu pārongo	31
Legislation and further info	
Pre-election report	31
Legislation	31
Code of conduct	33
Hei tāpiritanga	34
More information	



**Working together for a
Waikato region that has
a healthy environment,
vibrant communities
and strong economy.**

**It's this purpose that drives the everyday
activities of each of our employees.**



He tirohanga whānui o te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato

An overview of Waikato Regional Council

The role of council

The council, made up of 14 elected councillors, is the governing body for Waikato Regional Council. It is the councillors' role to make decisions on big-picture issues that support a sustainable future for the Waikato, one where our environment, economy and communities thrive. Key aspects include:

- developing and adopting council policies that direct our work programmes and activities
- monitoring the performance of council against its objectives and policies
- managing the council's resources, including setting financial and infrastructure strategies
- employing the chief executive.

The decisions councillors make affect all Waikato communities – now and for generations to come. As such, elected members have a responsibility to represent the interests of all residents and ratepayers in the region, not just their constituency.

Unless otherwise provided in the Local Government Act 2002 or in the council's standing orders, the council can only act by majority decisions at meetings. Any individual member (including the chairperson) has no authority to act on behalf of the council unless provided for by statute or the council has expressly delegated such authority.

The mahi of councils

Regional *vs* city *and* district councils

Regional councils, like our council, are responsible for functions that are best delivered at a regional scale, such as:

- managing the use of natural resources (water, soil, air, geothermal areas and coasts)
- regional transport planning and passenger transport services
- protecting and restoring natural biodiversity
- controlling harmful plant and animal pests
- providing flood protection and drainage schemes
- keeping water users safe
- responding to pollution incidents
- preparing communities for civil defence emergencies and coordinating the response when a disaster strikes.

City and district councils (also called territorial authorities) cover smaller geographic areas than regional councils and are responsible for:

- essential services (local roads, water supply, wastewater, rubbish collection, parking and public toilets)
- community facilities (libraries, parks, sports fields, pools and playgrounds)
- developing and monitoring the district plan (land use and subdivisions)
- community health and safety (animal control, building control and liquor licensing).



The Waikato region

is made up of **one city** (Hamilton), **seven districts** and **parts of three districts** that straddle regional boundaries (Waitomo, Taupō and Rotorua).

Our region at a glance

New Zealand's **fourth**
largest region

25,000km² of land

More than **1000km** of coastline

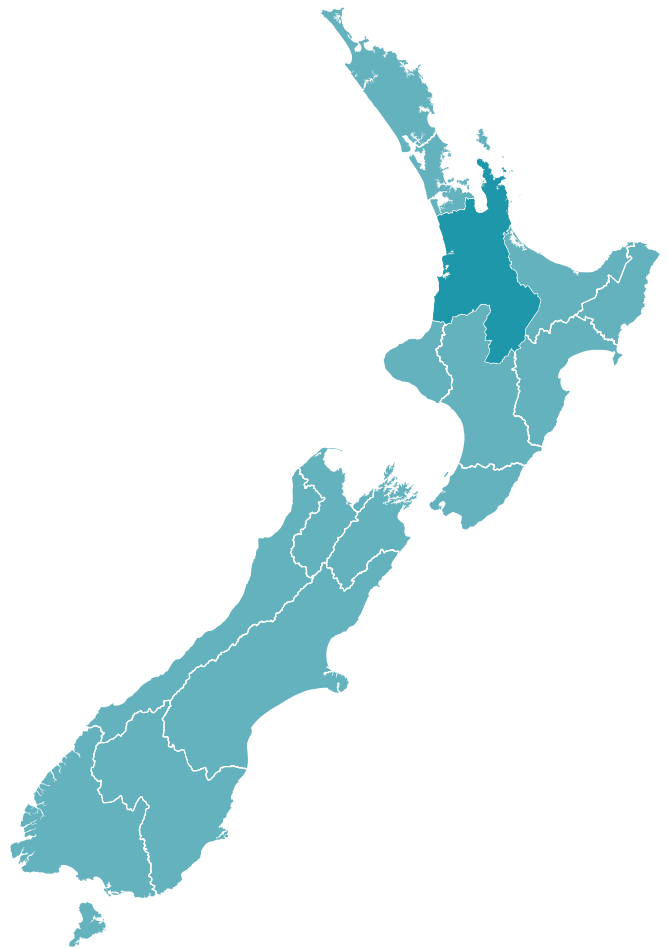
Internationally significant wetlands

The **largest** lake – Lake Taupō

Tongariro National Park

75% of New Zealand's geothermal resources

20 large rivers, including the Waikato River –
the longest in New Zealand at **425km**.



We're known for our natural environment from which great products are produced.



Waters second only to Marlborough Sounds for aquaculture production.



New Zealand's most important dairying region.



Nationally significant transport corridor.



Home to the largest proportion of plantation forests in New Zealand.



Our landscapes and environment – the number one reason why people visit.



New Zealand's premier electricity region, generating more electricity than any other single region.

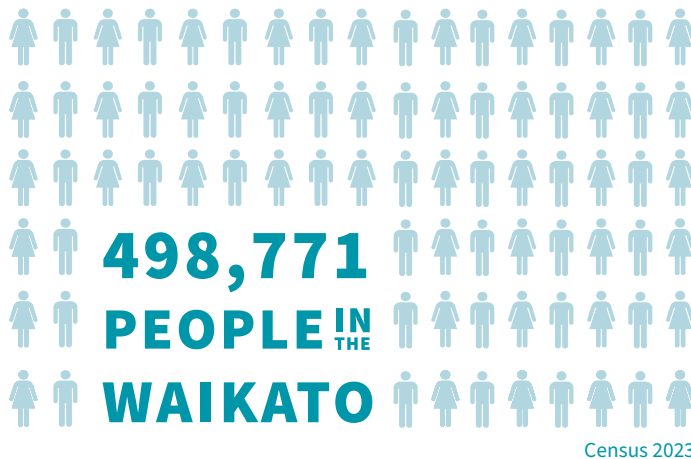


Along with Pukekohe, the Waikato dominates the growing of onions – New Zealand's most valuable vegetable export crop.



The most important minerals producing region in New Zealand.

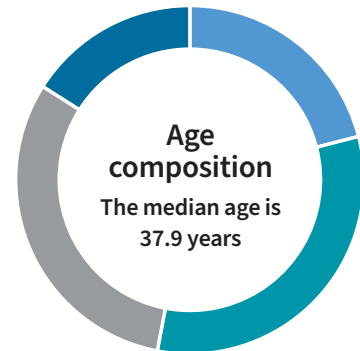
Our community profile



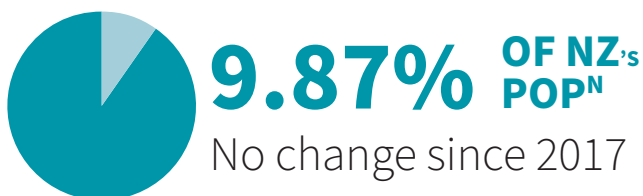
Around

125,574

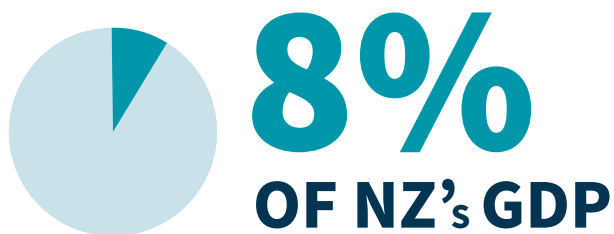
Māori usually live in the Waikato



■ 0-14 years ■ 15-39 years ■ 40-64 years ■ 65+ years



Our economic profile



Regional GDP is
\$23.9 Billion

Real increase of 3.1% since 2017

Employment
rate 64% (as at 2023)

Full time **50.5%**

Part time **13.5%**



Information about our key projects and financial position is included in the council's pre-election report, available in July.

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/elections

How council is structured

Chairperson

The chairperson is selected by a resolution of the council and shares the same responsibilities as other members of the council.

The chairperson also:

- presides at council meetings ensuring the orderly conduct of business during meetings (as determined by standing orders)
- advocates on behalf of the community
- is the spokesperson and ceremonial head for the council
- provides leadership and feedback to other elected members on teamwork and chairing of committees
- is a Justice of the Peace (for the duration of their term in office)
- provides leadership to the other members of the council and the region
- leads the development of council plans, policies and budgets for consideration by members of the council.

The chairperson may be removed from office by resolution of the council.

Deputy chairperson

The deputy chairperson is selected by a resolution of the council.

The deputy chairperson exercises the same roles as other elected members, and must perform all of the responsibilities of the chairperson if they are absent or incapacitated. In such cases, the deputy chairperson may exercise the powers of the chairperson (as previously summarised).

The deputy chairperson may be removed from office by a resolution of the council.

Committee chairpersons

The council can create committees (and subcommittees) of the council. The chairperson of each committee is selected by a resolution of the council.

A committee chairperson presides over all meetings of the committee, ensuring that the committee acts within the powers delegated by the council. They may also be required to act as the official spokesperson on issues relevant to the committees.

The council can also appoint deputy chairpersons for committees, who fill the role of chair when the chairperson is absent.

Committees

Councillors meet regularly in committees and subcommittees to look closely at the issues and make decisions or recommendations to the council. The full council generally meets on the last Thursday of each month to consider recommendations and make decisions on a wide variety of activities and policies. An overview of our committee structure for the 2022-25 triennium is on page 12 and 13.

Requirements and time commitment

The main requirements for elected members are to attend meetings, read reports, attend briefings, conduct site visits and respond to constituent enquiries.

Depending on the role (chairperson, deputy chairperson, committee chair, councillor), the time commitment can be significant.

Currently, the council holds its full council meetings (which all elected members are expected to attend) on the last Thursday of each month. Extra meetings are added into the month for specific topics that require attention.

In addition to this, councillors can be appointed to working parties, committees, subcommittees and hearings (on an as required basis). To understand community views, they may also attend local events.

The amount of reading required in preparation for meetings varies during the year, but at times can be significant – particularly with the annual plan, annual report, long term plan changes and any other plan required under legislation.

Elected members should also be aware of the impact that being selected as a chairperson or councillor can have on their families. Some people see elected representatives as being available 24 hours 7 days a week. However, most contact with elected representatives is done at a reasonable time and in a reasonable manner.

What the job pays

The Remuneration Authority is an independent body that sets the pay for elected members across the country. To give you an indication of remuneration, the following salaries will be paid until 30 June 2025:

- \$169,294 council chairperson
- \$86,693 deputy council chairperson
- \$73,355 - \$80,025 committee chairperson roles
- \$68,688 - \$70,689 deputy chairperson
- \$66,687 councillor with no additional responsibilities.

The Authority also determines the provisions for mileage, travel and allowances.





Mō tēnei kōwhiringa About this election

Key dates

4 July 2025	Candidate nominations open Roll opens for public inspection [Section 42 LEA]
1 August 2025 at 12pm	Candidate nominations close Roll closes [Section 5 LEA, Regulation 21 LER]
6 August 2025	Public notice published with candidate names [Section 65 LEA]
9-22 September 2025	Delivery of voting papers [Regulation 51 LER]
10 October at 12pm	Appointment of scrutineers [Section 68 LEA]
10 October at 12pm	Removal of election signs
11 October 2025	Election day [Section 10 LEA] Close of voting at 12pm – counting commences [Section 84 LEA]
11 October 2025	Preliminary results available as soon as practicable after close of voting [Section 85 LEA]
16-19 October 2025	Official declaration of results (public notice) [Section 86 LEA]
Mid December	Return of expenses forms [Section 112A LEA]

LEA = Local Electoral Act 2001

LER = Local Electoral Regulations 2001

Electoral officer

The electoral officer is appointed by the local authority. Once appointed, they (and other electoral officials) are not subject to the direction of the local authority in exercising their powers in carrying out duties under the Local Electoral Act (LEA) and Local Electoral Regulations (LER).

The general duties of a regional council electoral officer are:

- publishing public notices in relation to elections and polls
- receiving nominations, candidate profile statements, deposits required to be paid, and checking legal requirements are met
- the declaration of results
- receiving returns of electoral expenses and donations
- investigating and reporting alleged electoral offences to the police
- completing all necessary post-election and poll tasks, including reports and statistics.

Your key contacts at Waikato Regional Council

Electoral Officer

Mali Ahipene

Private Bag 3038
Waikato Mail Centre
Hamilton 3240

Phone:

07 859 0507 or
0800 800 401



Deputy Electoral Officer

Dave Doggart

Private Bag 3038
Waikato Mail Centre
Hamilton 3240

Phone:

07 949 7502 or
0800 800 401



Electoral principles

Section 4 LEA identifies electoral principles which must be taken into account in the conduct of any election or poll. These principles are set out below for the information of candidates.

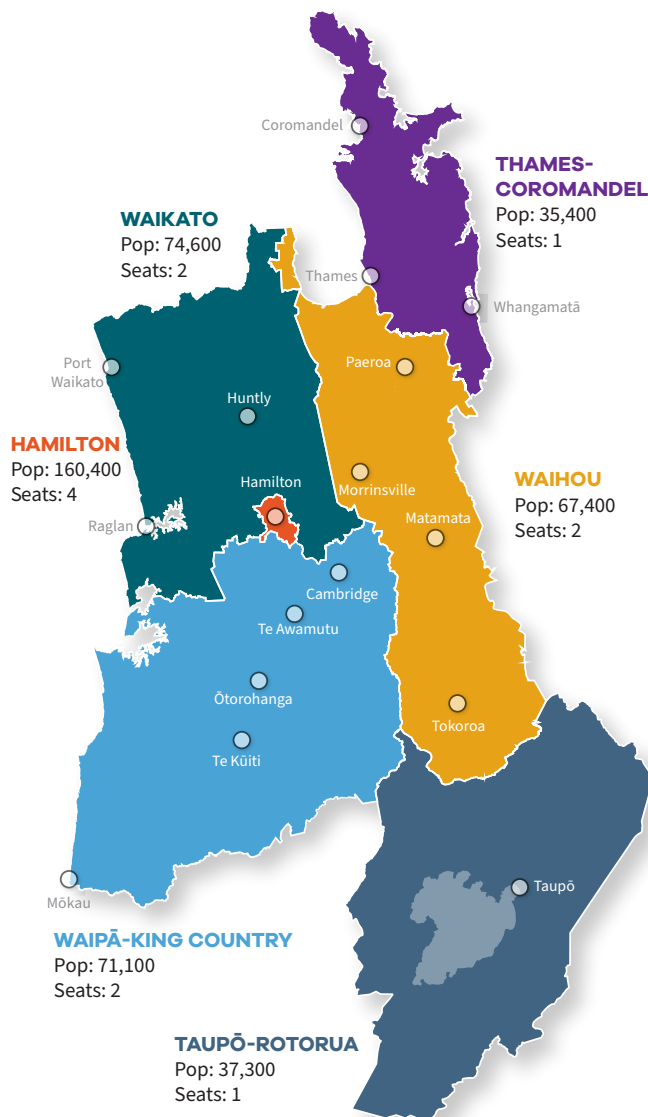
1. The principles that this Act is designed to implement are the following:
 - aa) representative and substantial electoral participation in local elections and polls
 - a) fair and effective representation for individuals and communities
 - b) all qualified persons have a reasonable and equal opportunity to
 - i. cast an informed vote
 - ii. nominate one or more candidates
 - iii. accept nomination as a candidate
 - c) public confidence in, and public understanding of, local electoral processes through
 - i. the provision of a regular election cycle
 - ii. the provision of elections that are managed independently from the elected body
 - iii. protection of the freedom of choice of voters and the secrecy of the vote
 - iv. the provision of transparent electoral systems and voting methods and the adoption of procedures that produce certainty in electoral outcomes
 - v. the provision of impartial mechanisms for resolving disputed elections and polls.
2. Local authorities, electoral officers and other elected officials must, in making decisions under this Act or any other enactment, take into account those principles specified in subsection (1) that are applicable (if any), so far as is practicable in the circumstances.
3. This section does not override any other provision in this Act or any other enactment.

Constituencies and positions available in this election

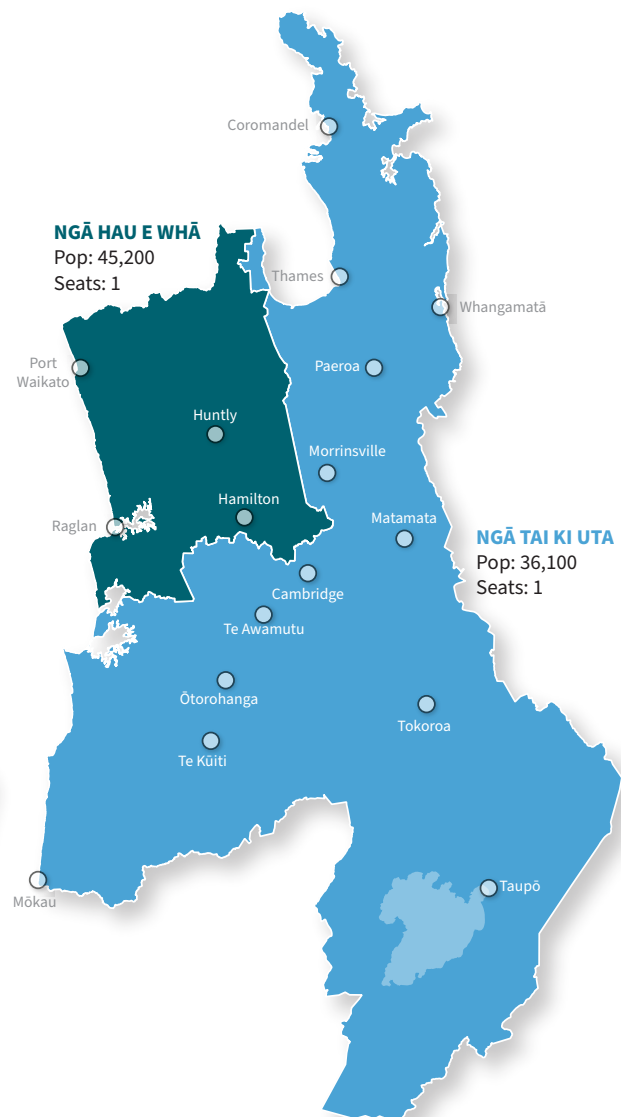
Regional councillors are elected by voters enrolled on the residential and ratepayer electoral rolls in their constituency. Elections will be held for:

- 12 councillors from six general constituencies
- two councillors from two Māori constituencies.

General constituencies



Māori constituencies



Waikato Regional Council will use the First Past the Post (FPP) voting system where voters tick the candidate(s) they would like to vote for. The number of candidates ticked depends on the number of seats available. When the votes are counted, the candidate(s) with the most votes is/are elected.

On 30 April 2025, Waikato Regional Council considered the order that candidate names will appear on voting documents. The option chosen was for the names to be fully random.



E tū ana mō te kaunihera

Standing for council

Eligibility

To stand for Waikato Regional Council you must be:

- a New Zealand citizen
- a parliamentary elector (anywhere in New Zealand).

The following restrictions also apply:

- A candidate may stand for election for mayor and district council within the same territorial authority, but may not also stand for election to a regional council of which the territorial authority is part, i.e. a candidate may stand for either the district/city council or the regional council but not both.
- A candidate may not stand for more than one constituency.
- A candidate cannot be a person concerned or interested in contracts over \$25,000 with the local authority [Section 3(1) Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968]. This restriction may be waived if prior approval is obtained from the Office of the Auditor-General.
- If a Waikato Regional Council employee is elected as a councillor, they must resign as an employee before taking up their position as an elected member.
- You can't be an elected member if you have a permanent court order.

Nominations

Ahead of the nomination period, a public notice will appear on the Waikato Regional Council website calling for nominations.

**Nominations open on Tuesday, 4 July 2025
and close at 12pm on Friday, 1 August 2025.**

Nomination form

Each nomination must be made on the official nomination form for Waikato Regional Council.

Where to get your form

Nomination forms are available from:

- waikatoregion.govt.nz/elections
- Waikato Regional Council offices in Hamilton, Paeroa, Whitianga and Taupō
- city and district council electoral officers in the Waikato
- the electoral officer on 0800 800 401.

Completion (Sections 55 & 121 LEA)

Nomination papers must be signed by two electors whose names appear on the electoral roll for the constituency in which the candidate is standing.

Each nomination paper must have the consent of the candidate.

A candidate may not nominate themselves.

If a candidate is unable to sign the nomination form (for example, because they are absent overseas), a letter of consent signed by the candidate is acceptable to attach to the nomination form.

Name of candidate (Section 56 LEA)

If a candidate is commonly known in the community by a slightly different name (for example, Edward Smith is commonly known as Ted Smith) and has been known by this name for at least the last six months (to the satisfaction of the electoral officer), the commonly known name may appear on the voting document provided certain requirements are met.

A candidate wanting to use their commonly known name on the voting document must provide both their full name and the name they are commonly known by on their completed nomination form.

Affiliation (Section 57 LEA)

The nomination form allows a candidate to have an affiliation. An affiliation is described in Section 57(3) LEA as “an endorsement by any organisation or group (whether incorporated or unincorporated)”.

Individual candidates not part of a political party or group may wish to identify their affiliation as ‘independent’ or leave the affiliation blank (if left blank, nothing will show alongside their name on the voting document).

A candidate specifying a party affiliation should have authority to adopt the affiliation from the party, organisation or group concerned. The electoral officer may require a letter of consent from the party, organisation or group giving its consent for the candidate to use the affiliation as a safety measure to avoid any illegal adoption of party, group or organisation affiliations.

No affiliation that might cause offence to a reasonable person, is unreasonably long, includes a title (for example, sir or dame), or is likely to confuse or mislead electors, will be accepted.

If candidates wish to list whānau, hapū or iwi details as an affiliation, an endorsement or confirmation letter from a marae, whānau trust, iwi authority, or other Māori organisation would be required. It is acknowledged whakapapa is a birth right and situations may occur where candidates may not feel they need to provide proof, in which case whakapapa can be highlighted in the context of the candidate profile statement and other forums and activities.

Situations may arise where the same affiliation is given by two or more candidates, or a candidate provides multiple affiliations. If a candidate provides multiple affiliations, an electoral officer may require multiple endorsement or confirmation letters.

Note that there are length limits to a candidate’s affiliation. The voting document and candidate booklet allow 38 characters before the affiliation truncates.

Submitting your nomination

Section 55 LEA

Completed nomination forms, together with other documentation (i.e. candidate profile statement, photograph, nomination deposit or proof of deposit) must be either:

Delivered at the same time to:

The Electoral Officer (or election mailbox)
Waikato Regional Council
160 Ward Street
Hamilton

Monday to Friday
8am-5pm

Posted at the same time to:

The Electoral Officer
Waikato Regional Council
Private Bag 3038
Waikato Mail Centre
Hamilton 3240

Nomination papers **WILL NOT** be accepted at the council's Whitianga, Paeroa or Taupō offices.

We recommend you make an appointment and deliver your nomination information in person to the electoral officer. Phone us on **0800 800 401** to make this appointment.

Do not leave lodging of nominations, candidate profile statements, photographs and deposits to the last minute. If a nomination form is lodged late on the morning that nominations close, and is incorrectly completed or ineligible nominators are identified, there may not be enough time before 12pm to correct the situation and the nomination form could be invalidated.

Nomination forms, with the deposit (\$200 including GST), candidate profile statement and photograph can be returned by mail. However, if the document(s) are received by the electoral officer after the close of nominations, the nomination is invalid and will not be accepted.

All nomination papers must reach the electoral officer no later than **12pm** on **1 August 2025**.

Once lodged, nomination forms are checked to ensure the candidate's name appears on a parliamentary roll and the nominators are two electors whose names appear on the electoral roll for the constituency in which the candidate is standing.

Once lodged with the electoral officer, nomination forms are public information and any person may inspect any nomination form without payment of any fee at any time during ordinary office hours, at the office of the electoral officer (Section 55(5) LEA).

Electoral deposit

Each nomination form lodged requires a deposit of \$200 (including GST). This is refunded if the candidate polls greater than 25 per cent of the lowest polling successful candidate in FPP elections.

Payment of the nomination deposit can be made by eftpos or internet banking.

You will need these details to make a payment by internet banking:

Account name: Waikato Regional Council

Account number: 06-0317-0096442-00

Particulars: Election

Code field: Your surname

Reference field: Your phone number

Please note, that we no longer accept cash or cheque payments.

Candidate profile statement

Section 61 LEA, Regulation 29 LER

Every candidate should provide the electoral officer with a candidate profile statement with his or her nomination. This is a statement of up to 150 words containing information about the candidate and his or her policies and intentions if elected.

The candidate profile statement must be true and accurate. The electoral officer is not required to verify or investigate any information included in this statement.

A typed copy of the candidate profile statement is preferred, together with an electronic copy in Microsoft Word if possible.

The candidate profile statement must specify whether or not the candidate's principal place of residence is within the constituency he or she is standing for.

This candidate profile statement will be included as part of the voting document sent to each elector.

Translating profile statements

The candidate profile statement may be in English or Māori (with a maximum of 150 words in either language) or in any other language (not exceeding 150 words in total).

If a candidate profile statement is submitted in Māori and English, the information contained in each language must be substantially consistent with the information contained in the other language.

The electoral officer requires an English translation of all profiles, other than those written in English, so the translation can be verified. This translation is not published with the candidate's profile statement.

Should all or part of a candidate profile statement be provided in a language that uses other than English symbols (for example, Japanese), the statement needs to be provided in an electronic image file. The file must meet the following specifications:

- EPS Bit map
- black and white
- 600 dpi
- 1mm white space included around the head and left hand side of the image
- 55mm high and 85mm wide
- file size not exceeding 400KB.

If a candidate chooses not to supply a profile statement or photograph then a message will appear in the profile booklet that a statement/ photograph was not supplied by the candidate.

If you are unable to prepare the translation image yourself, it is suggested that you contact:

Department of Internal Affairs

The Translation Service

Level 2

7 Waterloo Quay

PO Box 805

Wellington 6140

Freephone 0800 872 675

Opening hours 9am-4pm Monday to Friday

Email: translate@dia.govt.nz

Website: dia.govt.nz/translation-service

Candidates must pay for their own translation costs.

Candidate photos

The profile should also include a recent passport size colour photo. If electronic, it must meet the following specifications:

- JPG (preferred) or PNG
- true greyscale
- 20mm wide by 30mm high
- 472 pixels wide by 709 pixels high
- file size not exceeding 400KB.

Cancelling a nomination

Section 69 LEA

A candidate can withdraw his or her nomination until the close of nominations at 12pm on Friday, 1 August 2025.

After this time a candidate can no longer withdraw a nomination unless the candidate becomes incapacitated after the close of nominations but before the close of voting. Incapacitated means that a candidate would be unlikely to be capable of performing the functions and duties of office because he or she is suffering from a serious illness or has sustained a serious injury.

An application for the cancellation of the nomination must be made to the electoral officer by submitting the prescribed form together with a medical certificate.

Candidate safety

Being a candidate in local government elections means stepping into the public eye. With that comes increased scrutiny and, unfortunately, it may also raise the risk of abuse or harassment directed at you or your family.

It's important to take proactive steps to help keep yourself and your loved ones safe during this time. If you experience serious threats or harassment, you should report them to the police. For situations that may not warrant police involvement but are still concerning, there are some useful resources below.

Some practical steps to consider now include:

- use campaign-specific social media accounts rather than your personal ones and restrict access where possible
- set up a dedicated campaign email address or phone number instead of using personal or work contact details
- be aware of your surroundings when attending public events — know where exits are and stay mindful of your environment
- consider your responses in difficult situations.
If someone becomes agitated, try to remain calm and look for an opportunity to signal for help or safely end the conversation.

Balancing your public presence with personal safety can be challenging. You want to engage with the community and share your vision while also protecting yourself and those close to you. It's important to consider how you will manage this balance.

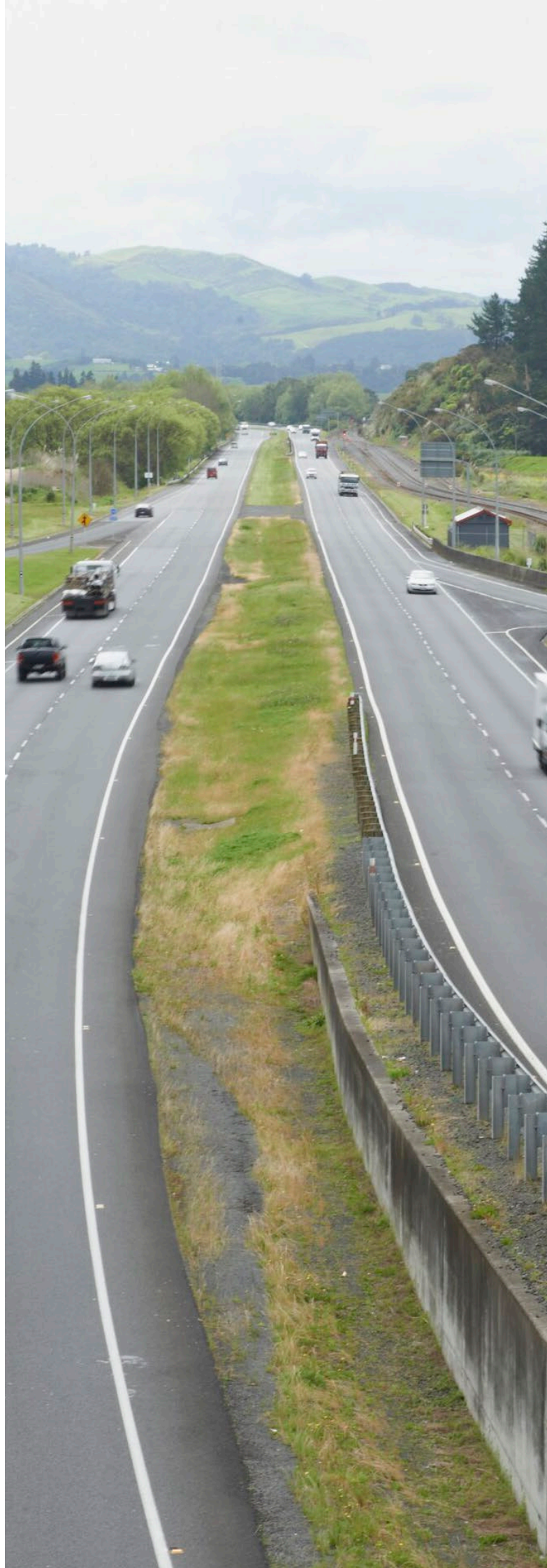
Remember, abuse and harassment are never acceptable. Your election campaign should be an exciting and rewarding experience. For many candidates, it is. However, being prepared and informed can help you handle any challenges that may arise.

Here is a list of other resources that offer advice on safety:

women.govt.nz/womens-safety/free-lead-toolkit

ownyouronline.govt.nz/personal/get-protected/guides/how-to-protect-your-privacy-online/

netsafe.org.nz/online-abuse-and-harassment



Ngā tikanga here me ngā waeture

Rules and regulations

Campaigning

Election campaigning can commence at any time and continue up to and including election day.

The official period for expenditure monitoring commences on Friday, 11 July 2025 (Section 104, LEA).

Authorisation of advertising

Part 5A LEA

Election advertising, using any media, must identify the person under whose authority it has been produced. The publication of any advertisements for candidates (for example, in any newspaper, periodical, notice, poster, pamphlet, handbill, billboard or card, or broadcast over radio or television) requires the written authorisation of the candidate or the candidate's agent.

The advertisement must contain a statement setting out the true name of the person or persons for whom, or at whose direction, it is published and the street address (not a PO box) of his or her residence or business. This applies during the candidate's entire campaign.

The Local Electoral (Advertising) Amendment Bill amended the Local Electoral Act 2001 to address concerns around candidate safety by loosening the requirement that candidates attach either their residential or business address to electoral advertising. It allows email addresses, PO box or phone numbers, or links to an internet page to be used instead.

Election material must not contain any untrue statement defamatory of any candidate and calculated to influence the vote of any elector. Also, no election material may contain an imitation voting document that has the names of the candidates with any direction or indication as to the candidate a person should vote for, or in any way contains such direction or indication likely to influence the voter.

Top tips for getting started

Voter numbers in local authority elections have been declining in many areas of New Zealand since the 1980s. In 2022, voter turnout nationally was 40.9 per cent, whereas the Waikato Regional Council turnout was 38 per cent.

The main reason why people don't vote is a lack of knowledge about the candidates and their views.

- Know what Waikato Regional Council stands for and how our council works.
- Attend a council or committee meeting.
- Know what's important to your community.
- Talk to people, connect with community groups, attend public meetings.
- Know what you stand for.

Candidates should be aware that it is an offence (carrying a fine of up to \$5000 if convicted) to interfere in any way with an elector with the intention of influencing or advising the elector as to how he or she should vote. Candidates and their assistants should be mindful of this, particularly if campaigning occurs in facilities such as rest homes or hospitals.

Candidates or their assistants should not collect voting documents from electors. Each elector should post or deliver his or her own voting document to the electoral officer.

The relevant electoral offence provisions are detailed later in this handbook. Please refer to them for your own protection.

Election signage rules

All signs are to display the true name and contact details of the person/s authorising them (Section 113(2)(b) Local Electoral Act as amended by Section 4(1) Local Electoral (Advertising) Amendment Act 2022). All election signs must be removed by midnight on Friday, 10 October 2025.

Contact details mean one or more of the following:

- a residential or business address
- an email address
- a post office box number
- a phone number
- a link to a page on an internet site (if the page contains one or more of the above).

Social media

Candidates must comply with the following guidelines for social media use and presence related to campaigning.

Things to be aware of:

- Election advertising, using any media, including social media, must identify the person under whose authority they have been produced, as per Sections 113-115 of the Local Electoral Act 2001. This means in your profile photo/bio, you must have a statement saying that all content/images on your social media channel are authorised by you or your agent. You must include contact details in the authorisation statement.
- The council's social media accounts – including but not limited to Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram – are not permitted to be used as a communications channel by anyone (candidates or members of the public) for promotion, electioneering or campaigning. This also applies to all social media accounts owned by council controlled organisations (CCO).
- The council's social media accounts are closely monitored and any campaign related or electioneering content will be removed immediately.
- If Waikato Regional Council already follows your public social media accounts, please note you will be unfollowed three months prior to the election date. This protocol is in line with the Local Electoral Act 2001.
- Any social media post, positive or negative, made by any individual specifically relating to their own or someone else's nomination, intention to run for council, or election campaign, will be removed immediately.
- Candidates cannot reply to Waikato Regional Council's social media posts with a comment. Any comments will be removed immediately.
- Candidates cannot comment on Waikato Regional Council's social media posts encouraging people to like or follow their own social media accounts or any other electioneering tool. Any such posts will be removed immediately.
- Candidates must not link their own social media accounts (if they are used for campaigning purposes) to Waikato Regional Council's social media accounts.
- Candidates cannot rate, review, check-in or tag Waikato Regional Council's social media channels.
- Waikato Regional Council's social media accounts will remain neutral. We will promote elections and the importance of standing for election, as well as voting, but will not associate these posts with any candidates.

The rules around election signs vary in each city and district council area. Please refer to the *Election signage rules in the Waikato* in your pack or on our website.

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/elections

Signage visible from a state highway

The NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi has provided information on its rules around signage applicable to the upcoming local authority elections as it relates to state highways. The relevant section is the chapter on *General election* sign guidance.

 **Requirements for general election signage on or near state highways | nzta.govt.nz**

Our social media accounts



Instagram

OurWaikato

TeHuiaTrain

BUSITWaikato

waikato_harbourmaster



LinkedIn

Waikato Regional Council



Facebook

Waikato Regional Council

Project Echo

BUSIT

Te Huia

Waikato Regional Harbourmaster

Civil Defence Waikato

Coastcare - Waikato



Council controlled organisations

Waikato Local Authority Shared Services (Colab)

Lake Taupō Protection Trust

Regional Software Holdings Ltd

Martha Trust (exempted as a CCO)

Election expense limits

Section 111 LEA

Candidates should be aware that expense limits apply for election campaigns. This means there is a maximum limit on how much a candidate may spend on his or her campaign. The “applicable period” for which campaign expenditure limits apply is three months before election day (i.e. 11 July 2025 to 11 October 2025).

For the Waikato Regional Council area, the maximum amount spent must not exceed the following limits (including GST).

CONSTITUENCY	NO. OF MEMBERS	APPROXIMATE POPULATION	EXPENDITURE LIMIT
Waikato	2	74,600	\$40,000
Waihou	2	67,400	\$40,000
Waipā-King Country	2	71,100	\$40,000
Hamilton	4	160,400	\$60,000
Taupō-Rotorua	1	37,300	\$20,000
Thames-Coromandel	1	35,400	\$20,000
Ngā Hau e Whā	1	45,200	\$30,000
Ngā Tai ki Uta	1	36,100	\$20,000

The amounts are based on the following:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA POPULATION	EXPENDITURE LIMIT
Up to 4999	\$3500
5000 – 9999	\$7000
10,000 – 19,999	\$14,000
20,000 – 39,999	\$20,000
40,000 – 59,999	\$30,000
60,000 – 79,999	\$40,000
80,000 – 99,999	\$50,000
100,000 – 149,999	\$55,000
150,000 – 249,999	\$60,000
250,000 or more	\$70,000

Electoral donations

a. Candidate donations

A candidate donation is a donation of money, goods or services that is made for use in the candidate's campaign.

Candidate donations, and contributions to donations, of more than \$1500 (including GST) are required to be declared in the candidate return of expenses and donations. A series of donations made by one person that adds up to more than \$1500 must also be declared.

The following are deemed donations:

- where a candidate is provided with goods or services free of charge that have a reasonable market value greater than \$300
- where a candidate is provided with discounted goods or services and the reasonable market value of the goods or services is greater than \$300, the difference between the contract or agreed price and the reasonable market value of those goods and services is a donation
- where a candidate sells over-valued goods or services the difference between the price paid and the reasonable market value is a donation, for example, a fundraising auction or dinner.

The following are not deemed donations:

- volunteer labour
- goods or services provided free of charge to a candidate or to any person on a candidate's behalf that have a reasonable market value of \$300 or less
- money provided by the candidate for his or her own campaign.

If a person or organisation gives or pays for goods or services that would otherwise be candidate election expenses, the reasonable market value of those items, whatever their value, should be recorded as an election expense. If the reasonable market value of the items exceeds \$300 it should also be recorded as a donation.

b. Donations made up of contributions

Donations to candidates can be made up of pooled funds contributed by more than one person (referred to as donations funded through contributions). These types of donations include, for example, campaign donations made through a trust, or where there is a fundraising collection for a candidate's campaign.

The total proceeds of a collection are treated as a donation. The person who collects the money will normally be the donor. The individuals who contribute to the collection are contributors.

If a candidate donation, other than an anonymous donation, is made up of contributions the transmitter or donor must tell the candidate:

- the name and address of the donor
- whether the donation is made up of contributions
- the total amount of individual contributions of \$1500 or less
- the name, address and contribution of each contributor in the case of individual contributions greater than \$1500.

If the candidate knows, or has reasonable grounds to believe, that the donor has failed to supply information about contributions, the whole donation must be returned to the donor.

c. Transmitted donations

A donation can be made either directly by the donor or indirectly by a transmitter who transmits a donation to the candidate on someone else's behalf, for example via a lawyer's trust fund.

Any person who received a candidate donation on the candidate's behalf must transmit it to the candidate within 10 working days.

When transmitting a donation, the transmitter must tell the candidate:

- that the donation is being transmitted on behalf of a donor
- the name and address of the donor
- whether the donation is made up of contributions
- the total amount of contributions of \$1500 or less
- the name, address and contribution of each contributor in the case of contributions greater than \$1500.

Where the transmitter does not disclose the name and address of the donor, the donation must be treated as an anonymous donation.

d. Anonymous donations

Candidates are not allowed to retain anonymous donations exceeding \$1500. An anonymous donation is a donation made in such a way that the candidate who receives the donation does not know the identity of the donor and could not, in the circumstances, reasonably be expected to know the identity of the donor.

If a candidate receives an anonymous donation greater than \$1500, he or she may retain \$1500 of that donation. The balance of the donation must, within 20 working days of receipt, be paid to the electoral officer for payment into the general fund of the local authority.

Return of electoral donations and expenses

A return of electoral donations and expenses form – available on the council’s website – is required to be supplied to the electoral officer within 55 days after the official declaration (early December 2025). This can be supplied to the electoral officer within 76 days after the official declaration if the candidate is overseas when successful candidates are declared elected.

The return of electoral donations and expenses must set out:

- the details of every electoral donation received by the candidate that, either on its own or when aggregated with all other donations made by or on behalf of the same donor for use in the same campaign, exceeds \$1500 in sum or value
- the details in respect of every anonymous electoral donation received by the candidate that exceeds \$1500
- details of the candidate’s electoral expenses.

The details of every electoral donation are:

- the name of the donor
- the address of the donor
- the amount of the donation or, in the case of aggregated donations, the total amount of the donations
- the date the donation was received or, in the case of aggregated donations, the date that each donation was received.

The details of every anonymous donation exceeding \$1500 are:

- the date the donation was received
- the amount of the donation
- the amount paid to the electoral officer and the date the payment was made.

With respect to electoral expenses, the return must set out separately the name and description of every person or body of persons to whom or which any sum was paid, and the reason for which it was paid. Sums paid in excess of \$200 (including GST) must be documented with an invoice or a bill and a receipt.

Once the return of electoral donations and expense forms have been received by the electoral officer they become a public document and are to be kept for public inspection for seven years. During this period:

- the returns will be placed on the council’s website
- the returns can be inspected by any person
- copies of the returns can be made available if requested.

Candidates are advised to retain all invoices and receipts relating to electoral expenses should these be required in the event of a challenge. They should not be submitted with the return.

If an election is not required (i.e. for those candidates elected unopposed), the 55 days will apply from the date of the electoral officer’s public notification of the candidates election (estimated to be 16 October 2025).

For candidates out of New Zealand at the time they are declared elected, the return must be filed within 76 days after the election result day.

Responsibility for the accuracy of the return lies with the candidate and significant penalties apply for the making of false returns (Section 112D LEA).

Electoral rolls

Copies of the preliminary electoral roll for the Waikato region will be available for public inspection during normal business hours (8am-5pm) from Tuesday, 1 July 2025 to Friday, 1 August 2025, at Waikato Regional Council’s Hamilton office. Individuals can also check their details by phoning 0800 800 401. Alternatively, please visit your local city or district council.

Those eligible to vote are:

- all residents enrolled on the parliamentary electoral roll within the local government area
- all non-resident ratepayers enrolled on the ratepayer electoral roll.

You qualify to be enrolled on the parliamentary electoral roll if you:

- are a New Zealand citizen or a permanent resident of New Zealand
- are 18 years of age or over
- have at some time resided continuously in New Zealand for one year or longer
- are not disqualified under the Electoral Act 1993.

Waikato residents are enrolled automatically on the residential electoral rolls if they are registered as parliamentary electors. This means there is no need to enrol separately for the local government elections.

Ratepayers who are not residents but pay rates on property within the region may be entitled to enrol on the ratepayer roll. Companies, businesses, trusts and societies that are ratepayers may also nominate an elector to vote on their behalf, provided any such elector resides outside the region. The person who is nominating a nominee must also be registered as a parliamentary elector at an address outside of the city/district.

Contact your city or district council electoral officer for a copy of the appropriate application form.

The preliminary electoral roll will contain both the residential roll and the ratepayer roll in one book.

Any alterations to the residential roll, should be made by:

- calling 0800 ENROLNOW (0800 367656)
- visiting **vote.nz**

Any changes, queries or omissions relating to the non-residential ratepayer electoral roll should be made through your local city or district council electoral officer.

The final electoral roll is produced once the preliminary electoral roll closes on 1 August 2025. The final electoral roll is the roll used for issuing voting documents and comes into force on 5 September 2025.

Details appearing in the electoral rolls are electors' names (surname, then first names) listed alphabetically. The qualifying address of the elector (and occupation) is shown alongside. No postal addresses, as distinct from residential addresses, are shown.

Information contained on the electoral rolls is not available from the electoral officer in electronic form, but candidates or political parties may request an electronic listing of resident electors from Enrolment Services at the Electoral Commission (provided the criteria of Section 114 Electoral Act 1993 are met). An application form will be required – you can request this from the Electoral Commission on **data@elections.govt.nz** or 04 806 3560. Candidates are only eligible for electronic roll data of the local area they are contesting and there is a fee of \$455.50 (incl GST) per extract supplied.

Candidates can purchase mailing labels and/or postal address lists for non-resident ratepayer electors from their local city or district council electoral officer.

Candidates or candidate scrutineers may request, before the close of voting, that the electoral officer provides a listing of names of persons from whom voting documents have been received. Such a request can be supplied in either hardcopy or electronic copy, but a reasonable charge will be made for this (Section 68(6) LEA).

Electoral offences

In addition to election offences already identified (in relation to illegal nominations, candidate advertising and electoral expenses), the following LEA provisions also apply and we recommend all candidates are familiar with these:

- Section 121 Illegal nomination, etc
- Section 122 Interfering with or influencing voters
- Section 123 Offences in respect of official documents
- Section 124 Voting offences
- Section 125 Bribery
- Section 126 Treating
- Section 127 Undue influence
- Section 128 Personation
- Section 129 Infringement of secrecy
- Section 130 Disclosing voting or state of election or poll
- Section 131 Penalty for electoral officer, deputy electoral officer, and other electoral officials.

General provisions

- Section 137 Property may be stated as being in electoral officer
- Section 138 Duty to take action in respect of offences
- Section 138AA Time limit for prosecutions



Te pōtihanga me ōna tatauranga

Voting and results

Voting

The election is being conducted by postal vote. Voting documents will be posted out to all electors whose names appear on the final electoral roll. Delivery by New Zealand Post will start on Tuesday, 9 September 2025, and all electors should have received their voting documents by Monday, 22 September 2025, at the latest.

Each elector, after receiving their voting document, should complete it, seal it in the return, postage paid envelope, and post or deliver it to the electoral officer.

If hand delivered, completed voting documents can be lodged at any city or district council offices in the region during normal business hours (8am-5pm, Monday-Friday). A list of available ballot boxes will be posted on the elections webpage prior to the voting period.

If posting completed voting documents, electors should ensure they are posted in time to guarantee delivery to the electoral officer before the close of voting (12pm, Saturday, 11 October 2025). Postal delivery times vary between city and rural delivery.

Special voting (Section 21 LEA)

Special votes are available to electors:

- whose names do not appear on the final electoral roll, but who qualify as electors
- who did not receive the voting document posted to them
- who spoil or damage the voting document posted to them
- whose name appears on the unpublished electoral roll.

Voters eligible to cast a special vote will be able to do this during normal business hours (8am-5pm, Monday-Friday), from Tuesday, 9 September, to 12pm, Saturday, 11 October 2025, at their local city or district council offices.

Special voting forms can be posted directly out to electors. The completed voting document, however, must be in the hands of the local city or district council electoral officer by 12pm on election day (Saturday, 11 October 2025).

Special votes require the completion of a statutory declaration. This is a legal requirement and a protection against possible duplicate voting.

If an elector requests a special vote and is not on the parliamentary roll (for example, just turned 18 years of age), the person must enrol by Friday, 10 October 2025 (the day before the close of voting). You can register as a parliamentary elector by:

- phoning 0800 ENROLNOW (0800 367656)
- enrolling at vote.nz.

After voting closes, special vote declarations are forwarded to the relevant Registrar of Electors for verification that the elector is eligible and has enrolled as a parliamentary elector.

Special voting documents can be uplifted on behalf of an elector with their written authority but cannot be collected by candidates or their assistants for distribution to electors.

Early processing of returned voting papers (Section 80 LEA)

Returned voting papers can be opened and processed during all or part of the voting period prior to the close of voting.

Early processing of voting documents will take place from 9 September 2025 and involves:

- opening envelopes
- extracting voting documents
- checking for informal or duplicate votes
- electronic capture and reconciliation of valid votes.

No tallying of votes is undertaken until after the close of voting on election day (12pm, Saturday, 11 October 2025).

The early processing functions are undertaken with strict security measures in place. One or more Justices of the Peace (JP) observe all early processing functions, and sign a certificate at the end of the processing to confirm that all functions were undertaken correctly and conformed with the strict legal requirements. Candidate scrutineers are not permitted to observe the early processing functions (Section 81 LEA).



Scrutineers

Candidates may appoint scrutineers to oversee various functions of the election. These functions are:

- the scrutiny of the roll
- the preliminary count (after the close of voting)
- the official count.

Scrutineers may not be present during the early processing of votes.

Each candidate may appoint one or more scrutineers for each of the above functions, but only one scrutineer for each candidate may be present at any one time.

A scrutineer cannot be:

- a candidate
- a member or employee of any local authority for an election being conducted
- under 18 years old.

Each scrutineer must be appointed by a candidate, in writing, to the electoral officer. For a person to be appointed a scrutineer, the letter of appointment must be received by the electoral officer no later than 12 noon, Friday, 10 October 2025 (Section 68 LEA).

Each appointed scrutineer must report initially to the electoral officer or deputy electoral officer. They will be required to sign a declaration pledging not to disclose any information coming to their knowledge. A name tag will be issued to the scrutineer that must be returned to the electoral officer or deputy electoral officer when departing the premises.

Any scrutineer may leave or re-enter the place where election functions are being conducted, but it is an offence (with liability for a fine) to make known:

- for what candidate any voter has voted
- the state of the election, or give or pretend to give any information by which the state of the election may be known, before the close of voting.

The preliminary count of votes will commence once voting closes at 12pm on Saturday, 11 October 2025. A progress report will be available as soon as practicable after 12pm, likely to be by 2pm on election day.

The official count of votes will commence once the preliminary count is concluded. The official declaration will be made in the week beginning Monday, 13 October 2025, but is unlikely to be before Wednesday, 15 October 2025.

The role of scrutineers is to ensure that election procedures are undertaken correctly and that the counting of votes is done fairly and reasonably. In carrying out this role, scrutineers must not disclose any information relating to voting or the state of the election or poll (this is an offence under Section 130 LEA).

During the preliminary and official counts, scrutineers must not talk to any staff member and should not distract, annoy or linger close by or talk loudly to one another so as to disrupt or upset any staff member. All communication should be through the electoral officer or deputy electoral officer.

No refreshments or meals will be provided to scrutineers. Scrutineers are advised to make their own provision for refreshments.

Mobile phones are prohibited within the secure area where the count will take place.

Results

Preliminary results

The preliminary count will take place from 12pm, Saturday, 11 October 2025.

As soon as practicable following the completion of the preliminary count, preliminary results will be:

- emailed to candidates
- emailed to the media
- published on [waikatoregion.govt.nz](https://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz).

We can also advise candidates of their specific results by phone, text or email (as preferred by the candidate).

You should notify the electoral officer of your preferred contact method before Friday, 10 October 2025.

Official results

The official results are declared after the validity of all special votes has been determined and all valid votes have been counted.

The declaration of the official results is expected to be made towards the end of the week following election day.

As soon as practicable, following the declaration, the official results will be emailed to candidates and the media.

Term of membership

When members come into office

A candidate comes into office on the day after the day the candidate is declared to be elected (i.e. the day after the first public notice declaring the official result is made) (Section 115 LEA).

Triennial meeting

No person is permitted to act as a member before making a declaration. This declaration will be made at the triennial meeting of the council, after the official declaration of results (by way of public notification).

The business conducted at the triennial meeting is as follows:

- the making and attesting of the declarations required of councillors
- the election of the chairperson and deputy chairperson
- a general explanation of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and other laws affecting elected members
- the fixing of the date and time of the first ordinary meeting of the council, or the adopting of a schedule of meetings
- items of urgent general business, if any.

When members leave office

Every member of a local authority vacates office – where the member's office is subject to an election – when the members elected at the next election come into office (Section 116 LEA).

If, at the close of nominations, the number of candidates is less than the number of vacancies, the unfilled vacancies become extraordinary vacancies and are treated as occurring on polling day (11 October 2025) (Section 64 LEA).

Any such extraordinary vacancy is required to be filled by an election, which cannot occur any earlier than 21 February 2026 (Section 117 LEA).

Ngā ture kāwanatanga me ētehi atu pārongo

Legislation and further info

Pre-election report

The chief executive of a local authority must prepare a pre-election report to provide information to promote public discussion about the issues facing the local authority prior to the local government elections.

The report must be completed and published no later than two weeks before the nomination day (August) for a triennial general election of members of a local authority under the Local Electoral Act 2001.

Copies of the pre-election report will be available to view at waikatoregion.govt.nz/elections and at council offices from this time.

The pre-election report must contain:

- for the three financial years immediately preceding the date of the election:
 - the information included in the council's funding impact statement
 - a summary of cash flows based on the council's financial statements for the last three years ending before the date of the election in 2025, disclosing income from rates and payments for property, plant, equipment and intangible assets separately
 - a summary balance sheet based on the financial statements that discloses public debt and financial assets separately
- for the three financial years immediately following the date of the election:
 - the information included in the council's funding impact statement
 - a summary balance sheet based on the council's forecast financial statements that discloses public debt and financial assets separately
 - the major projects planned for the three financial years immediately following the date of the election.

Legislation

Waikato Regional Council is a body corporate constituted under the Local Government Act 2002.

The conduct of local authority elections is regulated by legislation, namely:

- Local Electoral Act 2001 (and amendments)
- Local Electoral Regulations 2001 (and amendments)
- Local Government Act 2002
- Local Authorities (Members Interests) Act 1968
- New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 (for district health board elections)
- Crown Entities Act 2004 (for district health board elections)

The council gets its authority from the various laws made by Parliament. The main Acts council operates under are:

- Local Government Acts 1974 and 2002
- Local Government (Rating) Act 2002
- Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968
- Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987
- Local Electoral Act 2001
- Building Act 2004
- Resource Management Act 1991
- Land Transport Act 1998
- Health Act 1956

The council also operates under various other Acts of Parliament, including regulations made under those Acts.

Local Government Act 2002

The Local Government Act 2002 reflects a clear view that local authorities that are effective, responsible and accountable to the communities they represent are a fundamental part of our system of democratic governance, rather than merely a collection of assets and services.

The Act provides greater scope for communities to make their own choices about what local authorities do and the way they do these things. Local authorities have full capacity to undertake any act that promotes the purpose of local government, subject to other legislation.

The purpose of local government is:

- to enable democratic local decision making and action by, and on behalf of, communities
- to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities now and in the future.

The role of a local authority is to:

- give effect, in relation to its district or region, to the purpose of local government
- perform the duties, and exercise the rights, conferred on it by or under this Act and any other enactment.

These statements envelop a number of related ideas that reflect the actual job of the council and therefore its elected members:

- Democracy – ensuring opportunities for participation by electors in decision making processes, within the overall framework of representative democracy.
- Effectiveness – decision making processes are intended to ensure that representatives are well informed about the preferences of electors, and electors are well informed about the actions of their representatives (and the likely consequences of those actions).
- Local decision making and accountability – a framework for decision making that reflects the need to provide effective means for local accountability.

Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968

The Local Authorities (Members' Interests) Act 1968 fulfills two underlying purposes:

- It prevents members from using their position to obtain preferential treatment from the authority of which they are a member in contracting situations.
- It ensures that members are not affected by personal financial motives when they participate in authority matters.

There is a rule of law, known as the rule against bias, which says “no one may be judge of their own cause”. The object of this rule is to ensure people who exercise power from positions of authority carry out their duties free from bias (actual or apparent). The Act is a statutory application of this rule to particular circumstances, i.e. pecuniary interests, and:

- controls the making of contracts between members and their authority
- prevents members from participating in authority matters in which they have a pecuniary interest.

A member is disqualified from office who is “concerned or interested” in contracts with their authority under which the total payments made, or to be made, by or on behalf of the authority exceed \$25,000 in any financial year. The \$25,000 limit is GST inclusive. This restriction is waived if prior approval is obtained from the Office of the Controller and Auditor-General.

Disqualification means that a person cannot:

- be elected or appointed to:
 - the authority
 - any committee of the authority
- hold office as a member of the authority or any committee.

It is also an offence under the Act for a person to act as a member of an authority, or a committee of the authority, while disqualified. A disqualification lasts until the next general election or opportunity for appointment to the authority.

The restriction on contracting applies to the member, not the authority. The Act does not affect the authority's power to enter into contracts. The fact that a contract has been let does not invalidate the contract.

Code of conduct

Every council adopts a code of conduct for its elected members (Clause 15 of Schedule 7 of the Local Government Act 2002). The code of conduct provides guidance on how elected members may conduct themselves, including behaviour toward one another, staff and the public, and the disclosure of information.

The code of conduct also contains a general explanation of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 and other enactments or rules of law that are applicable to elected members.

The code of conduct can be amended but it cannot be revoked without replacement. To amend a code of conduct or adopt a new code of conduct, a vote of not less than 75 per cent of members present in support is necessary.

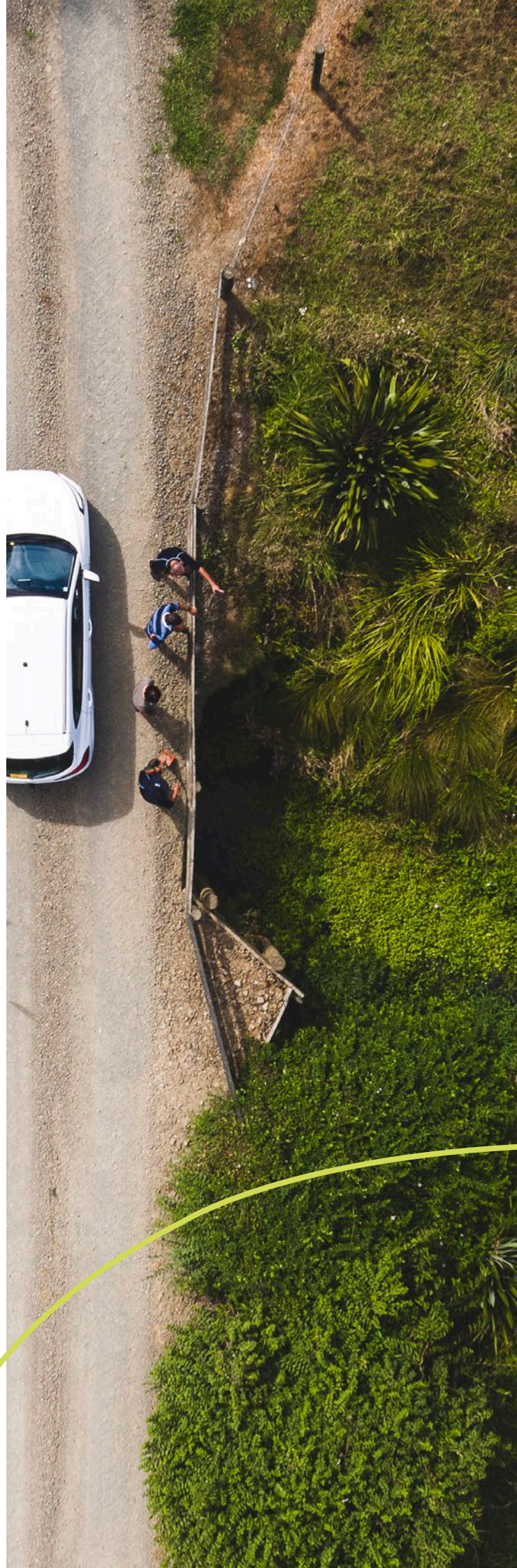
Breaching the code

There are repercussions if the code is breached. Penalties depend on the nature of the breach and can include:

- dismissal from the position of chairperson or deputy chairperson
- removal or suspension of a special status, such as committee chairperson or committee member
- invitation for the elected member to resign
- removal of right to speak to members of the staff, other than the chief executive
- education and/or mentoring
- request for an apology, either public or private.

A copy of the current code of conduct for Waikato Regional Council can be obtained from the electoral officer or from the council's website:

 waikatoregion.govt.nz/Local-Governance-Statement



Hei tāpiritanga

More information



waikatoregion.govt.nz/elections

For information on:

- standing as a candidate
- when and how you will be able to vote
- nomination papers
- what regional council does.

A list of all candidates will be posted on this website at the close of nominations. Profile statements for all candidates will be posted for the voting period (9 September to 11 October 2025).



elections.org.nz

For information on enrolling on the residential electoral roll or checking you are currently enrolled.





He taiao mauriora ▲▲ **Healthy environment**

He hāpori hihiri ▲▲ **Vibrant communities**

He ōhanga pakari ▲▲ **Strong economy**

May 2025 #7625

Private Bag 3038, Waikato Mail Centre,
Hamilton 3240, New Zealand
0800 800 401 waikatoregion.govt.nz