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Your Guide to the 2020 General Election and referendums

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The 2020 General Election will now be held on 17 October along with the End of Life Choice and cannabis referendums.

Voting in the general election and referendums starts on Saturday 3 October and ends at 7pm on election day, Saturday 17 October.

At the general election, you can vote for the parties and candidates you want to represent you in Parliament. There will be two referendums held alongside the election. You can vote on whether the End of Life Choice Act 2019 should come into force, giving people with a terminal illness the option of requesting assisted dying. You can also vote on whether the recreational use of cannabis should become legal.

Find out more about the referendums at referendums.govt.nz

Enrol to vote

You need to be enrolled to vote in the general election and referendums.

To enrol and vote, you need to be 18 years or older, a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident, and have lived in New Zealand continuously for 12 months or more at some time in your life.

If you're enrolled by Sunday 13 September, you'll get a voting information pack in the mail. The pack tells you how to vote, who the candidates and political parties are, and when you can vote. You'll also get an EasyVote card that makes voting quicker and easier on the day.

If you enrol after 13 September, you can still vote but you won't receive your voting information pack with your EasyVote card in the mail.

Did you know you can enrol online?

Enrolling to vote has been made easier with an improved online enrolment service at vote.nz.

You can now use a New Zealand driver licence, New Zealand passport or RealMe verified identity to enrol or update your details, for example if you've changed address. It takes about five minutes and means you'll be ready to vote in this year's general election and referendums.

You can also enrol or update your details using a paper enrolment form. Call 0800 36 76 56 or text your name and address to 3676 to have one sent to you in the mail. You can also pick up a form at a Citizens Advice Bureau or public library.

Vote early

You can vote in the general election and referendums from Saturday 3 October until 7pm on election day, Saturday 17 October. Vote early to help maintain physical distancing.

Information about where, when and how to vote is available at [vote.nz](https://www.vote.nz) or call 0800 36 76 56.

It's best to vote close to home

It's easier and faster to vote close to home if you can. Take your EasyVote card with you if you have one.

If you're not going to be in your electorate during the voting period, you can still vote at any voting place by completing a special vote, which will take longer because you will need to fill in an extra form.

If getting to a voting place is difficult or not possible because of poor health or mobility, several options are available to make sure you can still vote including telephone dictation voting or postal voting.

Register to vote by telephone dictation

If you're blind, partially blind or have a physical disability that means you can't mark your voting paper without help, you can vote using the telephone dictation service.

You can register to vote by telephone dictation from Monday 14 September by calling 0800 028 028 and selecting option 1 to register.

You can call weekdays from 9am to 5pm until Friday 9 October. From Monday 12 October you can call from 9am to 7pm.

You must be registered for telephone dictation voting by 7pm, Thursday 15 October.

Vote by telephone dictation

If you're registered to vote by telephone dictation, you can vote from Wednesday 30 September by calling 0800 028 028 and selecting option 2 to vote.

You can call weekdays from 9am to 5pm until Friday 9 October. From Monday 12 October you can call from 9am to 7pm.

Your last chance to vote is on election day, Saturday 17 October from 9am to 7pm.

Need help to vote?

If you need help to read or mark your voting paper, a friend, family member or electoral official can help. Just ask when you go to vote.

Voters who are blind, have low vision or another disability that means they are unable to mark their voting papers without help, can vote using the telephone dictation service.

Anyone who doesn't speak English can take a friend or family member to the voting place to help.

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COVID-19 safety measures for the election

The 2020 General Election and referendums will be different because of COVID-19. We have processes in place to protect you and your whānau while you vote.

Voting will open 2 days earlier than usual, and there will be more voting places to reduce queues. We encourage you to vote locally and bring your own pen if you can. We'll provide hand sanitiser at voting places, and there'll be space for physical distancing.

Can't get to a voting place?

If getting to a voting place is difficult or not possible because of poor health or mobility, several options are available to make sure you can still vote. This could include requesting a postal vote or asking a family member or friend to pick up and deliver voting papers on your behalf.

Find out more at [vote.nz](https://www.vote.nz) or call us on 0800 36 75 56 if you would like to talk over your options. If you know someone this information would help, please tell them about it.

If you are in a rest home and you won't be able to go to a voting place, you don't need to contact us. Your local Returning Officer will contact the manager of your rest home to arrange voting services.

If you can't get to a voting place because you are in hospital, from 3 October, a friend or family member can bring you your voting papers. Call 0800 36 76 56 for more information.

Voting in the general election and referendums

You get two votes in the general election – a party vote and an electorate vote.

Your party vote is for the political party you choose. This vote largely decides the total number of seats each political party gets in Parliament.

Your electorate vote is for the candidate you would like to be the member of Parliament for the area you live in. The candidate who gets the most votes wins.

You can vote for a party and a candidate, or vote for only one or the other — it's your choice.

You can also vote in two referendums — the End of Life Choice referendum and the cannabis legalisation and control referendum.

The referendums are a Yes/No vote. You vote in the referendums by placing a tick next to Yes to say that you support the referendum proposal, or by placing a tick next to No to say that you do not support the referendum proposal.

Voting in the referendums is optional. You can also choose to vote in only one referendum if you want to.

Māori or general roll?

If you are on the Māori roll you will vote for a candidate standing in a Māori electorate and if you are on the general roll you will vote for a candidate standing in a general electorate.

The type of roll you are on makes no difference to your party vote—you get to choose from the same list of political parties whether you are on the general roll or the Māori roll.

Find out more about the Māori roll at vote.nz or call 0800 36 76 56.

If you're not enrolled – enrol now!

Your vote is important – it's time to make sure you're enrolled and ready to vote in the general election and referendums.

Enrol online using your New Zealand driver licence, New Zealand passport or RealMe verified identity.

Or to get an enrolment form sent to you in the post, text your name and address to 3676 or call 0800 36 76 56.

To find out more about enrolling and voting go to vote.nz and for more information on the referendums go to referendums.govt.nz.