



2028 Electoral Systems Option

Electoral Officer Presentation
Taupo District Council

11 August 2026

The Electoral System Option

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- ◆ A change to the electoral system can be initiated by:
 - a resolution by the local authority; or
 - a poll of electors
- ◆ Decision by a local authority must be made by 12 September 2026 **if a council wishes to change the electoral system** for the next two triennial elections (s27)
- ◆ ***Not Mandatory*** – council can do nothing, the status quo will continue to apply unless changed by a council resolution or a poll of electors
- ◆ Public Notice of the right of electors to demand a poll must be published by 19 September 2026 – the public notice ***is mandatory*** whether the Council passes a resolution or not
- ◆ Decision (and public notice) is not necessary if the current system was put in place by a poll that applies to the 2025/2028 or 2028/2031 elections or a council has already resolved to hold a poll.

Electoral System Poll

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◆ Can be either:

- held at the initiative of a council (by resolution); or
- be demanded by a minimum of 5% of the electors
- 5% of 28,269 electors in Taupo DC in 2025 is **1,414**
- Estimated cost of a Poll is approx \$135,000
- If resolved by council by 12 September 2026 then Poll must be held by 28 March 2027

The result of a poll is binding and the electoral system adopted must be used for the next two triennial local elections and all subsequent elections until the council passes another resolution to change the electoral system or a further poll is held.

If a Poll is held by 28 March 2027 then the electoral system will be in place for the 2028 and 2031 council elections. If the poll is held after 28 March 2027 then it will be in place for the 2031 and 2034 elections.

'Future For Local Government' Report

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- ◆ The FFLG report from 2021 (page 87) has recommended that STV be adopted as the nationwide voting method for council elections, to quote.....

“STV can be more representative of voters’ choices because a vote can be transferred if a preferred candidate does not meet a certain threshold. This transfer of votes avoids wasted ballots. Early research demonstrates that STV leads to improvements in the representation of women (Vowles and Hayward 2021). However, the representative benefits of STV work best when there is a large pool of candidates and wards with more than one seat being contested.”

First Past the Post (FPP)

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- ◆ Well known and well used, everyone knows how it works
- ◆ You get as many votes as there are positions to fill
- ◆ You tick the boxes of the candidates you want to vote for, up to the number of positions to be filled, ie one for mayor, up to one, seven, one and one in each ward
- ◆ The candidates, equal to the number of positions to be filled, with the most votes are elected
- ◆ The voters for the unsuccessful candidates have no further say in the election
- ◆ FPP progress results sent to council at 12.54pm on election day in 2025
- ◆ In 2025 the successful mayoral candidate received 35.2% of votes

FPP Results

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Mayoralty

Votes Received

FUNNELL, John	(Independent)	5,600
COZENS, Zane	(Independent)	4,245
TREWAVAS, David James		2,985
TAYLOR, Kevin	(Independent)	2,866
INFORMAL		6
BLANK VOTING PAPERS		164

John FUNNELL is declared elected.

The voter return was 55.36%, being 15,866 votes, including special votes.

STV (Single Transferable Vote)

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- ◆ You have a single vote (regardless of the number of positions to be filled) and your vote can be transferred between candidates
- ◆ You rank (1, 2, 3 ...) as many or as few candidates as you wish
- ◆ If your first preferred candidate (no. 1):
 - *either* does not need all the votes they get, part of your vote is transferred to your next preferred candidate
 - *or* has no chance of being elected, your whole vote is transferred to your next preferred candidate
- ◆ Your vote continues to be transferred, if either your next preferred candidate does not need all the votes they get, or has no chance of being elected, until all positions are filled
- ◆ A demonstration explaining STV is available from <https://www.electionz.com/STV5/>

STV Counting Process

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- ◆ The 'quota' of votes needed to be elected is calculated (the total number of votes divided by one more than the number of positions)
- ◆ First preference votes (the no. 1s) are counted
- ◆ Any candidate who reaches the quota is elected, and their surplus votes (votes above the quota) are transferred to voters' next preference(s)
- ◆ If, after these transfers, not all the positions are filled, the candidate with the least number of votes is excluded and their votes are transferred to those voters' next preferences
- ◆ This counting process continues until all positions are filled
- ◆ STV results sent to councils between 1.30-2.30pm on election day
- ◆ Costs about 30% more to process the votes = approx \$16,000

Who uses STV

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16 councils – 14 TLAs and 2 RCs

◆ *Since 2004:*

Kapiti Coast, Porirua, Wellington, Marlborough, Dunedin

◆ *Since 2013:*

Palmerston North, Greater Wellington RC

◆ *Since 2019:*

Tauranga, Ruapehu, New Plymouth

◆ *Since 2022:*

Far North, Hamilton, Gisborne, Nelson

◆ *Since 2025:*

Whangarei, ORC

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Advantages and Disadvantages

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- ◆ There is no perfect system, all have advantages and disadvantages
- ◆ FPP is more familiar and easier to understand, you have as many votes as they are positions, whereas STV is one vote split many ways
- ◆ FPP can result in a “minority” mayor, or councillor in a single seat election
- ◆ STV has better outcomes:
 - a fairer system as the preferences of more voters are reflected in election results and less votes are ‘wasted’
 - can achieve representation proportional to all the significant communities making up the district
 - Works best for single member elections and at-large or large wards (5-7 members)
 - For single seat elections, winning candidate has support from more than 50% of the votes cast
- ◆ But:
 - some see STV as more work to rank the candidates
 - STV not as easy to understand how votes are counted
 - STV takes longer to produce the results, more data to capture and process
 - STV costs about an extra 30% for vote processing
 - STV requires a comms campaign the first time

STV Advantages

A fairer system:

- ◆ subject to the number of preferences you identify, you will contribute to the election of at least one candidate, i.e. vote not 'wasted' (on candidates who don't need all the votes they receive, or are not successful)
- ◆ because votes are transferable, there is no incentive to vote other than in accordance with your true preferences
- ◆ as a result, the true preferences of more voters are reflected in election results
- ◆ STV recommended by The Future of Local Government Report for all councils
- ◆ compared to FPP – block voting by sizeable minority interests can outweigh the votes of the majority spread over many candidates; two popular candidates may split the votes with a less popular candidate coming through the middle; 'tactical' voting to keep someone out

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STV informal votes

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- ◆ Is ranking of candidates that difficult?
 - 2008 Local Government Commission survey showed “a large majority of respondents (79%) who had heard of STV and voted in DHB elections found the system ‘easy to understand and use’.”
 - Those councils that use STV have about the same informal rate as FPP councils, 1%
- ◆ Two different systems (STV and FPP) on same voting document can result in more informal votes for the second election
 - Used to happen for DHB elections
 - Currently FPP for Taupo DC and WRC, BOPRC, HBRC, Horizons
 - Won’t be an issue if there are no RC elections

electionz.com
voting made easy



Thank You
Questions?