

25 March 2022

By email to: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST 2022/06

Thank you for your request of 5 March 2022 under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) in which you asked:

“What software brand and/or company was used in the last general election to record the hand-counted votes. If there are more than one software brand and/or company involved in recording voting numbers could you advise all their names. If you could also confirm if any of these companies are not New Zealand based.”

Your questions have been answered as set out below.

What software brand and/or company was used in the last general election to record the hand-counted votes. If there are more than one software brand and/or company involved in recording voting numbers could you advise all their names. If you could also confirm if any of these companies are not New Zealand based?

The process for counting votes in New Zealand is very thorough and careful, to maintain confidence and integrity. All votes are counted by hand – the Electoral Commission does not use vote counting machines.

There are two counts performed after voting has ended. The first is a preliminary count of votes on election night, followed by the official count which starts the day after election day.

During the preliminary count, all ordinary votes cast are counted, and the preliminary results are released on election night. Preliminary results are entered into the Election Management System by electoral officials at electorate headquarters after 7PM on election day.

During the official count, all ordinary votes cast are counted a second time and special votes are checked and counted. Once the count is complete for each voting place during the official count, the totals are recorded on a certificate of results which is signed by the Returning Officer for that electorate and a Justice of the Peace to declare that results are accurate.

These results are then entered manually into the Election Management System (EMS)– this process happens progressively over the official count period.

The Election Management System is a purpose-built system developed in New Zealand for the exclusive use of the Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission design, test and manage its development. Software development is performed by a New Zealand company CATALYST. NET LIMITED, NZ Company Number 952897. CATALYST is contracted to the Commission to help the Commission maintain the Election Management System. The system is hosted at New Zealand Government approved 'All-of-Government' data centres.

In the interests of transparency, we release responses to Official Information Act requests every 3 months. We will publish this response with your personal details redacted.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to make a complaint to the Ombudsman if you are not satisfied with the response to your request. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



James Willcocks

Chief Information Officer
Electoral Commission