



Māori Electoral Option public information and education campaign strategy

December 2022

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Māori Electoral Option

The Māori Electoral Option (“the Option”) is a chance for all enrolled Māori voters to choose which electoral roll to be on, the general roll or the Māori roll.

From 31 March 2023, Māori will be able to change the roll type they’re on at any time except:

- in the 3-months before a general election and the local elections held every three years
- during a parliamentary by-election if it puts you in the electorate where the by-election is being held.

It is important that Māori understand what the option means for them:

- the decision to change roll types may have an impact on the number of Māori electorates, and
- your choice of roll type will affect the candidates you can choose to vote for at a general election and may affect the candidates you can vote for at a local election.

Prior to 31 March 2023, Māori voters could choose to be on the Māori roll or general roll when they first enrolled to vote and only change roll types during the Māori Electoral Option which took place every 5 or 6 years.

Public information and education campaign

The Commission will deliver a public information and education campaign to inform Māori about the Māori Electoral Option (MEO), how to take part, understand what it means for them, and where to get more information.

Strategic context

The campaign will be guided by:

- the Commission’s strategic framework
- Te Ao Māori approach
- Te Reo Māori me ōna tikanga
- the Commission’s Ngā Maihihioterā framework and Te Tiriti principles
- qualitative and quantitative research with Māori audiences

Campaign objectives

The overarching objectives of the campaign are to:

- Raise awareness of the Māori Electoral Option amongst Māori.
- Ensure Māori know about the Māori Electoral Option, what the choice means for them, and how to make that choice.

Challenges

- Historically lower levels of electoral engagement among Māori.
- Complex subject matter and low levels of awareness and understanding of the Māori Electoral Option.
- Varying levels of awareness of the Māori Electoral Option, what it means and how to make their choice.
- Recent legislative changes that impact understanding of when Māori can choose to change rolls.

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- The choice now has a greater impact on voting at local elections with more local Councils establishing Māori wards and constituencies.
- Crowded space: many others will be demanding their attention at the same time.
- Message fatigue closely following COVID-19, Census, and local elections.
- The challenge of reaching all Māori and their descendants - geographic spread.
- The digital and social economic divide.

The opportunity

The campaign provides opportunity to:

- connect and communicate with Māori in a way that resonates
- strengthen relationships with Māori and key stakeholders
- raise the profile and reputation of the Electoral Commission among key stakeholders
- build understanding of the Commission's role.

Success indicators

Māori will know:

- what roll they are currently on, if they're already enrolled
- what the Māori Electoral Option is
- when they can and cannot choose to change rolls, if they want to
- how to take part
- what it means for them
- where to find more information

Audience

The campaign will need to reach:

- all Māori aged 18 years and over
- Māori who are already enrolled
- Māori who are not enrolled or who need to update their enrolment details
- Māori who are less engaged or harder to access through mainstream media and advertising

The communications task

The Commission will deliver a nationwide public information and education campaign to ensure Māori are aware of the Māori Electoral Option, how they can make their choice and what it means for them.

The purpose of the public information and education campaign is:

- to make it as easy as possible for Māori to take part by providing information about the Option in easily understood formats
- to raise awareness of the Māori Electoral Option
- to increase understanding of the Māori Electoral Option
- to help Māori feel confident to make a choice and know how to do it
- to raise awareness of what their roll choice means for them

Particular attention will be paid to:

- ensuring that the campaign is fair, impartial and politically neutral
- developing strategies designed to reach those Māori who are hardest to engage on electoral issues; and

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- ensuring all material resonates with Māori audiences.

Measuring the effectiveness of the campaign

Research will ensure the Commission delivers a campaign that resonates with Māori and builds their awareness and understanding of their choice and what they need to do.

Research will be undertaken before, during and after the campaign to support the following objectives:

Pre-campaign audience insights

Focus groups have been held with Māori to gauge levels of awareness, understanding and sentiment of the Option. This research provides important insights that will guide development of the creative for the campaign and campaign approach.

Pre-campaign creative testing

Creative testing will be necessary to test the advertising creative and communications prior to production to ensure they meet the campaign objectives and audience needs.

Pre-campaign benchmark

Benchmark research will be undertaken to establish pre-campaign levels of awareness and understanding. This will take place in early March 2023.

During the campaign – monitoring message uptake [TBC budget contingent]

To monitor message uptake and confidence levels to determine if the campaign is achieving its objectives.

Post-campaign – measuring the results

A post-campaign survey will measure the final impact the campaign had in reaching its objectives.

The approach will also be informed by the Commission's audience segmentation model based on cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement. The audience segment sizes were measured before and after the 2020 General Election, and again in August 2022. Māori appear across all segments and have both understanding and engagement barriers.

Alignment with the Commission's overall activity

The public information and education campaign forms part of the Commission's overall activity for the Option, which will include:

- A personalised mailout to all enrolled Māori, with information about the Option and an enrolment form to change rolls if they choose.
- Text and/or email messages sent to Māori who were on the electoral roll but could not be contacted through the mailout.
- Targeted community engagement via face-to-face and digital channels.
- Working with Māori groups to support them to share information about the Option.
- Advertising across multiple media channels to raise awareness and understanding.
- Public information on the Commission's websites, social media channels, brochures, and posters in English, te reo Māori and alternate formats.
- Information to news media to raise awareness of key milestones during the campaign.

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Alignment with community engagement:

- The campaign will use a variety of tactics and channels to inform Māori of their choices around the option, but a key delivery channel will be via the Commission's community engagement team.
- Face to face community engagement, utilising community organisations and our engagement teams has been an integral part of the Option for many years.
- It provides Māori with the chance to have a kanohi ki te kanohi conversation. It also allows for Māori groups to talk directly to Māori about the Option and their choices.
- The Community Engagement Team will deliver a targeted and on the ground Community Engagement Campaign in areas with higher Māori populations.
- It will align with the Public Information Campaign in terms of timing and messaging.
- The campaign will include direct kanohi ki te kanohi engagement with Māori communities by Commission staff (permanent and an additional temporary workforce) to share key messages about the Option.
- It will also include indirect engagement with Māori through contracted organisations, partners, and other community stakeholders in order to share these key messages and maximise reach.
- Local engagement plans will be developed to utilise local knowledge, insights, relationships, and partnerships. Plans will incorporate both in person and digital channels, including social media.
- Community Engagement staff, as well as many partners and community stakeholders, will also assist with helping people to enrol for the first time, exercise their choice, or update their details.

Evaluating the Commission's overall activity

Indicators to evaluate the success of the Commission's overall activity will include:

- Audience surveys to measure changes in awareness and understanding
- Post-media campaign report (i.e. impressions, click-through-rates)
- Website and social media visits and engagement
- Māori, community and stakeholder feedback
- Community engagement interactions with Māori
- Commission staff evaluation

Key messages

If you are Māori, you can choose which type of electoral roll you want to be on – the Māori roll or the general roll

- There has been a change to when Māori can change rolls
- From 31 March 2023, Māori can choose to change between roll types at any time except in the 3-months before a general election or the local elections that are held every 3-years
- You can't change roll types before a parliamentary by-election if it means you will be enrolled in an electorate where a by-election is being held.
- Previously if you are of Māori descent you could choose which roll type you want to vote on when you first enrol to vote, and choose to change roll types during the Māori Electoral Option, which took place every 5 or 6 years.

Your roll is your choice

- If you choose the Māori roll, you will vote for a candidate in the Māori electorate you live in.

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- If you choose the general roll, you will vote for a candidate in the general electorate you live in.
- You can vote for any political party regardless of which roll you are on
- The number of people on the Māori roll affects the number of Māori seats in parliament.

Its quick and easy to enrol to vote or change the roll you are on

- It's quick and easy to enrol, update your details or change which type of electoral roll you are on:
 - Visit vote.nz and use your New Zealand driver licence, New Zealand passport or RealMe verified identity to enrol online
 - Call free 0800 36 76 56 and ask for a form to be sent to you
 - If you're already enrolled, you'll get an information pack in the mail April 2023 asking you to check which roll you are on
 - Only return the form if you want to change the type of roll you are on
 - If you receive a letter and it's not yours, cross out the address and post it back
 - If you didn't get an information pack, then you're not enrolled or you need to update your enrolment details - do it now.
 - Go to vote.nz and use your New Zealand driver licence, New Zealand passport or RealMe verified identity to enrol or update your details or call 0800 36 76 56 to get a form sent to you in the mail.

Budget

Component	Description	Cost (FY 2022/23)
Research	Qualitative and quantitative research.	\$105,000
Advertising	Including creative, production, media placement, design of collateral including direct mail, engagement pack and translations of material.	\$2,900,000
IT specialist services	Web services to develop permanent MEO section on elections.nz	\$60,000
Specialist services (including personnel)	0800 services, accessible formats, translations, media management and stakeholder resources	\$513,275
Postage and couriers	Delivery of materials to stakeholders to help them share information about the Option.	\$15,000
Printing	Print materials to send to stakeholders	\$15,000
	TOTAL	\$3,608,275

High-level timeline

The public information and education campaign will start on 1 April 2023, to align with the personalised mailout to all enrolled Māori.

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The campaign will continue until the start of the 3-month exclusion period before the General Election. Additional budget is required if it is to continue after the end of FY2022/23.

The legislative changes to allow Māori to change rolls at any time affects ongoing communications to Māori and these need to be worked through overtime.

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Risks

Risk	Description	Activity
Effective partnership with Māori/iwi	IF effective partnerships between the Electoral Commission, Māori and iwi are not established, THEN we may not have their support, which would impact the Commission's ability to reach and build confidence with Māori communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acknowledge Māori as tangata whenua• Continue to build relationships/partnerships• Early engagement with iwi/Māori, including at a local level to allow jointly agreed solutions/plans• Continue work to build the Commission's Te Ao Māori capability• Alignment of communications and community engagement activities
Confusion about the Māori Electoral Option	IF Māori do not understand the what the Māori Electoral Option is, what it means, or how to choose (i.e. Māori do not understand that they cannot change rolls in the 3-months before election day) THEN confidence in the Option and electoral process may be impacted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear, relevant, and accurate messages across all channels• Messaging that resonates with Māori• The campaign and communication clearly define and explain the rolls, the options and how to make their choice• Close alignment of communications and community engagement planning and delivery• Māori help to inform the public information and education campaign• Pre-campaign quantitative survey sets a benchmark to measure levels of awareness and understanding and tracked throughout the campaign• Media and local stakeholder communications channels are used to maximise content sharing.
Low levels of understanding about how the choice affects who you can vote for at general elections and local elections, and when Māori can make that choice.	IF Māori don't understand that their choice affects who they can vote for at general elections and local elections, and when they can make that choice THEN trust, confidence and engagement in the electoral process may decline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear and concise messages about how the choice affects who you can vote for at general elections and local elections
Meeting expectations of the accessibility charter.	IF we can't deliver sufficiently on the initiatives outlined in the Accessibility Charter THEN we may not enable those with accessibility needs and their understanding and knowledge may to make a choice, which may result in reputational damage with the disabled	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with sector to understand and provide for accessibility needs• Manage community groups expectations about what is possible in time for 2023.

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	people and the disability sector.	
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