



FAQs

Triennial elections

12 OCTOBER 2019

THAMES-COROMANDEL DISTRICT COUNCIL



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Frequently Asked Questions

Thames-Coromandel District Council elections

General Information

Q1. When is the next Thames-Coromandel District Council election?

- A Election day is Saturday 12 October 2019 with voting closing at 12 noon. The voting period starts on Friday 20 September 2019.

Q2. Who runs the election?

- A The electoral officer has full responsibility for running the election.

Q3. What is the name of the electoral officer and deputy electoral officer?

- A The electoral officer is:
Dale Ofoske
Independent Election Services Ltd
Electoral Office: Level 2, 198 Federal Street,
Auckland
Phone: 0800 922 822
Email: dale.ofoske@electionservices.co.nz

The deputy electoral officer is:
Angela Jane, Governance and Strategy Group
Manager
Thames-Coromandel District Council
515 Mackay Street, Thames
Phone: (07) 868 0200
Email: angela.jane@tcdc.govt.nz

Q4. What type of electoral system is used?

- A The FPP (first past the post) electoral system is used for the Thames-Coromandel District Council and the Waikato Regional Council.

For a more detailed explanation of this electoral system, refer Q48.

Q5. What elections can we vote for?

- A Electors will be able to vote for the mayor, ward councillors, community board members, and Waikato Regional Council members. There will be no election for the Waikato District Health Board members due to the recent appointment of a commissioner.

Q6. What is the role of the mayor, councillors and community board members?

- A The mayor:
- presides at council meetings;
 - attends and participates at meetings of committees and working parties;
 - reads agenda and other materials before meetings;
 - leads the council and co-ordinates council political activity;
 - speaks on behalf of the council;
 - represents the council on related organisations, where appointed;
 - attends and participates at conferences and seminars;
 - attends to complaints and enquiries from members of the public;
 - presides at civic ceremonies;
 - hosts visiting groups, including overseas delegations;
 - attends and speaks at local functions, sometimes opening them;
 - declares a state of civil defence emergency in the district if the need arises.

A Mayor and councillors:

- participate in strategic and long-term planning for the whole district;
- develop policy across a wide range of activities and services;
- represent the district at functions as required;
- review and develops bylaws for the district;
- advocate on a wide range of issues;
- coordinates and forms partnerships with other spheres of government and other agencies;
- participate in the appointment and performance review of the chief executive;
- act on all these matters within a legislative and regulatory framework;

- set a budget and rates;
- monitor the performance of the council organisation.

A Community board members:

- promote residents' issues and initiatives to the board and the council;
- monitor the provision of council services and advocates changes as necessary;
- engage in community development activities in conjunction with council officers;
- take a proactive stance anticipating strategies and policies that may be needed;
- represent the community to other agencies;
- promote the role of the community board in the wider community;
- work cooperatively with the council.

but any expenditure made, within or outside the three-month applicable period before election day, must be accounted for.

Candidates

Q7. I want to be a candidate in these elections. What do I need to do?

A You must be a New Zealand citizen and your name must be on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll (anywhere in New Zealand).

When lodging your nomination, proof of citizenship will be required (e.g. copy of passport, birth certificate or citizenship certificate).

You will need to have two electors registered in the area of the election you are standing for to nominate you – e.g. if you stand for the Thames Ward, the nominators will need to be registered within that ward. (Note the candidate does not need to reside in the area in which he/she is standing but will need to disclose that fact in his/her candidate profile statement).

Nominations open on Friday 19 July 2019. If you would like a nomination paper and candidate information handbook sent out, please contact the electoral office closer to this date. Nomination papers will also be available on Council's website (www.tcdc.govt.nz) from 19 July 2019.

A candidate information handbook will be available in May 2019.

Candidate campaigning can commence any time prior to the election (no time restriction),

Q8. How much will it cost me to stand?

A You will need to pay a nomination deposit of \$200 GST inclusive. This deposit applies to each election you stand for.

Your nomination deposit can be paid by electronic bank transfer, EFTPOS, credit card or cash. Cheques will be accepted but not preferred (should they 'bounce').

If you poll greater than 25% of the lowest polling successful candidate (for FPP elections) you will receive your nomination deposit back.

Q9. What qualifications and experience do I need?

A Nothing formal. Elected members come from all walks of life and generally have a will/desire to serve the community.

All (or some) of the following capabilities will be useful in the elected member role:

- quality decision-making;
- political acumen;
- leadership;
- cultural awareness;
- strategic thinking;
- knowledge and understanding of Thames-Coromandel District Council and local government;
- communication and engagement;
- relationship building and collaboration.

Q10. Does a criminal record affect a person standing as a council candidate?

A No.

Q11. How long is the term of the elected member?

A Three years.

Q12. Do I need to be resident in the area I am standing for?

A No, but you must be on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll (anywhere in New Zealand) and be a New Zealand citizen (by birth or citizenship ceremony). You will however need to disclose whether or not you reside in the area you are standing for in the candidate profile statement.

The two people who nominate you must be on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll within the area you are standing for.

If you stand for more than one position, the amount you can spend is the highest amount for one position. You cannot add positions together to allow you to spend more than the limit.

All candidates are required to lodge an electoral donations and expenses return within 55 days after the day on which the successful candidates are declared to be elected (by 13 December 2019).

If a candidate is outside New Zealand on this day, the return must be filed within 76 days after election result day.

If a return is not submitted within the required time period, the non-return will be advised to the New Zealand Police for enforcement.

The return needs to be received before a candidate nomination deposit is refunded if appropriate.

Q13. How many positions can I stand for?

A You can stand for mayor, a ward councillor and a community board member, but if you are elected to more than one position, you take the highest ranked position.

You cannot stand for both the Thames-Coromandel District Council and the Waikato Regional Council.

Q15. When do nominations close?

A Nominations close at 12 noon Friday 16 August 2019.

It is strongly recommended that candidates do not leave lodging their nomination until the last day, as to do so may mean having to queue and should there be an error with the nomination, little time to have it corrected.

Q14. How much can I spend on my campaign?

A There is a limit on what you can spend on your campaign and it relates to the population of the area you are standing for.

The maximum amount that can be spent by a candidate cannot exceed the limits set out below:

Local government area population	Expenditure limit
Up to 4,999	\$3,500
5,000 – 9,999	\$7,000
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 – 1,000,000	\$70,000
1,000,000 or more	\$100,000*

*plus 50 cents for each elector

For example, a candidate for the Mercury Bay Community Board (which has a population in the range of 5,000 – 9,999) can spend up to \$7,000 inclusive of GST.

Enrolment

Q16. Where can I view the electoral roll that will be used for this election?

A The preliminary electoral roll will be available for public inspection for a one-month period from Friday 19 July 2019 to Friday 16 August 2019.

The preliminary electoral roll will be available for inspection at:

- Council's Main Office, 515 Mackay Street, Thames
- Coromandel Service Centre, 355 Kapanga Road, Coromandel
- Mercury Bay Service Centre, 10 Monk Street, Whitianga
- Whangamata Service Centre, 620 Port Road, Whangamata

- Colville, Coromandel, Ferry Landing Cooks Beach, Hahei, Mercury Bay, Pauanui, Tairua, Thames and Whangamata libraries.

Q17. How do I enrol to vote in these elections?

A Is this your main place of residence?

- Yes

Have you lived at your current address for more than one month?

- Yes

Are you on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll at your current address in the Thames-Coromandel District Council area?

- Yes

You will automatically appear on the electoral roll that is used for these elections

Or

Is this your main place of residence?

- Yes

Are you on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll at an address in the Thames-Coromandel District Council area?

- No or Don't Know

You need to complete an enrolment form for this. You can either:

- enrol online at www.elections.org.nz
- ring 0800 36 76 56
- send your name and address to Freetext 3676
- download a form at www.elections.org.nz
- pick a form up at your local New Zealand Post agency

Is this your main place of residence?

- No

Are you on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll at an address in another district?

- Yes

If you own a property in this district and it is not your main residence you may be able to enrol as a non-resident ratepayer elector. (Refer to ratepayer enrolment advice in Q23).

Q18. I am a student and spend my time in different places. Where should I enrol?

A You should enrol where you spend the greater part of your time.

Q19. I am a New Zealand Māori; do I need to enrol on the Māori roll?

A Not necessarily. If you are enrolling for the first time you can decide whether you want to go on the Parliamentary Māori Electoral Roll or the Parliamentary General Electoral Roll by signing the appropriate panel on the parliamentary elector enrolment form.

However, if you have already made that choice you will have to wait until the next Māori Option period to change, which occurs following the next census, likely in 2023. The last Māori Option period was 3 April to 2 August 2018.

Q20. How do I know whether I am enrolled?

A The Electoral Commission will be undertaking a roll update campaign at the beginning of July 2019 for the Parliamentary Electoral Roll which forms the basis of the electoral roll for the Thames-Coromandel District Council elections. If you do not receive a letter in the post during early July 2019 the chances are you are not enrolled, or your details are incorrect. You will then need to complete a Parliamentary Electoral Roll enrolment form.

You can check to see if you are enrolled at www.elections.org.nz or by phoning 0800 36 76 56.

Q21. I turn 18 on election day. Can I vote?

A Yes, but you need to make sure you have enrolled which you can do provisionally from the age of 17 and it automatically changes when you turn 18.

You will also need to apply for a special vote during the voting period (Friday 20 September 2019 to 12 noon, Saturday 12 October 2019).

For special vote availability, see Q38.

Q22. We own a business in the Thames-Coromandel District Council area and pay rates, but we don't live in the Thames-Coromandel District Council area – do we get a say in the Thames-Coromandel District Council elections?

A Yes, subject to being eligible as a non-resident ratepayer elector and becoming enrolled.

A non-resident ratepayer enrolment form is available:

- online www.tcdc.govt.nz
- or by phoning 0800 922 822.

The non-resident ratepayer enrolment form should be returned to the electoral officer or an electoral official by 16 August 2019 and absolutely no later than 11 October 2019 in order to vote.

If it is after Friday 16 August 2019, a special voting document will need to be requested and will be issued on 20 September 2019, the start of the voting period.

For special vote availability, see Q38.

Q23. I own a property in the Thames-Coromandel District Council area, but it is not my fulltime residence. How do I get on the ratepayer electoral roll?

A Is your name on the rates notice?
➤ Yes

You may be eligible to be on the ratepayer electoral roll. Contact the electoral office on 0800 922 822 and request a ratepayer enrolment form. This should be returned to the electoral officer or an electoral official by 16 August 2019 and absolutely no later than 11 October 2019 in order to vote. If it is after Friday 16 August 2019, a special voting document will need to be requested and will be issued on 20 September 2019, the start of the voting period.

If it is easier you can visit a special voting venue during the voting period (Friday 20 September 2019 to 12 noon Saturday 12 October 2019) and complete the ratepayer enrolment form and have your special vote at the same time.

For special vote availability, see Q38.

In no case does this allow you to have two votes at an election.

Is your name on the rates notice?

➤ No

You may not be eligible to be on the ratepayer electoral roll. Contact the electoral office on 0800 922 822.

Voting

Q24. Is it a postal vote and will I be sent my voting documents in the mail?

A All local authority elections will be conducted by postal vote. Voting documents will be delivered by NZ Post between Friday 20 September 2019 and Wednesday 25 September 2019.

There is no online voting option available.

Q25. I got my voting document but my partner didn't receive theirs.

A Is it before Wednesday 25 September 2019 and I believe I am correctly registered on electoral roll?
➤ Yes

Please wait until the mail has been delivered on Wednesday 25 September 2019. If your voting document is not received, then please call the electoral office on 0800 922 822.

Is it after Wednesday 25 September 2019 and I believe I am correctly registered on electoral roll?

➤ Yes

You will need to apply for a special vote – for special vote availability, see Q38.

Is it after Wednesday 25 September 2019 and I believe I am not correctly registered on electoral roll?

➤ No

You will need to complete a Parliamentary Electoral Roll enrolment form. These are available at any New Zealand Post agency, or you can enrol online at www.elections.org.nz or ring 0800 36 76 56 or send your name and address to Freetext 3676.

You will need to apply for a special vote – for special vote availability, see Q38.

Q26. I didn't get my voting document, so I called and got a special vote. Now I have two voting documents. Which one should I use?

A Use the original one and destroy the special vote.

Q27. I received a voting document for a member of my family (e.g. child, parent) and have Power of Attorney for that person. Can I vote for that person?

A No – Power of Attorney does not apply to voting for that person.

Q28. I received a voting document for a member of my family (e.g. child, parent) who does not live here. What should I do with the voting document?

A If they are overseas, you could post it to the person or destroy it if that is not practicable.

If they are for an elderly parent who is incapable of voting, please destroy it by ripping/cutting it up. You cannot vote on their behalf unless instructed by them.

Q29. I received a voting document that does not belong to me and I don't know this person or where this person has gone.

A Write GNA (Gone No Address) on the envelope and put it back in the mail.

Q30. What is that barcode that I can see through the return envelope or on the front of the voting document?

A It is a legal requirement to scan the barcode to mark the electoral roll that you have returned your vote so we can ensure that we do not receive two votes from the same person.

Q31. How do you ensure the secrecy of my vote?

A Returned envelopes containing a voting document cannot be opened until there is a JP present. The JP is required to sign off that the processes used by the electoral officer met the legal requirements.

Note that the voter's name is not shown on the voting document.

When the envelope is opened the only thing the electoral office is looking for is that the vote for each election is valid.

This means that for FPP elections we are making sure that the voter's intention is clear and the voter has not ticked or marked more than the number of candidates than there are vacancies.

Q32. Do I have to vote? I don't know any of these candidates.

A No, you don't have to vote, but we do encourage you to vote and exercise your democratic right.

You don't have to vote for all candidates or for all elections. But your vote is important because the people elected will be responsible for making decisions about what happens in your community for the next three years.

To help you get to know about the candidates:

- there may be candidate meetings being held in your community if you wish to go and hear what policies the different candidates are advocating for;
 - there is a candidate profile booklet that comes with the voting document in which there is a photo and a statement from each candidate. This information will also be available on the council's website (www.tcdc.govt.nz) after nominations close (expected 23 August 2019);
 - candidates may have their own website, social media page(s), advertise in local newspapers or send out information to letterboxes in your area;
 - local media are likely to cover information about the election.
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Q33. Do I have to post my voting document back?

A You can post it but make sure you have it in the mail by Tuesday 8 October 2019 to make sure it gets back to us in time (by 12 noon Saturday 12 October 2019).

However, you can also hand deliver your voting document to a ballot box during the

voting period (Friday 20 September 2019 to 12 noon Saturday 12 October 2019).

For ballot box locations see Q38.

Q34. I have lost my return envelope.

- A You can use an envelope of your own and put the return address and Freepost number on it. (You will not need to put a stamp on the envelope if you write the Freepost number on the envelope and post it in New Zealand).

Freepost number 4710
The Electoral Office
Thames-Coromandel District Council
PO Box 5135
Wellesley Street
Auckland 1141

Q35. I am on the Unpublished Parliamentary Roll and I want a special vote.

- A You will need to apply for a special vote – for special vote availability, see Q38.

Q36. I didn't receive my voting document; how do I obtain a special vote?

- A Are you on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll for the address you want to vote for?
➤ Yes

You will need to apply for a special vote – for special vote availability, see Q38.

Are you on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll for the address you want to vote for?
➤ No/Don't Know

If you are not enrolled or not enrolled correctly on the Parliamentary Electoral Roll, you will need to complete an enrolment form for this. You can pick one up at any New Zealand Post agency, or you can enrol online at www.elections.org.nz or ring 0800 36 76 56 or send your name and address to Freetext 3676. This form needs to be with the Registrar of Electors before close of business Friday 11 October 2019.

You will need to apply for a special vote – for special vote availability, see Q38.

Q37. I spoiled my voting document/I have made a mistake on my document. What can I do?

- A If you can amend it so that your voting intention is clear, then do so.

If necessary, we can issue you with a special voting document (for special vote availability, see Q38), but this will take time and require you to complete a declaration.

Q38. Where can I have a special vote?

- A Special votes can be obtained from
- Council's Main Office, 515 Mackay Street, Thames
 - Coromandel Service Centre, 355 Kapanga Road, Coromandel
 - Mercury Bay Service Centre, 10 Monk Street, Whitianga
 - Whangamata Service Centre, 620 Port Road, Whangamata
 - or by phoning 0800 922 822.

Q39. I am going away and will not be here when the voting documents are posted out.

- A You will need to apply for a special vote – for special vote availability, see Q38.

Q40. Do I have to vote for all the candidates for any election? If I don't vote for all the candidates or all the elections on my voting document, will all my votes be invalid?

- A Under FPP you can vote for as many candidates as you want to but not more than the number of positions available on the voting document. So, if you are electing two councillors then you can vote for up to two candidates. Remember, for FPP you tick the candidates you want to elect.

You can decide not to vote for one or more of the different elections on your voting document. This does not invalidate votes for other elections on your voting document.

Q41. Why can't I vote for a certain candidate who is standing for a different ward, community board or other election?

- A You can only vote for the elections relevant to the area in which you live. You cannot vote for a candidate who is standing for example in

another ward because you are not an elector of that other ward.

Q42. My partner's document and mine are different and there are more/less things to vote for. Why is the list of candidates different?

A You will need to call the electoral office on 0800 922 822.

Q43. I have received two voting documents.

A You will need to call the electoral office on 0800 922 822.

Q44. Do all the staff working on the election know who I voted for?

A No, your vote remains secret under the required separate roll scrutiny and vote counting procedures.

Q45. Can I help someone fill out their voting document?

A Under the Local Electoral Act 2001, you cannot interfere or influence any person as to how they can vote.

If authorised by a voter who is physically impaired, visually impaired or for whom English is a second language, a person can assist them to vote as directed by the voter.

Q46. What happens to all the voting documents after the elections?

A They are delivered to the Thames District Court and kept for 21 days so that the court can access them should there be any application for a recount or petition for inquiry.

After 21 days, the court is responsible for destroying them.

Q47. Do I get a vote for the district health board?

A No, due to the appointment of a commissioner to the Waikato District Health Board, there will be no election for this organisation in 2019.

Q48. What is FPP and how do I vote in an FPP election?

A FPP stands for first past the post voting system and is used for the Thames-Coromandel District Council and the Waikato Regional Council elections.

The candidate or candidates that gets the most votes wins.

You should mark those you want to vote for with a tick in the circle. Do not vote for more than the number of candidates shown in the instructions.

Election Results

Q49. When will we know the results of the election?

A Progress results will be announced as soon as practicable after 12 noon on Saturday 12 October 2019 (expected around 2pm).

Preliminary results will be announced on Sunday morning 13 October 2019 once all votes received at the council offices (up until 12 noon on election day) have been delivered to the electoral office in Auckland and processed.

The official results will be announced when special votes have been checked and included in the final results, expected to be Thursday 17 October 2019.

Q50. How will I find out?

Candidates:

A Progress and preliminary results will be advised as soon as practicable after the results are known.

Voters:

A Progress and preliminary results will be released to the media and placed on council's website (www.tcdc.govt.nz) as soon as they are known.

Q51. What do I need to do if I want to challenge the results of the election?

A Under legislation a candidate can challenge the declaration of results through either a judicial recount or a judicial inquiry. A candidate will have to provide reasons for the challenge and a deposit of \$750 with the application to the Thames District Court.

A candidate may wish to call the electoral office on 0800 922 822 to discuss this.

Members

Q52. When do elected members take up their roles?

Elected members take up office the day after the official result has been declared by public notice. However, members cannot act until they have sworn the oath of office which is usually at the first meeting of the council or community board. This first meeting is usually held as soon as practicable after the final election results are known.

Q53. Who are elected members responsible to?

Ultimately the elected members' final responsibility is to the local community. The Minister of Local Government and the Auditor-General do have a role in ensuring that council follows the law.

Q54. Do elected members get paid and if so, how much?

A remuneration pool is set by the Remuneration Authority. The newly elected council will decide how to apply the pool of funding. Some expenses are also reimbursed.

The Remuneration Authority reviewed in 2018 the basis of remuneration which has moved from a 'partial pool' basis to a 'full pool' basis.

For further information refer www.remauthority.govt.nz

Q55. Would being an elected member take up much time?

A Being an elected member is a busy job that often involves meetings, events and speaking with community members outside of normal business hours. Flexibility and the ability to prioritise and manage time effectively are essential. This includes balancing a high volume of reading, paperwork and emails with a schedule of meetings and public commitments.

Consequently, the mayor is considered a fulltime job and councillors and community board members are generally part-time jobs.

Q56. How many elected members are there?

A Elections are being held for:

- mayor (elected 'at large')
- councillors – 8 (elected from 4 wards)
- Waikato Regional Council members – either 1 member from the Thames-Coromandel General Constituency or 1 member from the Nga Tai Ki Uta Māori Constituency.

Election Signs

Q57. What are the requirements for election signs?

A Election signs are referenced in the Local Electoral Act 2001, council's bylaw on advertising and signs and its signs policy – all of which must be complied with.

Local Electoral Act 2001

All election material, including signs and hoardings, must show an authorisation statement (name and physical address of the candidate or the candidate's agent). Not to do so is an electoral offence.

Refer section 113 Local Electoral Act 2001.

Council bylaw on advertising and signs

Council's bylaw contains rules on the size of signs (which vary according to the type of location), the number of signs allowed per property, and in some cases, the size of the lettering (text) on the sign.

Council's election signs policy

Election signs are only permitted on private land with the owner's consent. Election signs are NOT permitted on council property, including road reserves.

Election signs on state highway road reserve must obtain permission from the New Zealand Transport Agency.

For further information relating to the rules about signs, refer to www.tcdc.govt.nz/bylaws

Election Sign Complaints

Q58. I have a complaint about the electoral signage.

The signs don't have the required authorisation on them:

A You will need to call the electoral office on 0800 922 822.

The signs are located where they should not be or have been pulled over or damaged:

A You will need to call the council on 07 868 0200.
