

MEDIA RELEASE

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agenda?

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LGNZ.**

14 October 2015

Eight councils put forward to be among first to trial online voting in local authority elections

Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) has announced that eight councils are in the running to be among the first in the country to offer online voting, should the Government agree to a trial during the 2016 local authority elections.

LGNZ President Lawrence Yule said the councils which have volunteered to take part in the trial are:

- Masterton District Council
- Matamata Piako District Council
- Palmerston North City Council
- Porirua City Council
- Rotorua Lakes District Council
- Selwyn District Council
- Wellington City Council, and
- Wanganui District Council

"This is an important project and a key initiative which will ultimately change the way many people vote in New Zealand," said Mr Yule.

"People are undertaking more and more of their business online and, in my view, it is only a matter of time before the option of voting online is routine. A trial of this kind is beneficial both to local authorities and to New Zealand as a whole. Voters in the trial areas will still be able to cast votes by post if they wish but will also have the option of voting online."

Taken together, the population of the trial councils makes up approximately 10 per cent of New Zealand's total population and Mr Yule said the councils which have volunteered to take part have both sufficient diversity and complexity to test the effectiveness of online voting systems.

"In our view the eight councils together meet the Cabinet's requirement that the trial is of sufficient scale and representativeness to produce evidence of the practicality and value of online voting in local elections across New Zealand. The councils will only be able to offer online voting if they meet the regulatory requirements set by Cabinet and if Cabinet agrees to a trial going ahead.

"All have given an assurance they are able to meet the Government's regulatory requirements within the proposed time-frame and many have told us they are already well on the way to meeting those requirements."

The trials will cover a range of election types depending on the council area, including single transferable vote (STV), community board, licensing trust and combined STV and first past the post (FPP) elections.

The trial councils are also diverse in terms of different socio-economic status, population density and broadband access. Each council's preparation for the trial, if accepted by the Government, will be subject to an audit by the Government's Chief Information Officer.

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ENDS

For more information please contact LGNZ's Director of Advocacy, Helen Mexted, on 029 924 1221 or email helen.mexted@lgnz.co.nz

For comment from individual councils please contact the relevant council's Mayor:

- Masterton District Council – Mayor Lyn Patterson, 021 172 6002
- Matamata Piako District Council – Mayor Jan Barnes, 027 439 1545
- Palmerston North City Council – Mayor Grant Smith, 06 351 4417
- Porirua City Council – Mayor Nick Leggett, 04 237 1400
- Rotorua Lakes District Council – Mayor Hon Steve Chadwick, 021 472 069
- Selwyn District Council – Mayor Kelvin Coe, 027 267 7732
- Wellington City Council – Mayor Celia Wade-Brown, 04 801 3102
- Wanganui District Council – Mayor Annette Main, 021 466 486

About LGNZ and local government in New Zealand

Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) is the peak body representing New Zealand's 78 local, regional and unitary authorities. LGNZ advocates for local democracy, develops local government policy, and promotes best practice and excellence in leadership, governance and service delivery. Through its work strengthening sector capability, LGNZ contributes to the economic success and vibrancy of communities and the nation.

The local government sector plays an important role. In addition to giving citizens a say in how their communities are run, councils own a broad range of community assets worth more than \$120 billion. These include 90 per cent of New Zealand's road network, the bulk of the country's water and waste water networks, and libraries, recreation and community facilities. Council expenditure is approximately \$8.5 billion dollars, representing approximately 4 per cent of Gross Domestic Product and 11 per cent of all public expenditure.

For more information visit www.lgnz.co.nz.