



## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT MĀORI WARDS AND CONSTITUENCIES AND THE REPRESENTATION REVIEW PROCESS**

Below are answers to questions the Local Government Commission has commonly received about Māori wards and constituencies and how they are dealt with in the representation review process.

### **What population is to be used to calculate:**

- **The number of members to be elected from Māori wards and constituencies?**
- **Compliance for Māori and general wards and constituencies with +/-10% rule?**

The population statistics to be used are the Māori electoral population (MEP) and the General electoral population (GEP). These populations are calculated by Statistics New Zealand after each census and the subsequent Māori electoral option.

The technical definitions of these populations are as follows:

- MEP: the total number of people registered as voters in Māori parliamentary electorates, plus a proportion of people of New Zealand Māori descent who are not registered as electors of any electorates, plus a proportion of the people of New Zealand Māori descent under the age of 18 years.
- GEP: the total ordinarily resident population as shown in the last Census of Population and Dwellings, with the exception of the Māori electoral population.

In other words:

- MEP is based on the number of people enrolled on the Māori electoral roll plus a proportion of those people who are not enrolled or who are aged under 18 years.
- GEP is the rest of the population.

MEP and GEP are also used in the periodic review of parliamentary electorates.

Other statistics such as the total Māori population and the number of electors on the Māori roll are not to be used in the representation review calculations.

## **How are the number of members to be elected from Māori wards and constituencies calculated?**

The number of members to be elected from Māori wards and constituencies is calculated through a formula and depends on:

- The total number of elected members for the district that are to be elected through wards; and
- The Māori Electoral Population (MEP) and General Electoral Population (GEP) of the district.

See also:

- clauses 2 and 4, Schedule 1A, Local Electoral Act 2001
- Chapter 4 of the Local Government Commission's representation review guidelines which can be found [here](#).

## **Is the timetable for a representation review involving Māori wards or constituencies the same as the timetable for a review not involving Māori wards or constituencies?**

With one small difference the timetables are the same. That small difference is that:

- For a review involving Māori wards or constituencies a council's initial resolution must be made by 31 August 2021
- For a review not involving Māori wards and constituencies there is no date specified in the Local Electoral Act for when the initial resolution must be made, but the public notice of that resolution must be given not later than 8 September 2021.

## **Can the council's decision to establish Māori wards and constituencies be reversed through the council's representation review as a result of submissions to the council or appeals and objections to the Local Government Commission?**

No, the initial decision to establish Māori wards and constituencies cannot be reversed by the representation review.

However, submissions, appeals and objections may be made on detailed arrangements such as:

- the total number of members of the council
- the names of Māori wards and constituencies
- if there are to be 2 or more members elected from Māori wards and constituencies, whether there should be 1 ward or multiple wards
- if there are to be multiple Māori wards or constituencies, the number and boundaries of those wards and constituencies.

**Our council is currently elected at large. If we establish a Māori ward do we have to establish a General ward?**

Yes, if a Māori ward or constituency is established there has to be one or more General wards or constituencies (see clause 1, Schedule 1A, LEA). It is possible that the Māori ward and the General ward may cover the whole of the district. This is currently the case in Wairoa District.

**Can some members be elected from wards and some “at large”?**

Yes, if the council is a territorial authority. If the council has decided to have 1 or more Māori wards, the first step in the representation review process is to determine whether:

- all of the members (other than the mayor) are to be elected through a combination of Māori and General wards; or
- some of the proposed members are to be elected by the electors of the district as a whole (“at large”) and some are to be elected through a combination of Māori and General wards.

In either case, the Māori and General wards may cover the whole of the district.

**When a council first establishes Māori wards or constituencies, are the members for the new wards/constituencies additional to the current councillor positions, or do they replace existing positions?**

Either can be the case. The second step in the representation review process is to decide what the total number of members for the council should be. This number is used to calculate how many of those members are to be elected from Māori wards or constituencies.

Where the council has decided that some members are to be elected from wards and some at large the calculation uses the number of members to be elected from wards. The “at large” members are not included in the calculation.

**Is the +/-10% rule calculated collectively over both Māori and General wards, or separately – once for Māori wards/constituencies and once for general wards/constituencies?**

It is calculated separately for each category of ward (see clause 6(a), Schedule 1A, LEA).

## **If Māori wards or constituencies are established, who votes in which elections?**

At territorial authority elections:

- A person on the Māori roll may vote for:
  - the Mayor
  - members elected from a Māori ward
  - any members elected “at large” from the district as a whole (if applicable)
  - community board or local board members (if applicable)
- A person on the General roll may vote for:
  - the Mayor
  - members elected from a General ward
  - any members elected “at large” from the district as a whole (if applicable)
  - community board or local board members (if applicable)

At regional council elections:

- A person on the Māori roll may vote for members elected from a Māori constituency
- A person on the General roll may vote for members elected from a General constituency

## **When can people move from the Māori electoral roll to the General electoral roll, or vice versa?**

If a person of Māori descent is already enrolled, they can change rolls during the next Māori electoral option, scheduled for 2024.

A person of Māori descent enrolling for the first time can choose which roll they wish to be on - the General roll of the Māori roll.

### ***Status of document:***

*Updated on 10 March 2021*