Chief Electoral Office
Ministry of Justice
Business Plan
1 January 2006 to 30 June 2009

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
Tāhū o te Ture

Comments and Suggestions

If you have any comments or suggestions for improving the plan please send them to:

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Introduction

The Chief Electoral Office is responsible for the administration of parliamentary elections and referenda, advising Ministers and Select Committees of Parliament on electoral matters, and supporting the Representation Commission in its determination of electoral boundaries. The Chief Electoral Office is a division of the Ministry of Justice.

This business plan sets out the Chief Electoral Office's strategy, planning assumptions and high level work programme for the period 1 January 2006 to 30 June 2009. It forms part of the Ministry of Justice's wider strategic plan.

The plan is divided into three parts.

Part I sets the overall context and identifies the major strategic themes for the next 3 years.

Part II sets out the major planning assumptions and the detailed projects and timetables through to 2009.

Part III provides basic statistical information on the 2005 general election.

The plan is designed to provide guidance to the Office in carrying out its many activities. I hope it is also of interest to other readers.

Robert Peden
Chief Electoral Officer

Part I - Strategy

Overview

The Chief Electoral Office aims to maintain public and political confidence in the administration of parliamentary elections and referenda. To that end, we strive to improve our services to voters, political parties and candidates and to ensure we act with integrity and impartiality.

The challenges

Planning for parliamentary elections provides many challenges. One is that the date of an election is unknown until a few weeks beforehand. Until the date is certain many tasks, including the employment and training of many thousands of temporary staff and the securing and supply of polling places, cannot be completed.

Another is that there is no permanent field structure. Returning Officers and their staff need to be recruited and trained and the infrastructure that supports them established anew for each election.

We seek to meet these challenges through careful planning and risk management.

The last general election

For 2005 we improved our services to voters with disabilities, reduced barriers to voting, and simplified the important but complex series of post-election day processes that Returning Officers have to complete (the scrutiny of the rolls, the processing of special declaration votes, the official count, and the close down of their headquarters). The technology used by Returning Officers to support the post-election day processes was significantly enhanced for the 2005 election.

Market research showed a high level of public satisfaction with the services provided to voters on polling day. The vast majority used their EasyVote card when they voted, considered the time spent in the polling place reasonable, and were satisfied with the timeliness of the results. New services, such as the sign language DVD on voting, were well received.

Main areas of focus for the next general election

For 2008 the main focus will be on further improving the training for Returning Officers and their staff to enable them to deliver high level services. While capability at all levels was significantly improved for 2005, training continues to be a priority.

Other areas for focus are:

- Improving advance voting services
- Identifying and meeting the needs of voters who face particular barriers to voting
- Simplifying post-election day processes and procedures
- Ensuring that our policies have regard to the needs of Māori voters.

The Chief Electoral Office will contribute to the government's review of the electoral finance regime. The government intends any legislation arising from the review to be enacted by 30 November 2007 so that it is in place in good time for the 2008 election.

The Representation Commission will convene in 2007 to determine new electoral boundaries and this will form a major area of work for the Chief Electoral Officer, who is an ex officio member of the Commission, and for the Chief Electoral Office which provides administrative support to the Commission.

The Chief Electoral Office intends to develop, by 31 December 2007, a long-term strategy on electronic voting. Electronic voting will not be available in 2008.

Vision

Widespread public and political confidence in the administration of the parliamentary electoral process.

There will be widespread public and political confidence in the administration of the parliamentary electoral process if the administration:

- Is impartial, professional and acts in accordance with law
- Supports the rights of voters to vote without undue influence and in secret
- Makes participation easy
- Delivers timely and accurate results
- Continually improves its processes, procedures and service
- Reduces compliance costs as much as possible
- Is responsive to views and concerns of stakeholders
- Is open to public, judicial and parliamentary scrutiny
- Is efficient.

Purpose

Preparation and conduct of New Zealand's general elections, by-elections and referenda.

The Chief Electoral Office is responsible for the administration of parliamentary elections and referenda, advising Ministers and Select Committees of parliament on electoral matters, and providing administrative support to the Representation Commission in its determination of electoral boundaries. The Office also assists electoral agencies of other countries on a reciprocal basis with their electoral events.

Principles of electoral administration

In undertaking its functions the Chief Electoral Office follows the principles of electoral administration endorsed by the Justice & Electoral Select Committee:

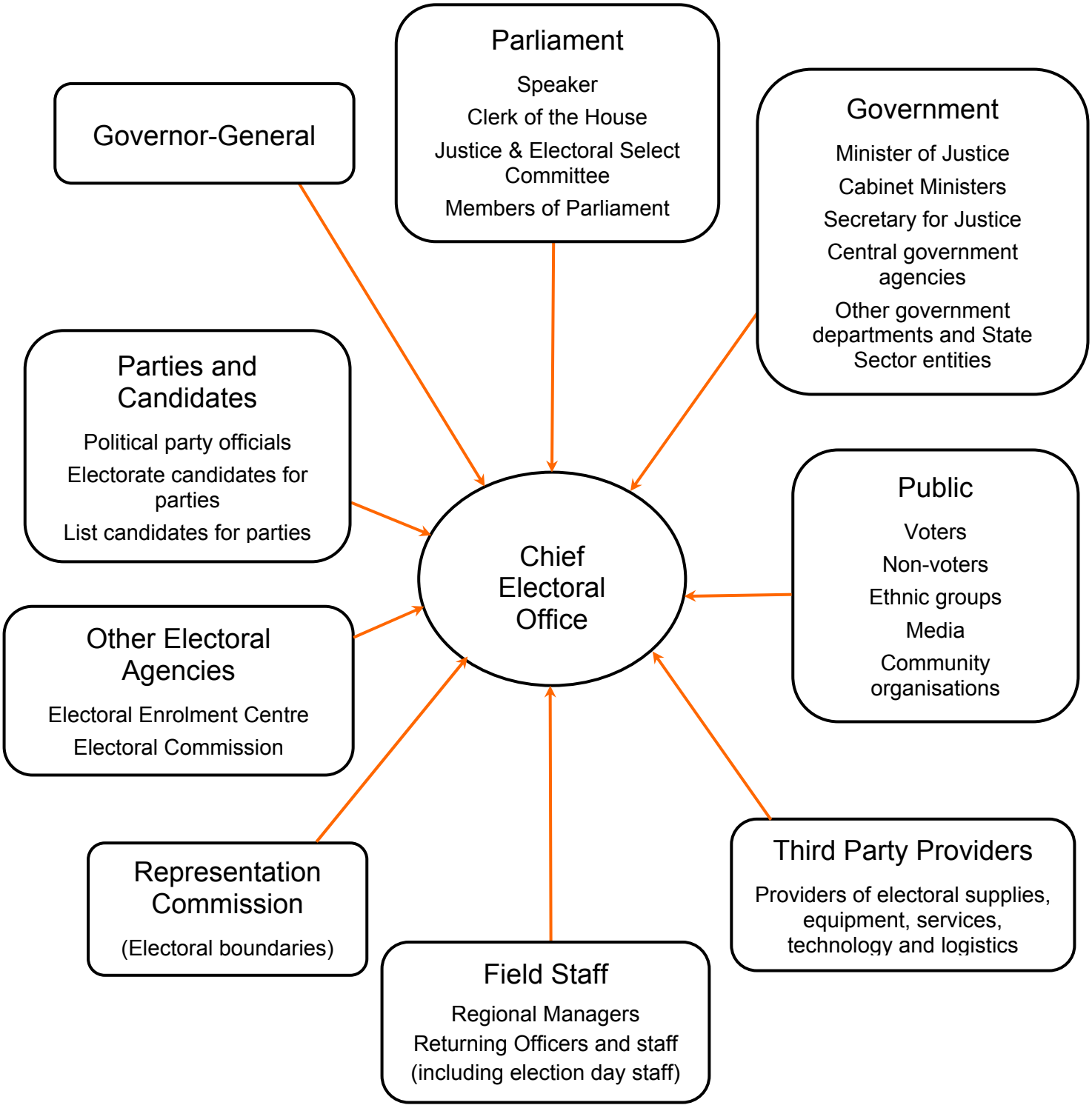
- Independence
- Neutrality
- Service to voters, candidates and parties
- Professionalism
- Responsibility and accountability.

Legislation

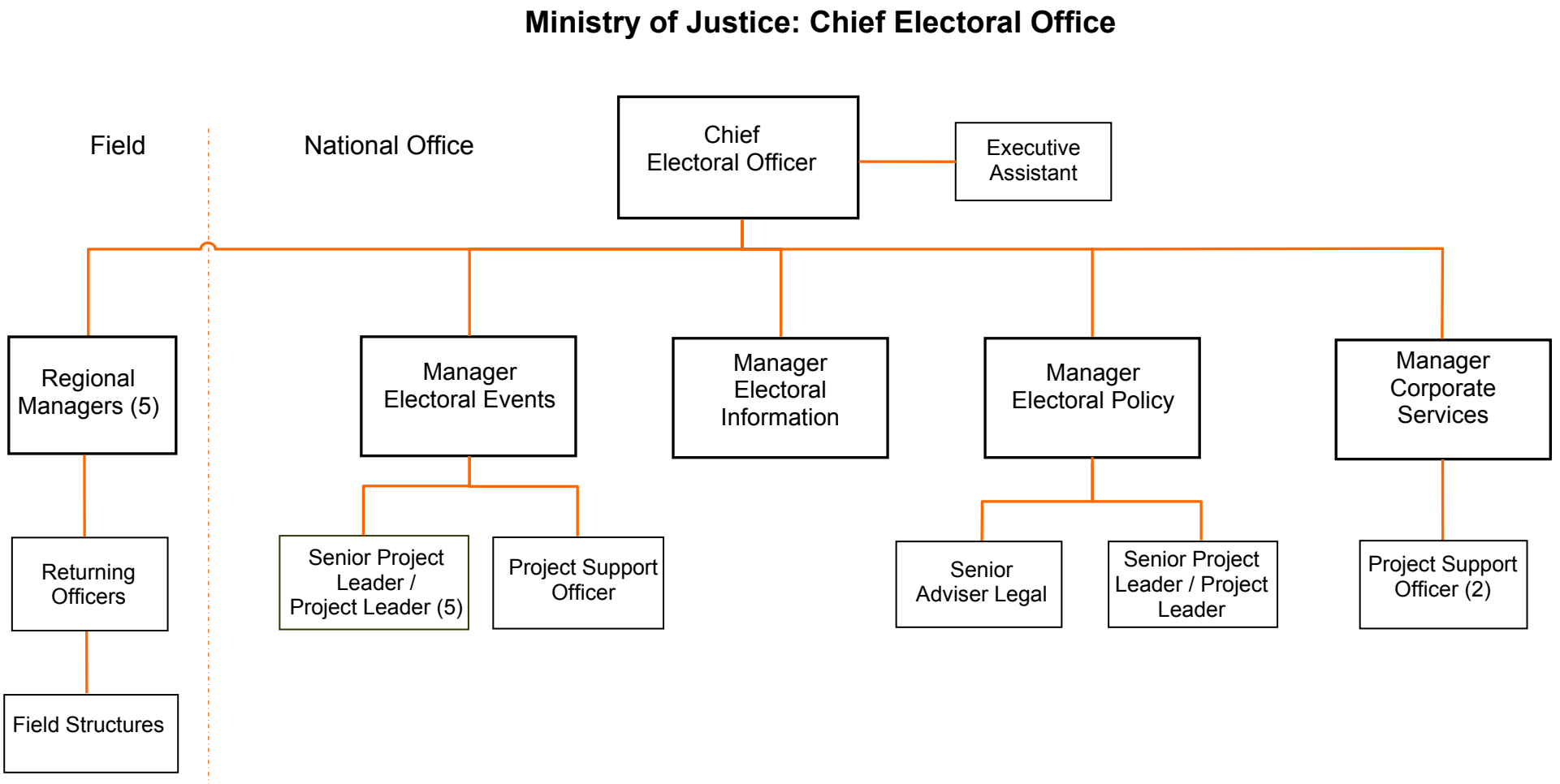
The Chief Electoral Officer is a statutory officer employed by the Secretary for Justice.

The functions and powers of the Chief Electoral Officer are set out in Parts 6, 7, 8, and 9 of the Electoral Act 1993, the Electoral Regulations 1996, the Citizens Initiated Referenda Act 1993 and the Referenda (Postal Voting) Act 2000. These statutes and their associated regulations are administered by the Ministry of Justice.

Stakeholders



Organisational structure (as at 1 August 2006)



Note: The number of Returning Officers will not be known until determination of the new electoral boundaries in 2007.

Part II – Operations

Major planning assumptions

The 2006-2009 business plan is based on the following assumptions:

Timing

- The 2008 general election will be held in the second half of the 2008 calendar year (15 November 2008 is the last possible date under the law).
- All processes, systems and procedures will be built and tested by 30 September 2007 and frozen by 31 December 2007.

Service

- Voters and other participants will expect high quality services at the next general election.
- Advance voting services will be improved.
- Services to voters with disabilities will be further improved.
- Service will have regard to the needs of Māori voters.

Notice

- A quality general election can be delivered at eight weeks notice in the second half of the 2008 calendar year.
- A quality by-election can be delivered at eight weeks notice in any year.

Assistance

- Collective state sector support will be forthcoming when needed.

Legislation

- Any legislative changes for 2008 will be in place by 30 November 2007.

Turnout

- 88% of enrolled electors will vote in the 2008 general election.

Training

- All staff, including field staff, will be trained.
- Training delivery programmes will be improved.

Funding

- Any referenda or by-election will be funded separately.
- Price level increases for supplies and services will be funded.

Visions, priorities and outcomes

The Chief Electoral Office carries out its work in the context of the New Zealand Justice sector strategies and as part of the Ministry of Justice.

Government's vision

An inclusive New Zealand where all people enjoy opportunity to fulfil their potential, prosper and participate in the social, economic, political and cultural life of their communities and nation.

Government priorities over the next decade

- Economic transformation - working to progress our economic transformation to a high income, knowledge based market economy, which is both innovative and creative and provides a unique quality of life to all New Zealanders.
- Families - all families, young and old, have the support and choices they need to be secure and be able to reach their full potential within our knowledge based economy.
- National identity - all New Zealanders to be able to take pride in who and what we are, through our arts, culture, film, sports and music, our appreciation of our natural environment, our understanding of our history and our stance on international issues.

Justice sector outcomes (priorities for the next 5-10 years)

- Safer communities
- A fairer, more credible and more effective justice system.

Ministry of Justice strategic themes

- Putting service first
  - Improving our understanding of service needs
  - Enhancing services to reflect our understanding of service needs
  - Enhancing public understanding of the justice system
- Ensuring simple, connected processes
  - Operating effective systems and processes to enhance service delivery to users of Ministry services
  - Operating effective systems and processes to underpin Ministry work
- Building knowledge and expertise
  - Increasing the Ministry's capability
  - Enhancing our business and management information
- Enhancing sector collaboration
  - Work with other agencies to deliver on justice sector outcomes
  - Develop a shared vision for the justice system of the future

Intermediate outcomes for electoral (priorities for the next 3-5 years)

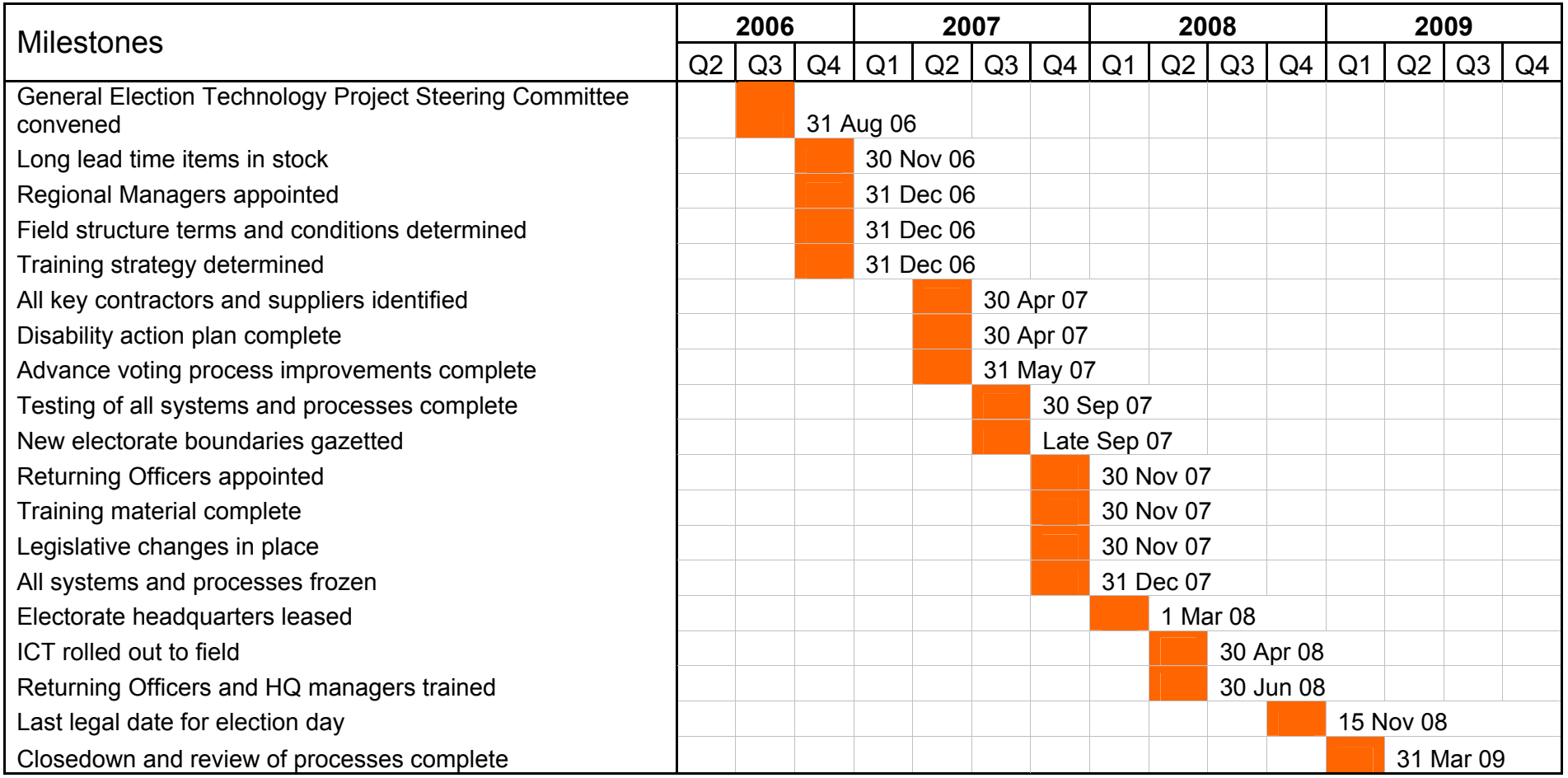
- Widespread public and political confidence in the administration of the parliamentary electoral process.
- Fewer institutional barriers to participation.

Outputs

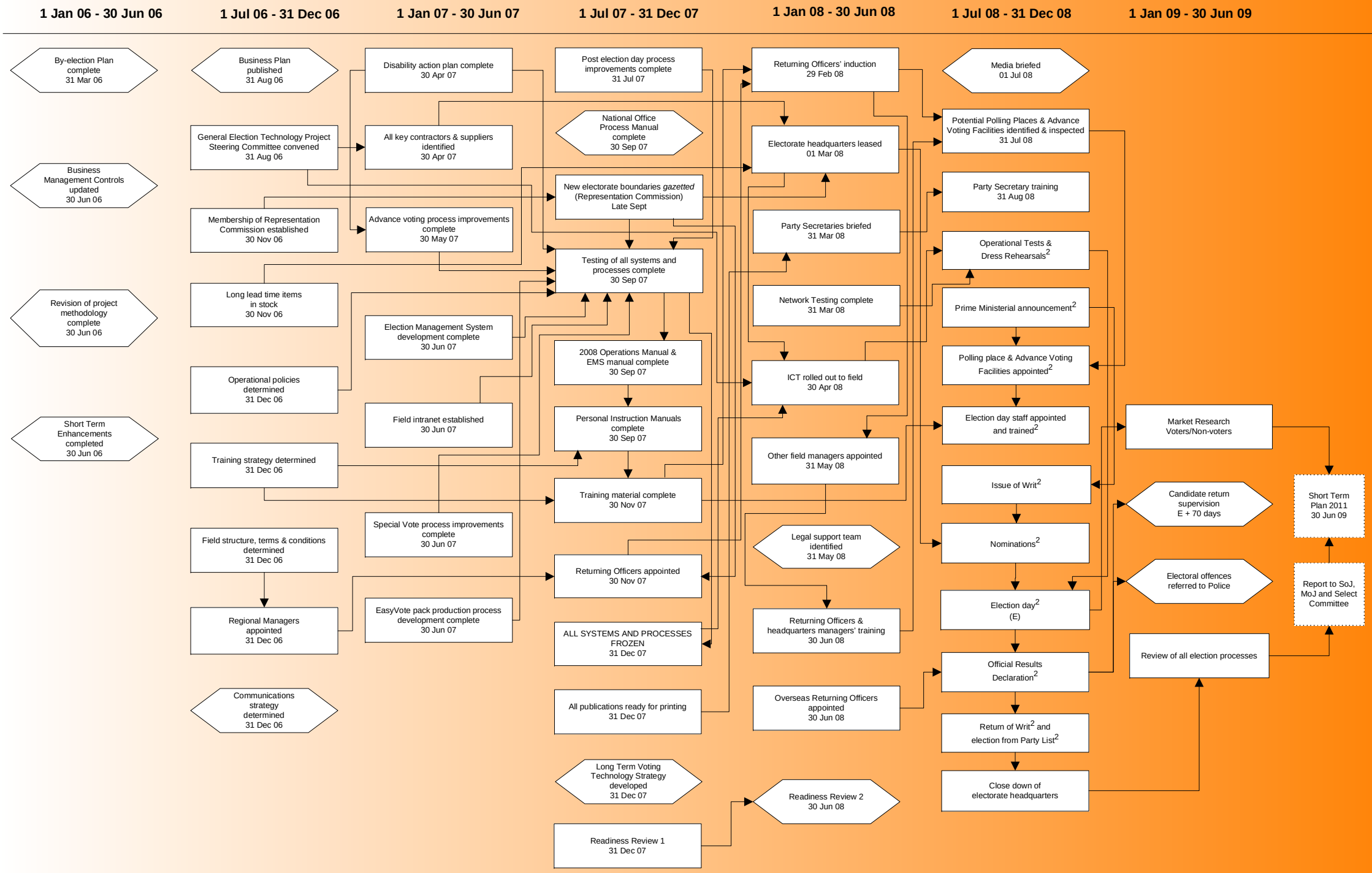
Output class – Management of the parliamentary electoral system
1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 *Policy Advice* ▪ Advice and documentation meets the Ministry's quality criteria. ▪ Advice and documentation are provided to the satisfaction of the Minister. *Conduct the general election* ▪ A new three year business plan to 2009 is agreed by 31 August 2006. ▪ Develop a long term strategy for voting technology by 31 December 2007. ▪ Electoral processes and technology reviewed and frozen by 31 December 2007. *Conduct by-elections and referenda (if any)* ▪ Statutory deadlines are met. *Declare election of list members to vacancies* ▪ Declaration published within three working days of notification of vacancy. *Servicing the Representation Commission* ▪ Provide administrative support to the Representation Commission to the satisfaction of the Chair.
1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 (expected outputs) *Policy Advice* ▪ Advice and documentation meets the Ministry's quality criteria. ▪ Advice and documentation are provided to the satisfaction of the Minister. *Conduct the general election* ▪ A long term strategy for voting technology is developed by 31 December 2007. ▪ Electoral processes and technology reviewed and frozen by 31 December 2007. ▪ Returning Officers appointed, trained and in headquarters by 30 June 2008. *Conduct by-elections and referenda (if any)* ▪ Statutory deadlines are met. *Declare election of list members to vacancies* ▪ Declaration published within three working days of notification of vacancy. *Servicing the Representation Commission* ▪ Provide administrative support to the Representation Commission to the satisfaction of the Chair.
1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (expected outputs) *Policy Advice* ▪ Advice and documentation meets the Ministry's quality criteria. ▪ Advice and documentation are provided to the satisfaction of the Minister. *Conduct the general election* ▪ The general election is conducted in accordance with the Electoral Act 1993. ▪ Preliminary results on election night are accurate and timely. ▪ Official results are declared on election day plus 14 days. ▪ Post-election market research shows high satisfaction levels of voters, non-voters, political parties and candidates. *Conduct by-elections and referenda (if any)* ▪ Statutory deadlines are met. *Declare election of list members to vacancies* ▪ Declaration published within three working days of notification of vacancy.

Significant milestones – Chief Electoral Office

This chart depicts some significant milestones on the road to readiness for the 2008 general election.



Chief Electoral Office Simplified Work Programme (end dates only)[1]



1 Not all projects or activities are shown
2 Election day and associated dates are unknown until announcement by Prime Minister

Electoral cycle appropriations

Financial information excludes GST

Fiscal year ending 30 June	Electoral Commission $m	Electoral Enrolment Centre $m	Chief Electoral Office $m	Total $m	
2007*	0.734	10.964	3.130[1]	14.828	20%
2008*	0.734	17.866	8.669[2]	27.269	37%
2009*	0.734[3]	14.192	17.121	32.047	43%
TOTAL	2.202	43.022	28.920	74.144	100%
	3%	58%	39%	100%	

* Subject to annual budget appropriations.
[1] An additional $1.733m is appropriated for the Representation Commission.
[2] An additional $0.131m is appropriated for the Representation Commission.
[3] In addition, $2.855m is appropriated for broadcasting allocations to political parties by the Electoral Commission.

Responsibilities of New Zealand electoral agencies

The responsibilities of the electoral agencies are summarised in this table:

Responsibility	Electoral Enrolment Centre	Electoral Commission	Chief Electoral Office	Ministry of Justice
Information for electors on enrolment	✔			
Enrolment of voters (opportunity and encouragement)	✔			
Production/maintenance of electoral rolls and habitation indexes	✔			
Supply of electronic lists of electors & walk lists (residences with no enrolment) to parties and candidates	✔			
Hosting of the elections website	✔			
Conduct of Māori Electoral Option	✔			
Verifying, by sample, that signatures on citizen initiated referendum petitions are those of enrolled electors	✔			
Supply of lists of qualified electors to Courts for jury rolls	✔			
Registration of political parties/logos		✔		
Allocation to parties of election broadcasting time and money; payment of parties' election broadcasting accounts; receipt of broadcasters' returns of election programmes		✔		
Supervision of annual returns of donations and returns of election expenses – political parties		✔		
Public education and information on electoral matters		✔		
Conduct of Parliamentary general elections and by-elections				
▪ information to voters, parties and candidates			✔	
▪ receipt of writ			✔	
▪ designation and staffing of polling places			✔	
▪ calling for and receipt of nominations (including bulk nominations)			✔	
▪ acceptance or rejection of party lists (general elections)			✔	
▪ ballot papers-production			✔	
▪ voting (advance, on election day)			✔	
▪ scrutiny of rolls and identification of dual votes			✔	
▪ preliminary and official counts			✔	
▪ qualification of special votes	✔		✔	
▪ declaration of results			✔	
▪ recounts			✔	
▪ return of writ			✔	
▪ allocation of members from party lists (general elections)			✔	
▪ supervision of returns of candidate expenses and returns of donations			✔	
Conduct of referendum (government initiated and citizen initiated)			✔	
Filling vacancies from the party list			✔	
Membership of the independent Representation Commission (electoral boundaries)			✔	
Administration of the Electoral Act (including policy advice to Ministers)				✔
Advice to Select Committees	✔	✔	✔	✔

Risk management

We define risk management as:

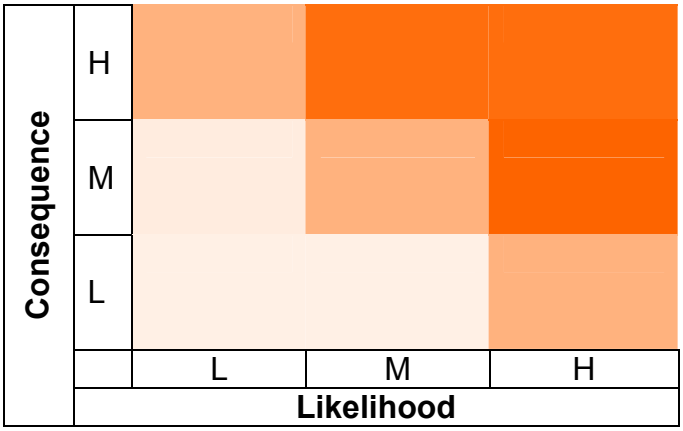
> *The systematic application of management policies, procedures and practices to the tasks of identifying, analysing, assessing, treating and monitoring risk.*

A risk management framework has been developed by the Ministry of Justice and is used by the Chief Electoral Office. This framework provides a structure for the identification, documentation and management of risks.

The framework requires six questions to be answered:

- What don't we want to happen?
- What could cause this to happen?
- How can we reduce the chance of this happening?
- After taking action, what is the chance of this happening? (Likelihood)
- If it does happen despite our efforts, what more can we do?
- What will the impact be then? (Consequence)

Likelihood and consequence are rated High, Medium or Low and are captured in the following table:



The position on the table highlights those risks which require more attention than others.

The framework requires the regular reassessment of risks. In addition, new risks are identified progressively. A risk management assessment is produced each quarter.

Part III –
The 2005 general election

General election results - 2005

Total votes counted: 2,286,190 (including special votes 248,677)
Turnout: 80.92% of enrolled electors

Party	Party Votes	Votes %	Electorate Seats	List Seats	Total Seats
Labour Party	935,319	41.10	31	19	50
National Party	889,813	39.10	31	17	48
New Zealand First Party	130,115	5.72	0	7	7
Green Party	120,521	5.30	0	6	6
Māori Party	48,263	2.12	4	0	4
United Future New Zealand	60,860	2.67	1	2	3
ACT New Zealand	34,469	1.51	1	1	2
Jim Anderton's Progressive	26,441	1.16	1	0	1
Destiny New Zealand	14,210	0.62	0	0	0
Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis Party	5,748	0.25	0	0	0
Christian Heritage NZ	2,821	0.12	0	0	0
Alliance	1,641	0.07	0	0	0
New Zealand Family Rights Protection Party	1,178	0.05	0	0	0
Democrats for Social Credit	1,079	0.05	0	0	0
Libertarianz	946	0.04	0	0	0
Direct Democracy Party	782	0.03	0	0	0
99 MP Party	601	0.03	0	0	0
OneNZ Party	478	0.02	0	0	0
The Republic of New Zealand Party	344	0.02	0	0	0
Informals	10,561	-	-	-	-
Total	2,286,190	100	69	52	121

Source: Chief Electoral Office. For further information refer www.electionresults.org.nz

Achievement against Output Class performance measures

Description	Quantity, quality, timeliness	Results for 2005 general election
Advance Voting Facilities (AVFs): Provided for voters who cannot vote in their electorate on election day.	AVFs provided from eight days after Nomination day. AVFs are correctly rated for access by voters with disabilities in accordance with standards set by the Barrier Free New Zealand Trust. Download facilities for overseas voters are provided from eight days after nomination day.	Achieved. Achieved. Achieved.
Polling Places: Adequate polling places are provided on election day.	Approximately 2800 polling places are provided in New Zealand. Polling places are correctly rated for access by voters with disabilities in accordance with standards set by the Barrier Free New Zealand Trust. All polling places within a Māori electorate issue ordinary votes for that electorate.	Achieved. There were 2717 provided in 2005. Achieved. Achieved.
Electors registered by writ day receive a Voter Information Pack including details of local polling places, local candidates, an EasyVote card, and party lists.	All packs are delivered by election day minus four days. 75% of voters use EasyVote Card.	Achieved. Packs lodged with New Zealand Post for delivery by election day minus nine. Exceeded. 84% of voters used the card.
Preliminary Count on election night is accurate and timely.	100% of advance ordinary votes are entered by 8.30pm. 50% of polling place results are entered by 10pm and the balance by 11.30pm.	Achieved. Exceeded. 90% of polling places entered by 10pm and balance by 11.30pm.

Description	Quantity, quality, timeliness	Results for 2005 general election
Official Results are accurate and timely.	Official results declared on election day plus 14 days.	Achieved.
Party Votes of voters using the wrong ballot paper are allowed as part of the official count.	All votes in this category are identified.	Achieved.
Assistance with judicial recounts.	District Court Judge satisfied with assistance provided by Chief Electoral Office.	No recounts.
Election of List members of Parliament.	Election of list members declared by election day plus 21 days (if no recounts).	Exceeded. Election of list members declared by election day plus 19 days.
Return of writ to Clerk of the House.	Writ returned no later than 50 days after issue (subject to recounts).	Achieved. Writ returned 49 days after issue.
Plural votes.	Plural votes are identified and extracted. Appropriate referrals to Police within five weeks of offence.	Achieved. Achieved.
Complaints by parties, candidates and voters.	Simple complaints actioned within 24 hours. Appropriate referrals to Police within five weeks of offence.	Achieved. Achieved.
Satisfaction levels (of voters, non-voters, political parties and candidates) with conduct of general election by Chief Electoral Office.	Post-election market research results reflect high satisfaction by majority of respondents.	Achieved.

Critical success factors for Chief Electoral Office

The following success factors are recommended by the Justice and Electoral Select Committee when assessing the management of a general election.

Success factor	2005 result
Turnout of those enrolled to vote	80.92% of all enrolled voters (2002:77%, 1999:85%). Non-voting was not caused by institutional barriers to voting.
Turnout amongst Māori, Pacific peoples and youth	67.07% of voters on the Māori roll (2002:58%, 1999:71%). Pacific peoples and youth not separated out.
Number of early (advance) votes cast	8.6% of voters cast advance votes (2002:6.5%, 1999:5.3%).
Number of special votes cast and disallowed	10.79% of voters cast special votes (2002:10.65%, 1999:12.33%). 17.43% of candidate special votes were disallowed (2002:15.21%, 1999:15.97%) 7.16% of party special votes were disallowed (2002:6.93%, 1999:15.97%).
Levels of public understanding of the voting system	The low levels of informal voting, the results of the Office's analysis of informal votes, and the levels of split voting, indicate that voters understand the voting process and MMP.
Number of upheld complaints and irregularities	353 complaints received (2002:214). 12 referrals were made to the police relating to election advertising.
Number of plural votes	22 plural voters were referred to the Police (2002:8).
Timeliness and accuracy of preliminary count	90% of polling places were counted by 10.00pm (2002:77%) 99.9% were counted by 11.30pm (2002:98%).
Timeliness and accuracy of official count	Results declared accurately and on time.

Post election research - 2005

Extract from voter survey results

	All Voters	Advance Voters	Māori Voters
Ordinary vote	92%	55%	89%
Special vote	8%	45%	11%
Voted in electorate	91%	64%	88%
Voted same place as in 2002	42%	9%	41%
Voting time			
Before 11am	33%	28%	33%
11am-1pm	26%	37%	24%
1-3pm	19%	20%	20%
3-5pm	13%	11%	14%
5-7pm	9%	4%	8%
Queued	15%	25%	14%
Did not queue	85%	75%	86%
Took EasyVote card	84%	72%	79%
Time in polling place			
Under 5 minutes	73%	49%	67%
5-10 minutes	20%	30%	23%
Considered a reasonable time	98%	94%	97%

Sample	
Māori	307
Non-Māori	683
Total	**990**

Margin of error	
Voters	3.1%
Non-voters	6.5%

	All Voters	Non-Voters	Advance Voters	Māori Voters
Rating of Polling Place (very good to excellent)				
Convenience	97%		88%	94%
Outside signage	89%		81%	90%
Layout	92%		77%	92%
How well-equipped was booth	96%		93%	96%
Privacy	90%		89%	91%
Staff - politeness	96%		91%	96%
- well-informed	91%		91%	94%
- efficiency	95%		90%	94%
Decision not to vote (timing)				
Election day		53%		
1 week before		11%		
More than one month before		27%		
Knowledge				
Knowledge of nearest polling place	97%	92%	97%	99%
Recall advertising	83%	75%	74%	83%
Heard advertising on EasyVote card	63%	42%	58%	64%
Heard advertising on advance voting	70%	51%	75%	70%
Looked at party lists	88%	72%	89%	86%
Satisfied/very satisfied with information	92%	88%	88%	93%
Recall receiving Voter Information pack	98%	88%	94%	98%
Read pack	89%	70%	85%	89%
Satisfied/very satisfied with pack	93%	77%	91%	91%
Followed results on election night	77%	47%	60%	70%
- on television	98%	87%	93%	97%
Satisfied with timeliness (or better)	78%	67%	84%	74%

Source: Chief Electoral Office: Voter/non-voter satisfaction survey conducted by TNS New Zealand Limited

Other key statistics

Key dates, 1996 – 2005

	1996	1999	2002	2005
Election date announced by Prime Minister	21 May	26 Sep	11 Jun	25 Jul
Parliament dissolved	6 Sep	18 Oct	18 Jun	11 Aug
Writ day	12 Sep	27 Oct	25 Jun	17 Aug
Nomination day	18 Sep	3 Nov	2 Jul	23 Aug
Advanced voting commenced	23 Sep	9 Nov	10 Jul	31 Aug
Election day (Saturday)	12 Oct	27 Nov	27 Jul	17 Sep
Declaration of official results	Declared progressively		10 Aug	1 Oct
Last day for return of writ	1 Nov	16 Dec	14 Aug	6 Oct
List MPs declared elected	14 Nov	20 Dec	15 Aug	7 Oct
Parliament meets	12 Dec	20 Dec	26 Aug	7 Nov

Source: Chief Electoral Office

Nomination analysis, 1999 – 2005

Category	1999	2002	2005
Parties contesting party vote	22	14	19
Total number of parties standing candidates	35	29	27
Male candidates	647 (67%)	487 (71%)	523 (71%)
Female candidates	318 (33%)	196 (29%)	216 (29%)
Total number of candidates	965	683	739
List candidates only	286	90	142
Electorate candidates only	197	160	72
Dual candidates	482	433	525
Average number of electorate candidates per electorate	10.1	8.6	8.7

Source: Chief Electoral Office

Voter turnout statistics, 1993 – 2005

	1993 FPP[1]	1996 MMP[2]	1999 MMP	2002 MMP	2005 MMP
Electors on the Roll	2,321,664	2,418,587	2,509,365	2,670,030	2,847,396
Estimated voting age population on election day	2,506,110	2,642,400	2,755,800	2,835,240	2,990,300
% of estimated voting age population enrolled	92.64	91.53	91.06	94.17	95.22
Total number of votes cast	1,978,092	2,135,175	2,127,245	2,055,404	2,304,005
Turnout of those enrolled (%)	85.20	88.21	84.77	76.98	80.92
Turnout of estimated voting age population (%)	78.93	80.80	77.19	72.50	77.05

1 First Past the Post
2 Mixed Member Proportional

Source: Electoral Enrolment Centre and Chief Electoral Office

Informal votes statistics, 1999 – 2005

	1999	2002	2005
Party	1.0%	0.4%	0.5%
Candidate	1.8%	1.3%	1.1%

Source: Chief Electoral Office

Contact details

Chief Electoral Office, Ministry of Justice – general enquiries

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Postal address: PO Box 3220, Wellington
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Fax: +64 4 495 0031
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Chief Electoral Officer – Robert Peden

Statutory officer with overall responsibility for conducting parliamentary elections, by-elections and referenda.
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Manager Electoral Events – Mark Lawson

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Manager Electoral Information – Anthony Pengelly

Responsible for the application of information technology to electoral processes.
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Manager Electoral Policy – Kristina Temel

Responsible for policy and legal advice, and ministerial servicing.
Phone: 04 498 2306
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Manager Corporate Services – Elizabeth Ropeti

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Websites

Information on elections provided by the Chief Electoral Office, the Electoral Enrolment Centre and the Electoral Commission:
www.elections.org.nz

Information on election results (including election night results in real time) provided by the Chief Electoral Office:
www.electionresults.govt.nz

Information on justice issues generally, provided by the Ministry of Justice:
www.justice.govt.nz