

# **Elections NZ Electoral Education Roadshow '08**

What we did and what we would  
do differently next time  
– summary report

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## Introduction

In late 2006 and early 2007 we assessed all of the research that we had on non-voting. This exercise led us to identify two key messages that we wanted to deliver in election focused activity:

- Taking part in an election is easy
- I have the information I need to be able to engage with the election.

One strategy explored for delivering this message was a roadshow to be delivered to range of people who work with the target audiences of those more likely to be uncertain and uncomfortable about elections - in particular youth and younger adults, migrant and established ethnic communities, and the disabled, including those with learning difficulties. The aim was to deliver knowledge, techniques and motivation to high value influencers and elector peer audiences which they, in turn, could use to empower and grow electoral participation by their communities, clients and cohorts. This would be achieved through a variety of workshops and resources for a range of audiences and settings.

In late 2007 the commission decided to go ahead with the roadshow using existing staff plus one person hired on a contract for services running from February to end of June 2008. The resource developer/roadshow co-ordinator started work on 11 February 2008.

## Goal

Empowering Cascade for Participation

## Audience

Key influencers in the following sectors: Youth; Māori and Pacific; Migrant; Disability; and Aged. Also included high school social studies staff and local media. Prospective workshop hosts were identified through contact lists provided by Registrars of Electors or through City and District Councils, Maori Trust Boards, iwi organisations, Citizens Advice Bureaux, and online websites providing details of tertiary education providers, youth networks, migrant-specific support organisations as well as disability and aged sector advocacy groups.

## Timetable

*Mid February – late March:*

- Roadshow co-ordinator familiarisation with existing resource materials;
- Planning of roadshow destinations based on need, and target sectors;
- Planning of modules for powerpoint presentations;
- Development of print resources;
- Contact Wellington-based key influencers to schedule practice workshops and trial format, materials and delivery

*Late March to early May:*

- Hustle for first three weeks of roadshow, due to commence Tuesday 6 May.
- Complete booking files for all scheduled workshops in each destination.
- Conduct Wellington-based trial workshops with target sectors [We should have done more of this earlier]

### *May and June:*

- |              |                |                              |
|--------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| • Week One   | (6 - 8 May)    | - New Plymouth and Wanganui  |
| • Week Two   | (12 - 14 May)  | - South Auckland             |
| • Week Three | (21 - 23 May)  | - Christchurch               |
| • Week Four  | (27 - 29 May)  | - Whangarei and Kaikohe      |
| • Week Five  | (2 - 5 June)   | - Week in Office             |
| • Week Six   | (9 - 11 June)  | - Hamilton / Rotorua         |
| • Week Seven | (18 - 20 June) | - Gisborne / Wairoa / Napier |
| • Week Eight | (25 - 27 June) | - West and Central Auckland  |

### **Workshops**

Generally, workshops were scheduled for an hour and a half, with timeframes largely dictated by the hosts themselves according to prior engagements, any existing opportunities to include our workshop in, and availability of staff and venues.

The menu of offerings delivered from was:

- 123 preparing for elections. Start with one of the audience-specific true or false quizzes to get people thinking about the issue and how much they know. Work through the 123 presentation answering questions as they arise and referring back to the quiz at the end of each section. Discussion of making choices, using the handout [in retrospect would have been good idea to imbed the graph from this handout in the presentation so that it was discussed at that point]. End with one or more activities that they could use to deliver the messages to the people they work with: acrostics, democracy dice, get creative. Takes an hour and a half. Each participant was given a copy of 123 and of Two ticks, Too Easy.
- 123 preparing for elections for disability sector. In addition to the basic 123 presentation we used a DVD created by the Chief Electoral Office on voting for people with intellectual disability. The DVD was only available in the latter half of the roadshow and having it made a big difference in engaging the support workers. Poster posers was an activity that utilised stills from the DVD.
- Encouraging participation in elections. The full resource that was created was not used as no group was available for the three hours needed. A shorter version was delivered ad hoc along with a fast version of 123. As well as the powerpoint each participant was given a handout of the slides and we used a 'gingerbread man' outline to encourage application of the different ideas relating to participation. Aim was to deliver this to youth and some Māori audiences to encourage them to encourage participation is a way that addressed the real underlying reasons for non-participation.
- Introduction to the available resources. A format developed during the roadshow to meet the needs of support staff at deaf and blind support organisations. One on one using the internet meant that the range of material could be displayed for deaf people and familiarity with our website established for workers. One on one using flipcharts and other resources allowed the same for the blind.
- Media briefing – thinking about covering the election. Using the material on non-voters challenged journalists to think about how they cover the election and to provide coverage that will encourage participation. Where possible, familiarised them with key relevant content on the Elections NZ website. Lasted 30-45 minutes.
- Radio interviews delivering key messages of elections are easy and encourage those around you to participate. Worked well when in the studio. Some were conducted by phone. The best slot was the local component on networked programmes, usually the morning show. Iwi radio stations proved flexible with time and welcomed the information. A handful of 123 and Two Ticks giveaways in te reo were left with each station for display purposes.

- Social Studies teachers briefing on available resources. Using *Hands Up for a little help in the classroom* poster as the focus we talked about each of the resources and gave them printout of the introduction to *Hands Up* and *Elect*. Also gave them copies of *Two Ticks, Too Easy* and *Taking Part*. Where possible went online to show the range of material on the website. Usually lasted 45 minutes and we took refreshments to help with lagging energy levels at the end of the school day.

When planning workshops and resources we overestimated existing knowledge of the basic information about elections amongst the groups we were presenting to. We had thought that as we were talking to group and community leaders that they would have a good basic knowledge.

## Measuring Success

### Feedback

Overall, attendees indicated their expectations had been met and indicated their intention to pass on the information and encourage their communities to enrol, vote and participate.

Comments included these typical examples:

- "When people come into our CAB now, I'm going to make sure everyone I talk to is enrolled and going to vote in the elections"
- "The quiz and the exercises were worthwhile, creative, and interactive"
- "A good refresher for me"
- "Thankyou for the information and DVD – interesting and enjoyable"
- "Time very well spent"
- "Thank you for the very informative and fun workshop. All the participants loved it and enjoyed their moment - albeit brief - moment of glory! It truly was a great event."

### Numbers

Audience	Events	People	Average
<b>123 or participation workshop</b>			
Youth workers	6	50	8.3
PTEs	3	12	4.0
Disability support	8	110	13.8
Migrant support	11	179	16.3
Maori organisations	5	38	7.6
Citizen Advice Bureau	2	23	11.5
Age concern	1	5	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>11.6</b>
<b>Other visits</b>			
High School Social Studies	6	41	6.8
Newspaper reporters	7	24	3.4
Registrar of Elector office	9	52	
Deaf and Blind associations	4		
Radio interviews	9		
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>		
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>71</b>		

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Contacts which didn't result in workshop booking	34
Bookings where no one came	4
% contacts resulting in a booking and audience	65

While attendance numbers at some workshops and within specific sectors was lower than anticipated, many of those in attendance could clearly be identified as key influencers who, in their work or within their respective communities, would reach and engage a wide and diverse range of people.

### **Suggestions for next time**

While the roadshow succeeded in talking to many people, we would have hoped to reach more people. For the next roadshow, revised strategies are needed for targeting youth, Māori and Pacific and the aged sector. A strategy is also needed for engaging the 16-17 year-old youth transition sector, including, for example, teenage mothers and those who have left the mainstream education stream, as well as interested, socially-connected community members who do not fit into any of the categories identified for this roadshow.

Strategies adopted for sector-targeting and engagement during the 2008 Roadshow succeeded for the migrant and disability sectors and for high school social studies teachers and the media. A key factor in this success was in the level of responsibility the host assumed for organising the workshop on behalf of the Electoral Commission. Some sectors clearly assumed greater responsibility and commitment than others in arranging and hosting workshops.

In several cases, particularly in smaller centres, hosts indicated they had "contacted all their networks" but attendance numbers had failed to meet host expectations. It was interesting to note that the sectors identified as low voter turnout targets for roadshow electoral education were indeed the ones that proved challenging to engage and seek commitment from with regard to arranging and hosting workshops (especially Maori and youth).

#### Suggestions:

- Establish contact with sector-specific Ministries in the year prior to election year to gain access to extensive sector-specific contacts lists
- Contact national conference organisers in the one or two years prior to election year to allow sufficient notice to secure precursor presentations for key networks
- Arrange workshops prior to roadshow with groups with extensive intranet/networks so that the message goes out throughout the organisation that the workshop is worth having
- Schedule the roadshow closer to the anticipated election date, allowing hustling to coincide with the start of the enrolment update campaign and thus take advantage of the extensive media profile and urgency provided by the launch of the update campaign
- Assume responsibility for some workshops and advertise them in local paper etc. Could be in association with a local group, for example, "The Electoral Commission, in association with Settlement Support Napier, wishes to invite ..."
- 'Warm-up' prior to hustling. Circulate promotional postcard featuring, for example, the orange elections guy, to raise awareness of the election and upcoming roadshow. This would draw on the 2008 roadshow contacts database plus other network contacts identified in the year prior to the election. Issue a challenge to stakeholders – can you ???
- Update flyer mid-way through roadshow to promote coverage and show positive feedback received
- Find other ways to establish the message "there is a problem that we can do something about" in order to avoid the 'having a go at certain sectors' approach. Develop attention-grabbing strategies for youth, Māori and Pacific
- With more resources, the roadshow could have covered more of the country, had more engagements, and gone for longer and up closer to the election. This would have allowed it to better integrate and reinforce enrolment, MMP and voting messages delivered by the main campaigns, as well as giving more of the roadshow the benefit of the improved reception due to the heightened electoral urgency among stakeholders. Economies of scale would also have been achieved through a better return on the development phase.