



Electoral Commission
Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri

Request for Proposals

Māori Electoral Engagement Research Project

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Overview

The Electoral Commission is seeking proposals for research projects on aspects of Māori electoral engagement. The research should help the commission and others in policy development and the planning of outreach and education programmes to increase Māori electoral participation.

Proposals can be for a budgeted cost of between \$10 000 and \$70 000 (inc GST).

Preliminary proposals must be received by 10am, Friday, 24 February 2006.

Invitations to submit a full proposal will be issued by Wednesday 8th March with submission required by Monday 27th March.

Final decisions and negotiations will take place in early April 2006.

Final research reports will be due on Thursday 30th November 2006.

Contact Person

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Project Background

The Electoral Commission's vision is that 'New Zealand's electoral framework and systems are widely used, understood, trusted, and valued'. As well as providing education and information for all voters we seek to target those groups where electoral engagement is lower.

Māori voter turnout is consistently lower than non-Māori. This difference is true for Māori in Māori electorates and general electorates. More details are available in the attached extract from a briefing paper prepared for the commission in 2004. Statistics on the 2005 election are on our website.

Our programmes are generally research based. However, there is no recent, theory-based, published research that explains Māori electoral (non)engagement. The first step in the process of seeking to fill this gap was to hold a Māori electoral research hui in Auckland in November 2004 (report on our website). The discussion identified many of the existing resources that may contain some of the answers and discussed some of the key research questions. Discussion raised a series of hypotheses or ideas that may explain why Māori electoral engagement is lower. This funding of research is a next step.

As well as informing its work, the commission will make all of the research reports publicly available on its website soon after acceptance of the final reports. This will not preclude authors from seeking publication of their findings elsewhere.

Further background information including the existing education and outreach resources of the Electoral Commission, statements of objectives and briefing to the incoming minister are available on our website at www.elections.org.nz. Note that this website is shared by the three electoral agencies with the authoring agency identified at the bottom of each webpage.

Research Questions

The Electoral Commission is seeking proposals for research projects that will assist in planning education and information programmes. We have framed our areas of interest in two different ways: three broad inter-related questions; and a set of hypotheses. Proposals may address one or several of the questions and/or hypotheses and use any relevant methodology or mix of methodologies.

Broadly we seek information on three inter-related aspects of Māori electoral engagement:

1. Amongst Māori, who consistently does not vote? (socio-economic, identity, efficacy)
2. Why are electoral participation levels lower amongst Māori than non-Māori?
3. What are Māori attitudes towards politics, elections and representation?

The following hypotheses are raised in discussion of Māori electoral engagement and research that tested them would be welcome:

- a. Low levels of participation are not about being Māori, they are about poverty and education levels and the different age profile
- b. Māori are strongly engaged in iwi and Māori politics, just not in national elections
- c. Turnout in Māori electorates is lower because Māori on the Māori roll have strong Māori identity and so are more involved in iwi politics and not involved in national politics
- d. Māori are interested in politics but do not take part because they think their voice is not heard or of value
- e. Candidates are more important than party to Māori voters

We encourage the use of existing data, particularly work that utilises a number of existing sources and makes new connections. Possible data sources include census material, election statistics, the NZES post-election surveys. International literature and data may inform or be included in the research project where direct relevance to New Zealand and Māori electoral participation is established.

We encourage collaborative research that draws upon a range of disciplines and expertise, including Māori researchers and non-academic contributors. Proposals are welcome from academics, commercial researchers and other organisations with sound research credentials.

Budget

The Electoral Commission has a budget of \$75,000 for the current financial year (to 30 June 2006) and may add to this in the next financial year depending upon the bids received. The Electoral Commission may choose no bid, one or a number of bids. Bids should have a budget of between \$10 000 and \$70 000 (inc GST).

Payment will be split into thirds: when the contract is signed; on receipt of a progress report against an agreed milestone; on receipt of the completed research report.

Timing

Research reports are due with the commission on 30th November 2006, with presentation invited shortly thereafter at a possible commission-organised one-day conference.

What is required in your preliminary proposal

Please keep your preliminary proposal concise and focused; we anticipate a maximum of five A4 pages in an easy-to-read format. You will be asked to provide more detail in a final proposal should your preliminary proposal be shortlisted. Your preliminary proposal must include the following information:

1. Name and contact details (phone, email and postal address) for the person who will be the point of contact during the initial bid process
2. List of the key people in the research team with a paragraph outlining their relevant experience (full CVs and details of research experience are not needed at this stage)
3. A two page (maximum) description of the proposed research indicating:
 - a. the question(s) you are answering
 - b. how you intend to do the research
 - c. the reasons why this research is a good way to answer the question(s)
 - d. if using existing data its availability and how you will use it
 - e. if gathering your own data, methodology and sample sizes
 - f. methodology / theories / approach to be applied in the analysis
4. Timing of the key research events
5. Broad budget breakdown
6. Any parallel research projects, proposals or funding sources, or conflicts of interest which we should know about

Selection Criteria

Selection for an invitation to submit a full proposal will use the following criteria:

1. relevance of the proposed research to the interests of the Electoral Commission as described in this document
2. relevance of the proposed research, including the methodology
3. value for money
4. demonstrated ability of the team to deliver on the proposal
5. extent of collaboration and inclusion of Māori viewpoints/interpretations

The decision of the selection panel is final. We will provide feedback but will not engage in further discussion on unsuccessful bids.

The selection panel may ask for consideration of changes to a proposal or for two bidders to create a combined bid, when inviting a full proposal bid.

The selection panel will consist of :

1. Dr Helena Catt (Chief Executive of the Electoral Commission) who has a background in political science
2. Peter Northcote (Communications Manager of the Electoral Commission) who has a background in public education and social marketing
3. Chief Judge Joe Williams (or his nominee) who has a background in constitutional law as well as Māori and indigenous research

Other process matters

Any questions should initially be by e-mail to Helena Catt - catt@elections.govt.nz. We will endeavour to turn around answers within a working day. Please note there may be a delay in responding to questions asked after 10th February, due to absences from the office.

This brief has been written to include and make clear the matters that will be important to our decision-making.

Those making a bid may not make any public statement relating to this process or any outcome without permission of the commission.

The commission is under no obligation to accept any proposal

The commission may alter this process at its complete discretion. We would keep you advised.

The nature of our work means that we have to ensure political neutrality in all of our work and use of our budget.

The bid may be emailed, faxed, posted or hand delivered to our offices:

catt@elections.govt.nz

Fax 04 474 0674

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Appendix - Levels of Māori electoral participation

Prepared by the Electoral Commission, using publicly available data.

Enrolling

The enrolment form asks all voters to indicate if they are 'a New Zealand Māori or descendent of a New Zealand Māori' and the response to this question is used to ascertain the number of Māori on the general roll. Since the 2001 Māori option 55% of enrolled Māori are on the Māori roll. Data on Māori enrolment is in the New Zealand Electoral Compendium 2002.

The other issue is the number of Māori who are eligible to enrol but have not. It is not immediately possible to tell what percentage of Māori adults are enrolled. One complication when looking at enrolment levels is the two different questions asked on Māori identification so that some people may give a different answer to the question of Māori descent on the census form and on the enrolment form. Comparing census projections by ethnic identify for the population aged 18+ in 2005 with the number of Māori and non-Māori enrolled suggests that Māori are just as likely as non Māori to be enrolled.

We do know the age profile of those not enrolled. At the end of June 2005, 55% of those not enrolled were under the age of 25.

Voting

Votes Cast as Percentage of Enrolled Voters

	2005	2002	1999	1996	1993	1990
All seats	81	77	85	88	85	85
Māori seats	67	58	71	78	68	66
Highest Māori seat	70	59	73	81	70	69
	Te Tai Tokerau	Te Tai Tokerau	Waiariki	Te Tai Rawhiti	Northern Māori	Eastern Māori
Lowest Māori seat	62	54	67	74	65	61
	Tamaki Makaurau	Tamaki Makaurau	Hauraki	Te Tai Hauauru	Western Māori	Western Māori
	73	71	77	86	80	80
Lowest general seat						
	Mangere	Mangere	Mangere	Mangere	Matamata	Mangere
Highest general seat	87	83	90	93	90	91
	Wellington Central	Wellington Central	Wellington Central	Wellington Central	Wellington-Karori	Wellington Central

Data from the General Election Results - E9

Voting turnout in Māori electorates is consistently lower than in general electorates as shown in the table. Although turnout in 2005 was higher than in 2002 it was the second lowest since 1981.

Election statistics cannot tell us how many Māori on the general roll voted. In the 2002 post election survey conducted by Prof Vowles et al, 42% of Māori said that they did not vote. Analysis of the survey data suggests that, net of all other factors Māori are 10% more likely to be non-voters than everyone else. Overall

the largest impact on voting levels is age with older people being significantly more likely to vote than younger people, the same as for enrolling. However, within each age group Māori are less likely to vote than are non-Māori. A third of Māori non-voters in the survey said that they had never voted, compared to 18% of non-Māori non-voters. Survey results are in Vowles, J., P. Aimer, et al., Eds. (2004). *Voters' Veto*. Auckland, Auckland University Press.

Understanding MMP

The regular monitor polls conducted by the EC indicate lower levels of understanding of MMP amongst Māori than for non-Māori. The same result is found in the larger surveys conducted by Vowles. Not only are Māori more likely than Pākehā to say that they do not know the answer but they are also more likely to give the wrong answer.

% Within Each Ethnicity Who Gave That Answer

	NZ EUROPEAN	NZ MĀORI	PACIFIC ISLAND
Party vote most important	56.6	38.3	30.7
Both equally important	25.2	34.9	33.3
Electorate vote most important	13.1	18.3	19.3
Don't Know	5.2	8.5	16.7
Sample size	4503	410	114

Survey results are in Vowles, J., P. Aimer, et al., Eds. (2004). *Voters' Veto*. Auckland, Auckland University Press.