

From: [LGOIMA](#)
To: **Section 7(2)(a) - Protection of Privacy**
Cc: [Elections](#)
Subject: LGOIMA Request - ballot design and data collection - Reference: 3162
Date: Monday, 29 September 2025 12:38:32 pm
Attachments: [image287492.png](#)
[image777605.png](#)
[image850613.png](#)

Kia ora **Section 7(2)(a) - Protection of Privacy**

We refer to your official information request dated 20 September 2025. Our response is below:

1. **Is the detailed information collected from the ballot stored on any computer system, mobile device, or paper file?**
 - a. **If so, is this information destroyed when the paper ballot material is destroyed?**
 - b. **If not, what is the retention schedule for the detailed information collected from a ballot?**

In response to part 1 a-b. Yes, all returned paper voting documents are scanned so the votes can be captured, tallied and results generated. Following the declaration of results, all paper voting documents are deposited at the district court as per sec 89 of the Local Electoral Act 2001. All electronic records are wiped/cleansed.

2. **A 13 digit number and a bar code are printed in multiple places on the ballot and return address box. Is this number unique and associated with each voter on the roll? How is this number used by Tasman District before, during, and after voting and certification of results?**

The 13-digit number is a unique number generated by our election software that links back to the elector for the roll scrutiny process (to ensure each elector only votes once). This function is tightly held by the electoral officer and is a legal requirement. Specifically sec 75(2)(a) Local Electoral Act 2001 states: "...every voting document must contain...(a) information necessary to identify the elector on the electoral roll and the voting documents issued to that elector.."

3. **Candidates are listed in what is labeled as a random order. What statistically valid technique was used to ensure an unbiased and random sequence of candidate names?**

Reg 31 of the Local Electoral Regulations 2001 permit a local authority to choose the order of candidate names to appear on the voting documents – from alphabetical, pseudo-random and random. If no order is chosen, then the order defaults to alphabetical. The Tasman District Council resolved on 8 May 2025 to adopt the pseudo-random order of candidate names. This means candidate names are randomly drawn and all electors for the specific election receive the candidates in the same order. This process was undertaken by a JP at 9am Thursday 7 August 2025 as publicly notified on Wednesday 6 August 2025 as required by reg 31 (4)

Local Electoral Regulations 2001.

4. **My ballot happens to list the incumbent first on the list of mayoral candidates. Why was the incumbent listed first, which could result in anchoring bias in the voter?**

The order that appears on the voting documents is the order of names drawn by the JP.

5. **Each section of the ballot has a blank line listed after all other choices. What is the purpose of this blank line?**

If this is a reference to a coloured line after each election, this is a design feature to distinguish between elections.

6. **The electoral commission's web site states that all ballots in the central government election are counted by hand. Are ballots in the Tasman local government also only counted by hand?**

No, local election ballots are counted electronically from scanned images. Two images are taken, and one process uses a black and white image and a second process uses the colour image. For the first process all votes are captured and the computer software through various rules, records all votes. The second process looks at all votes recorded and compares them to the first process's recorded votes. At this stage, all votes are manually inspected by a person with the original documents in front of them. If there are any differences in votes between the first and second process, a third process of a further check with the physical documents is undertaken. Each of the three processes are undertaken by different people so one person cannot have sole control over a voting document. All processes are supervised by one or more JPs.

7. **What is the purpose of the printed cross marks located in the corners of both sides of the ballot? Are these alignment marks used in machine scanning?**

Yes, we use optical scanning so these are anchor marks for this to be undertaken.

8. **What is the purpose and use of the bar codes printed in multiple places on the ballot?**

The barcodes alongside the candidate names are a back-up should optical scanning be an issue. This simply means each vote can be scanned and the vote recorded on an individual basis if required.

9. **Please provide any document used to determine the design of this ballot. What I am referring to is some formal document such as the best practices described in this reference: <https://www.aiga.org/membership->**

[community/design-for-democracy/election-tools-resources](#)

All local government voting documents must comply with a general format issued by the Secretary of Local Government (Department of Internal Affairs). This is a requirement of sec 77 Local Electoral Act 2001 and formats are available on the DIA website (<https://www.dia.govt.nz/Services-Local-Elections-Index?OpenDocument#four>)

- 10. Please provide the location or copies of all documents authored or under the control of Tasman District Council that it considered informed consent to voters on the details of the local election process.**

Please refer to information published on our [Elections 2025 webpage](#). This page contains all required public notices, nomination deadlines, voting locations and deadlines, details for voters requiring a special vote or ratepayer electors, including eligibility and procedures, FAQs, candidate information, link to the Electoral Commission, candidate community meetings, electoral wards, p e-election report etc

If you are unsatisfied with the Council's response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or reephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely,
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