

REFERENDA

A referendum is a vote by all enrolled electors on a question. In New Zealand a referendum can be called under the Referenda (Postal Voting) Act 1993 (http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1993/0101/latest/DLM317193.html?search=ts_act_c)

Referendums are either binding or indicative (non-binding).

A binding referendum requires the result to be acted upon or implemented.

An indicative referendum does not require the result to be acted upon or implemented. Citizens' initiated referendums are indicative or non-binding.

Citizens initiated and Government initiated referendums can be conducted by postal vote under the Referenda (Postal Voting) Act 2000. A citizens' initiated referendum can be held together with a general election or at a stand alone poll. Special legislation is required to enable Government initiated referendums to be held other than by postal vote.

What is a Government initiated referendum?

A Government initiated referendum is a referendum promoted by the Government. It can be binding or indicative (non-binding) and pose more than one question or questions with more than two possible answers. Legislation is required to enable a Government initiated referendum to be held unless it is conducted by postal vote under the Referenda (Postal Voting) Act 2000.

Government Initiated Referenda

Date of referendum * held on day of general election # held by postal ballot	Turnout (total votes cast as % of enrolled electors)	Topic and authorising Act	Result (% of valid votes)
9 Mar 1949	54.3	<i>Off-course betting</i> (Gaming Poll Act 1948) Proposal that provision be made for off-course betting on horse-races, through the Totalizator, by means to be provided by the New Zealand Racing Conference and the New Zealand Trotting Conference. I vote for the proposal. I vote against the proposal.	In favour 68.0 Against 32.0
3 Aug 1949	63.5	<i>Compulsory military training</i> (Military Training Poll Act 1949) I vote for compulsory military training. I vote against compulsory military training.	In favour 77.9 Against 22.1
23 Sep 1967	69.7	<i>Term of Parliament</i> (Electoral Poll Act 1967) I vote for a maximum of three years as at present. I vote for a maximum of four years.	3 years 68.1 4 years 31.9
27 Oct 1990*	85.2	<i>Term of Parliament</i> (Term Poll Act 1990) I vote for 3 years as the term of Parliament as at present. I vote for 4 years as the term of Parliament.	3 years 69.3 4 years 30.7
19 Sep 1992	55.2	<i>Voting system</i> (Electoral Referendum Act 1991) <u>Part A</u> I vote to retain the present First-Past-The-Post system. I vote for a change to the voting system. <u>Part B</u> I vote for the Supplementary Member system (SM) I vote for the Single Transferable Vote system (STV) I vote for the Mixed Member Proportional system (MMP) I vote for the Preferential Voting system (PV)	<u>Part A</u> Retain 15.3 Change 84.7 <u>Part B</u> SM 5.6 STV 17.4 MMP 70.5 PV 6.6
6 Nov 1993*	85.2	<i>Voting system</i> (Electoral Referendum Act 1993) I vote for the present First-Past-The-Post system as provided in the Electoral Act 1956. I vote for the proposed Mixed Member Proportional system as provided in the Electoral Act 1993	FPP 46.1 MMP 53.9
5-26 Sep 1997#	80.3	<i>Compulsory Retirement Savings Scheme</i> (Compulsory Retirement Savings Scheme Referendum Act 1997) Do you support the proposed Compulsory Retirement Savings Scheme?	Yes 8.2 No 91.8

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Date of referendum * held on day of general election # held by postal ballot	Turnout (total votes cast as % of enrolled electors)	Topic and authorising Act	Result (% of valid votes)
		<i>Voting System (Electoral Referendum Act 2010)</i> http://www.elections.org.nz/events/past-events/2011-referendum-voting-system	
		Part A - Should New Zealand keep the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) voting system?	Keep 56.17%
		Part B - If New Zealand were to change to another voting system, which voting system would you choose?	Change 41.06%
26 Nov 2011*	74.2%	First Past the Post (FPP)	31.19%
		Preferential Voting (PV)	8.34%
		Single Transferable Vote (STV)	11.19%
		Supplementary Member (SM)	16.14%
		Informal Votes*	33.14%
		* An informal vote is when the voter has not clearly indicated the option for which they wish to vote.	
		<i>First referendum on the New Zealand flag</i>	
		If the New Zealand flag changes, which flag would you prefer?	
11 Dec 2015	48.78%	Results: http://www.electionresults.govt.nz/2015_flag_referendum1/results-by-count-report.html (http://www.electionresults.govt.nz/2015_flag_referendum1/results-by-count-report.html)	See link
		<i>Second referendum on the New Zealand flag</i>	
		What is your choice for the New Zealand flag?	
24 March 2016	67.78%	Results: http://electionresults.govt.nz/2016_flag_referendum2/ (http://electionresults.govt.nz/2016_flag_referendum2/)	See link

What is a Citizens' Initiated Referendum (CIR)?

A citizens' initiated referendum is a referendum promoted under the Citizens Initiated Referenda Act 1993. A referendum question must have only two possible answers.

A referendum is required if 10% of enrolled electors sign a petition calling for a referendum. The form of the petition must be approved by the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the signatures must be collected within 12 months of the Clerk's approval.

Details of current petitions can be found at [Parliament's website \(https://www.parliament.nz/en\)](https://www.parliament.nz/en).

There is a \$50,000 spending limit on advertising promoting or opposing a petition.

There is a \$50,000 spending limit on advertising promoting or opposing either of the answers in a referendum.

Advertising relating to a petition or referendum must include an authorisation statement setting out the name and address of the person at whose direction it is published.

For more details see the [Citizens Initiated Referenda Act 1993 \(http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1993/0101/latest/contents.html\)](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1993/0101/latest/contents.html) and the [Referenda \(Postal Voting\) Act 2000 \(http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2000/0048/latest/contents.html\)](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2000/0048/latest/contents.html).

Citizens Initiated Referenda

Date of referendum * held on day of general election # held by postal ballot	Turnout (total votes cast as % of enrolled electors)	Question	Result (% of valid votes)
2 Dec 1995	27.0	'Should the number of professional firefighters employed full time in the New Zealand Fire Service be reduced below the number employed on 1 January 1995?'	Yes 12.2 No 87.8
27 Nov 1999*	84.8	'Should the size of the House of Representatives be reduced from 120 members to 99 members?'	Yes 81.5 No 18.5
27 Nov 1999*	84.8	'Should there be a reform of our justice system placing greater emphasis on the needs of victims, providing restitution and compensation for them and imposing minimum sentences and hard labour for all serious violent offences?'	Yes 91.8 No 8.2
25 August 2009#	56.09%	Should a smack as part of good parental correction be a criminal offence in New Zealand?	Yes 11.98% No 87.40%
17 December 2013#	45.07%	Do you support the Government selling up to 49% of Meridian Energy, Mighty River Power, Genesis Power, Solid Energy and Air New Zealand?	Yes 32.4% No 67.3%

Last updated: 04 August 2016