

Women and the vote

Page 7 – About the suffrage petition

MCH, 2018d

The database on this site is a digitised version of the main suffrage petition submitted to Parliament on 28 July 1893. It contains the names and addresses of about 24,000 women aged 21 years or older. The original petition comprised more than 500 individual sheets, which were signed in various parts of the country. These were glued together to form a single roll that stretched more than 270 m.

1893
pg 95
Timeline 1

The information reproduced on this site is based on a transcript of the original petition produced by volunteers from the Society of Genealogists in 1993 as part of the suffrage centenary commemorations. The Suburb/Town and City/Region fields have been added to provide consistent information about the signatories' location. Every effort has been made to make these location fields accurate, but some gaps and errors inevitably remain.

Further research is required to discover what happened to the other 1500 or so names that are supposed to be on this petition (see below). We have also found some discrepancies in the petition, including almost identical copies of some sheets (sheets 103 & 109; 180 & 218; 265 & 268; 365 & 387 and 391 & 392 have been discovered so far).

See also: The women's suffrage petition: from document to database (2017, NZHistory Facebook note)

This video from the He Tohu exhibition tells the story of the the Women's Suffrage Petition:



Regional breakdown of the petition database

As this table shows, Canterbury and Otago were particularly strongly represented on the main suffrage petition. Areas such as Bay of Plenty, East Coast and Nelson are hugely under-represented, and it is likely that some of the separate, smaller petitions referred to above were compiled in these regions.

Region	Signatories
Northland	211
Auckland	2142
Coromandel	141
Waikato	79
King Country	2
Bay of Plenty	3
East Coast	4
Taranaki	269
Volcanic Plateau	0
Whanganui	1119
Manawatū/Horowhenua	1270
Hawke's Bay	1763
Wairarapa	607
Wellington	1260
Nelson	1
Marlborough	203
West Coast	272
Canterbury	4432
South Canterbury	1312
Otago	7471
Southland	1430
TOTAL	23991

1892 petition

We also have a transcript of the 1892 suffrage petition which has more than 17,000 names, including some from places missing on the 1893 petition. You can download a transcript of this 1892 petition as an Excel file [here](#).

Share this item

Women's Suffrage Petition



Thirteen petitions

This petition was by far the largest of 13 separate petitions collected by women's suffrage supporters in 1893. When pro-suffrage MP Sir John Hall presented them to the House of Representatives on 11 August, he noted that they contained the signatures of 31,872 women, almost a quarter of the adult (voting age) European female population of New Zealand.

- Mary J. Carpenter and 25,519 others
- Kate Baldwin and 2765 others
- (Mrs?) Gerald L. Peacock, of Devonport, Auckland: 2301 names
- Elizabeth M. Eyre Kenny and 601 others (probably collected in Nelson)
- Caroline Anderson and 393 others
- Mrs J. Irwin Wilson, of Whangarei: 83 names
- Marian Kirker and 49 others
- Clara M. Birch and 40 others
- Sophia James and 34 others
- Lizzie F. Rattray, of Auckland: 31 names [see the DNZB's biography of Lizzie Frost Rattray]
- Harriet Win: 23 names
- F. Nightingale, of Nelson: 16 names
- Sarah Lurchin and 15 others

Little is known about the 12 smaller petitions, which do not appear to have survived. It is likely that they were compiled in specific regions, which would help explain some notable gaps in the geographical coverage of the Carpenter petition (see table below).

Sources for petition information: *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1893, I-1 and I-2; *Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1893.



How to cite this page

'About the suffrage petition', URL: <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/womens-suffrage/about-the-petition>, (Ministry for Culture and Heritage), updated 15-May-2018