

1853
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GENERAL ELECTIONS 1853-2014 - DATES AND

(Electoral Commission, 2016a)

Dates and turnout of New Zealand General Elections from 1853 to 2014

Date of general election[1]	Date of Maori election[2]	Total no. of MPs	
1853 14 Jul-1 Oct		37	5,849
1855 26 Oct-28 Dec		37	9,891[6]
1860-1 12 Dec-28 Mar		53	13,196
1866 12 Feb-6 Apr		70	29,320
1868	15 Apr, 6 May	76	
1871 14 Jan-23 Feb	1, 15 Feb	78	41,527
1875-6 20 Dec-29 Jan	4, 15 Jan	88	56,471
1879 28 Aug-15 Sep	1, 8 Sep	88	82,271
1881 9 Dec (Fri)	8 Dec (Thu)	95	120,972
1884 22 Jul (Tue)	21 Jul (Mon)	95	137,686
1887 26 Sep (Mon)	7 Sep (Wed)	95	175,410
1890 5 Dec (Fri)	27 Nov (Wed)	74	183,171
1893 28 Nov (Tue)	20 Dec (Wed)	74	302,997
1896 4 Dec (Wed)	19 Dec (Thu)	74	337,024
1899 6 Dec (Wed)	19 Dec (Tue)	74	373,744
1902 25 Nov (Tue)	22 Dec (Mon)	80	415,789
1905 6 Dec (Wed)	20 Dec (Wed)	80	476,473
1908 17, 24 Nov & 1 Dec (Tue)[7]	2 Dec (Wed)	80	537,003
1911 7, 14 Dec (Thu)	19 Dec (Tue)	80	590,042
1914 10 Dec (Thu)	11 Dec (Fri)	80	616,043
1919 17 Dec (Wed)	16 Dec (Tue)	80	683,420
1922 7 Dec (Tue)	6 Dec (Mon)	80	700,111
1925 4 Nov (Wed)	3 Nov (Tue)	80	754,113
1928 14 Nov (Wed)	13 Nov (Tue)	80	844,633
1931 2 Dec (Wed)	1 Dec (Tue)	80	874,787
1935 27 Nov (Wed)	26 Nov (Tue)	80	919,798
1938 15 Oct (Sat)	14 Oct (Fri)	80	995,173
1943 25 Sep (Sat)	24 Sep (Fri)	80	1,021,034[8]
1946 27 Nov (Wed)	26 Nov (Tue)	80	1,081,898
1949 30 Nov (Wed)	29 Nov (Tue)	80	1,113,852
1951 1 Sep (Sat hereafter)		80	1,205,762
1954 13 Nov		80	1,209,670
1957 30 Nov		80	1,252,329
1960 26 Nov		80	1,310,742
1963 30 Nov		80	1,345,836
1966 26 Nov		80	1,409,600
1969 29 Nov		84	1,519,889
1972 25 Nov		87	1,583,256
1975 29 Nov		87	1,953,050
1978 25 Nov		92	2,487,594
1981 28 Nov		92	2,034,747
1984 14 Jul		95	2,111,651
1987 15 Aug		97	2,114,656
1990 27 Oct		97	2,202,157
1993 6 Nov		99	2,321,664
1996 12 Oct		120	2,418,587
1999 27 Nov		120	2,509,365
2002 27 Jul		120	2,670,030

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	Year	Date	Total no. of MPs[3]	Total registered electors[4]	Official turnout (%) [5]
2005	17 Sep		121	2,847,396	80.9
2008	8 Nov		122	2,990,759	79.5
2011	26 Nov		121	3,070,847	74.2
2014	20 Sep		121	3,140,417	77.9

[1] From 1853 to 1879 general elections took place over a period of weeks or months. As many members were returned unopposed in these years, the range of dates given covers both nomination day and (where required) the day of polling. From 1881 a single day was specified for voting in all general (European) seats, although Maori voting was held on a different day. Since 1951 elections in general and Maori seats have taken place on the same day, and always on a Saturday.

[2] Between 1868 and 1879 dates are given for both nomination and (if required) polling in the four Maori seats. At the first elections in 1868 three of the four members were elected on nomination day (15 Apr), two without opposition and one by show of hands; the fourth was returned in a poll on 6 May. From 1881 only the day of Maori polling is given.

[3] From 1868 includes Maori MPs.

[4] Includes electors enrolled in uncontested seats, who are excluded when calculating turnout (note that all seats have been contested since 1943). Figures from 1860-1 to 1879 exclude gold miners, who were entitled to vote without registration. In 1864 there were 11,838 males aged over 21 on the Otago goldfields, while in 1869-70 20,300 miners throughout New Zealand were entitled to vote under this provision. Maori are excluded until 1951. Rolls for the Maori seats were not compiled until 1949, and those used for that election were clearly incomplete (more votes were cast than electors enrolled). If the official figures for Maori were included, the 1949 turnout would be 94.8%.

[5] Uncontested seats are excluded. Maori are excluded until 1951. Note that the method of calculating official turnout has changed several times: until 1954 it was valid votes plus informal votes as a percentage of total enrolled electors; from 1957 to 1978 valid votes plus informal votes as a percentage of total enrolled electors plus allowed special votes; from 1981 valid votes, informal votes and disallowed special votes as a percentage of total enrolled electors.

[6] Includes an estimated 485 electors enrolled in the New Plymouth, Grey & Bell and Omata electorates, for which figures are not available.

[7] The Second Ballot Act 1908 provided for second ballots (where required) to be held seven days after the first ballot except in ten large rural seats, where fourteen days was allowed. In 1908, 22 second ballots were held on 24 Nov and one (Bay of Plenty) on 1 Dec. At the 1911 election, all 30 second ballots were held seven days later. The Second Ballot Act, which did not apply to the Maori seats, was repealed in 1913. The figures for turnout in these years are for first ballots only.

[8] The figures for enrolled electors and turnout are for civilians only; an additional 92,934 military votes were cast.

[9] This figure is misleading because the electoral rolls in 1978 contained a large number of outdated and duplicate entries. If the 361,000 names deleted in 1979-80 are subtracted, the turnout was 79.9%.

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