

Electoral systems

The Otago Regional Council operated its 2019 election under the first past the post system (FPP). With the FPP system, electors vote by indicating their preferred candidate(s) on the voting paper. The candidate(s) who receives the most votes is then declared elected.

The other option that councils can use for their elections is the single transferable vote system (STV). This system is compulsory for district health board elections. Under STV, electors rank candidates in order of preference. The number of votes required for a candidate to be elected (called the quota) depends on the number of positions to be filled and the number of valid votes. The necessary number of candidates to fill all vacancies is achieved by first counting voters' first preferences, then by a transfer of a proportion of the votes in excess of the "quota" that are received by any candidate. The lowest polling candidates are then excluded, and these votes transferred in accordance with voters' second preferences.

Under the Local Electoral Act 2001, councils can resolve to change the electoral system to be used at the next two elections, or conduct a binding poll on the question, or electors can demand a binding poll. This must be done no later than 12 September in the year that is two years before the next triennial general election is held. The next triennial general election will be in October 2022.

Council gave public notice in September 2014 that electors had the right to demand a poll on the electoral system to be used for the next two elections. There was no demand for a poll.