



## Auckland local elections



## Guidelines:

### Running a ‘Meet the Candidates’ event

Giving voters easy access to information about all candidates is key to a fair and transparent elections process.

The main purpose of organising an event is for voters to:

- meet and hear from candidates
- know the candidates’ positions on the issues that affect our city and daily lives
- make well-informed decisions when voting in this year’s local elections.

## Key dates for 2025 Auckland local elections

Nomination Period	Voting Period
Friday 4 July - 12 noon, Friday 1 August	Friday 9 September - 12 noon, Saturday 11 October Voting papers delivered

## Can anyone run an event?

There are no specific rules around who can organise and run a ‘meet the candidates’ event. During past elections, community groups, resident and ratepayer associations, universities, iwi, marae, youth councils and many more individuals and groups throughout Tāmaki Makaurau have taken the initiative to give Aucklanders the chance to meet their candidates.

Note: for the first time this year Auckland Council will run a series ‘meet the candidate events’ for all local board and ward candidates. These events will be held online only and recordings will be available on website. The schedule and other details will be available on [voteauckland.co.nz/meetcandidates](https://voteauckland.co.nz/meetcandidates)

### When should an event take place?

'Meet the Candidates' events should run after candidates nominations have closed on 1 August and close of voting on 11 October.

Candidates names and their contact details (if they have chosen to make these publicly available) will be released on VoteAuckland by the end of Monday 4 August, but more details about the candidates will be made available later: their full online profiles will be published from 1 September.

You may also want to consider running your event well before the close of voting to give voters the best chance to hear from, and speak with candidates, before they return their votes.

When planning your event, consider the most appropriate day and time to provide as many voters as possible the opportunity to attend.

### Venue and accessibility

It is up to you to decide where to hold your event but keep in mind how accessible the location and the venue will be for voters. For example, if the venue is not wheelchair-accessible already, provide a ramp for the event. Also, consider having translators available depending on the make-up of the community in the area where your event takes place.

Remember that you can hire Auckland Council venues for your event. Normal costs apply. Find more information about Auckland Council venues for hire [here](#).

You can also consider running the event online, using tools such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Each of these tools have guidance available online.

### Let us know

If you have confirmed an event, advertise it without cost on the [OurAuckland website](#).

Once you have uploaded your event, we will then link it to the Auckland Council elections website - [voteauckland.co.nz](http://voteauckland.co.nz) - for all Aucklanders visiting the website to see.

More info?

[www.voteauckland.co.nz](http://www.voteauckland.co.nz)

[elections@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:elections@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

# Health and safety

### Be aware of the size of your venue and its maximum capacity.

The nature of political debate means you should always be prepared for strong opinions and the possibility of confrontation. To minimise risk of an incident, make sure you have a confident, well-prepared moderator to control and steer the conversation in a safe direction if things get heated or off track.

Potential conflict can involve both audience members and candidates alike, so we recommend the moderator remind the candidates and the audience beforehand about what you expect in terms of behaviour.

Safety of all involved is critical – so, you will need to have a health, safety and security plan for any event (we can share a template to help you out if needed) and, in some cases, you may want to consider additional measures, such as hiring security staff.

# Fairness and political neutrality

To ensure political neutrality at a ‘Meet the Candidates’ event, we recommend that you invite all candidates running within the local board or ward area, so they all have the same opportunity to meet voters. It is essential to a fair electoral process to make sure that no candidate is given a greater advantage over another.

To keep things fair throughout an event, moderators should give all candidates equal opportunity to answer questions and make statements. It can also help to steer candidates away from asking each other questions because these can sometimes be personal, unrelated and move debate away from the current topic of discussion.

# Content

For ideas about what to ask candidates, have a look at the pre-election report that will be available later in the year on [voteauckland.co.nz](http://voteauckland.co.nz). This is an informative, user-friendly overview of the key issues facing Tāmaki Makaurau in the next three years. You could also ask around in your community for the key issues and topics they want to hear about.

It is preferable to **give candidates questions in advance** - keep in mind that debate is often richer when candidates are well prepared. See attached a template you may find useful to create your questions and provide helpful guidance to the candidates you invite.

More info?

[www.voteauckland.co.nz](http://www.voteauckland.co.nz)

[elections@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:elections@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

## Guidelines: Running a 'Meet the Candidates' event

### Attachment

# Template of invitation letter to candidates

Tēnā koe

Congratulations on your candidacy for the xxx local board/ward in the 2025 Auckland local election. It's fantastic to have you step forward in anticipation of serving your community.

You are invited to a *Meet the Candidate* event, a townhall-styled forum where you will be given the opportunity to tell the community about yourself and answer questions they have of you. These events are organised to help voters get to know you better.

Find here some questions you can expect to be asked at the event. There will also be an opportunity at the end of the discussion for the community to ask questions of you.

- Tell us a bit about your cultural and professional background
- Why are you running for the xxxx Local Board/Ward?
- What do you think the key issues are for this community?
- How do you propose to bring about positive change to the issues you have identified?
- How do you plan on involving the community in the decision-making process in the xxx Local Board/Ward area?
- If elected what would be your top priority(ies)?

You are encouraged to invite and bring along your whānau, friends, supporters and wider community to listen.

These events are hosted by xxx and facilitated by xxx. Each candidate will receive fair treatment with equal opportunity to speak and respond to questions. **It is not the role of our organisation to provide instruction to electors about who to vote for, but to simply encourage the community to vote.**

If you have any questions or concerns about the events, please do not hesitate to contact xxxx. Alternatively, for any specific electoral queries, you can contact the Electoral Officer Dale Ofsoske: [dale@electionservices.co.nz](mailto:dale@electionservices.co.nz)

More info?

[www.voteauckland.co.nz](http://www.voteauckland.co.nz)

[elections@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:elections@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)