



ELECTORAL COMMISSION  
Te Kaitiaki Take Kōwhiri

Citizens Initiated Referendum  
22 November – 13 December 2013

*“Do you support the Government  
selling up to 49% of Meridian  
Energy, Mighty River Power,  
Genesis Power, Solid Energy and  
Air New Zealand?”*

**MEDIA KIT**

**30 September 2013**

## 2013 Citizens Initiated Referendum

**"Do you support the Government selling up to 49% of Meridian Energy, Mighty River Power, Genesis Power, Solid Energy and Air New Zealand?"**

A Citizens Initiated Referendum will take place between 22 November and 13 December 2013. It will take place by post, and be administered by the Electoral Commission.

This referendum asks voters the question: *"Do you support the Government selling up to 49% of Meridian Energy, Mighty River Power, Genesis Power, Solid Energy and Air New Zealand?"* People will vote "yes" or "no" in answer to this question on their voting paper.

A Citizens Initiated Referendum gives everyone who is enrolled to vote the opportunity to vote on a specific question. Under the Citizens Initiated Referendum Act 1993 a referendum is held when at least 10% of the people enrolled to vote sign a petition calling for one. The results of citizens initiated referenda indicate the views held by voters on specific questions and are not binding on the Government.

Under the Citizens Initiated Referenda Act 1993, a referendum must be held within 12 months of the successful petition being presented to the House of Representatives. The petition that triggered this referendum was presented to the House of Representatives on 3 September 2013.

## Media Contact Details

### Voting

Anastasia (Stasi) Turnbull, Manager Communications and Education  
phone +64 4 806 3535  
mobile 027 474 3997

### Enrolment

Murray Wicks, National Manager, Enrolment Services  
phone +64 4 801 0701  
mobile 027 249 4508

[www.elections.org.nz](http://www.elections.org.nz)

[www.electionresults.govt.nz](http://www.electionresults.govt.nz)

The elections Freephone number is 0800 36 76 56.

## 2013 Citizens Initiated Referendum Timeline

Date	Activity
Sunday 6 October	Campaign starts to ensure people are correctly enrolled to vote in the referendum. Enrol or update your enrolment details at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.elections.org.nz">www.elections.org.nz</a></li> <li>• by Freetexting name and address to 3676</li> <li>• any PostShop</li> <li>• by calling Freephone 0800 36 76 56</li> </ul>
Thursday 21 November	Last chance to enrol to vote.
Friday 22 November	Voting opens in the Citizens Initiated Referendum on the question "Do you support the Government selling up to 49 % of Meridian Energy, Mighty River Power, Genesis Power, Solid Energy and Air New Zealand?"
Friday 29 November	All voting papers sent to enrolled electors by this date.
Thursday 12 December	Voting papers posted in New Zealand by this date will reach the Returning Officer in time.  Voting papers sent from overseas need to be postmarked no later than Thursday 12 December.
7pm Friday 13 December	Voting closes.
8.30pm [target] Friday 13 December	Target time for preliminary result to be announced. <a href="http://www.electionresults.govt.nz">www.electionresults.govt.nz</a> <a href="http://www.elections.org.nz">www.elections.org.nz</a>
Tuesday 17 December Noon	Last point for voting papers to be received for inclusion in the count (they must be postmarked no later than 12 December if from overseas).
Tuesday 17 December 5pm [target]	Official result announced. <a href="http://www.electionresults.govt.nz">www.electionresults.govt.nz</a> <a href="http://www.elections.org.nz">www.elections.org.nz</a>

## Facts and Statistics

Total enrolled population as at 4PM, September 30 2013: 3,024,268

Percentage of population enrolled: 91.0% of estimated eligible vote age population

*More than 1.6 million voters took part in the 2009 postal referendum. Stacked up tightly one on top of the other those voting papers would make a tower 185m high. To put this in perspective, the summit of Wellington's Mt Victoria is 196m high.*

### Previous 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%

## Advertising and Media Rules

### **Are there any rules about how much can be spent on advertising the referendum?**

Any individual or group can undertake advertising to promote a Yes or No vote on the referendum question.

Advertisers are subject to an expenditure limit of \$50,000 (including GST). The expenditure limit applies to advertising that is used or appears to be being used to promote one of the answers to the referendum question, published or broadcast during the period from 3 September 2013 to the close of the voting period.

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.

### **Can MPs and parliamentary parties use public money to fund referendum advertising?**

Communications that explicitly seek support for casting a vote for one of the answers to a referendum under the Citizens Initiated Referenda Act 1993 are excluded from funding entitlements under the Parliamentary Service Act 2000. For further information on the parliamentary funding rules, contact the Parliamentary Service.

### **Are there any rules about what can and can't be said in the media in relation to the referendum?**

No.

### **Are there any rules or restrictions on media coverage?**

No.

## Questions and Answers

### **When is the referendum?**

Voting in the Citizens Initiated Referendum takes place between 22 November and 13 December. It will take place by post.

### **What is this referendum about?**

This referendum asks voters the question: *"Do you support the Government selling up to 49% of Meridian Energy, Mighty River Power, Genesis Power, Solid Energy and Air New Zealand?"* People can vote "yes" or "no" in answer to this question on their voting paper.

### **Why is there going to be a referendum?**

More than 10% of enrolled voters signed a petition asking the following question: *"Do you support the Government selling up to 49% of Meridian Energy, Mighty River Power, Genesis Power, Solid Energy and Air New Zealand?"*

This means that under the Citizens Initiated Referenda Act 1993, a referendum must be held within 12 months of the successful petition being presented to the House of Representatives. The petition that triggered this referendum was presented to the House of Representatives on 3 September 2013.

### **What is a Citizens Initiated Referendum?**

A Citizens Initiated Referendum gives everyone who is enrolled to vote the opportunity to vote on a specific question. Under the Citizens Initiated Referendum Act 1993 a referendum is held when at least 10% of the people enrolled to vote sign a petition calling for one. The results of citizens initiated referenda indicate the views held by voters on specific questions and are not binding on the Government.

Under the Citizens Initiated Referenda Act 1993, a referendum must be held within 12 months of the successful petition being presented to the House of Representatives.

### **Is the result binding on the government?**

No. The results of citizens initiated referenda indicate the views held by voters on specific questions and are not binding on the Government.

### **Why isn't it being held with the next general election?**

The referendum must be held within a year of the date of the presentation of the petition, unless 75% of all members of the House vote to defer it, in which case it must be held within 24 months.

## **Will there be an official education campaign to inform the public about the question?**

The Electoral Commission's role is to make sure people know how to take part in the referendum. This involves raising awareness that the referendum is on, what the question being asked is and how to take part. As electoral officials, we must remain impartial and so cannot be involved in discussing the merits of the question. The purpose of the referendum is to indicate the views held by voters on the specific question.

## **Why is it a postal vote, not voting in person like at election time?**

Postal voting is a user friendly, convenient way to conduct a referendum and encourages participation. Postal voting enables voters to vote in the comfort of their homes at a time that is convenient to them. The Referenda (Postal Voting) Act 2000 was enacted in response to a recommendation from the Justice and Electoral Select Committee that serious consideration be given to holding referenda by postal vote rather than with general elections. It followed on from the 1999 general election where two CIR caused voter confusion, congestion in polling places and significantly delayed the preliminary results.

## **Can the result be challenged?**

Yes. Applications for an inquiry into the conduct of the referendum can be made to the High Court within 20 working days of the result being declared. An application requires 200 electors to be dissatisfied with the result.

## **Can the petitioner change the question now that some of the assets have been sold?**

No. The question was proposed by the promoter of the Citizens Initiated Referendum petition. The question was then determined by the Clerk of the House of Representatives following a public submission period for comments on the wording. The Clerk makes sure that the wording shows the referendum's purpose and effect and that people can only answer yes or no to the question. More than 10% of electors have signed a petition to have that question put to voters in a referendum.

## **Can the petition be withdrawn?**

The promoter can withdraw the petition at any time prior to the day the writ for the referendum is issued on 25 October. The writ for the referendum must be issued at least 28 days before the start of the postal voting period for a referendum conducted by post.

## **Voting**

### **How do I take part?**

By law only those enrolled by the start of the voting period can take part in the referendum.

You can only vote if you are enrolled before voting starts on 22 November.

If you are enrolled by Thursday 21 November you will be sent your voting paper in the mail. You should receive your voting paper by Friday 29 November.

- ✓ Tick your answer to the question on the voting paper
- ✓ Tear off the voting paper from the personalised letter sent to you in the mail
- ✓ Put it into the Freepost addressed envelope provided and
- ✓ Post it in a New Zealand Post mailbox. You should send it no later than 12 December to ensure it gets to the Returning Officer in time to count.

(If you are overseas your voting paper will need to be postmarked no later than Thursday 12 December and be back with the Returning Officer by noon on Tuesday 17 December to count.)

### **What if I don't get a voting pack?**

Your address details may need updating, or you may not be enrolled to vote. Go to [www.elections.org.nz](http://www.elections.org.nz) or call Freephone 0800 36 76 56 to check your details. If you are enrolled, we can send you a replacement voting paper. You will also need to fill in and send us an enrolment form to update your details.

### **What if I make a mistake on my voting paper?**

We can issue replacement voting papers. Go to [www.elections.org.nz](http://www.elections.org.nz) or Freephone 0800 36 76 56 to request a replacement voting paper. If you are issued with a replacement voting paper, the old one will be cancelled.

### **How do you get a replacement voting paper?**

Call Freephone 0800 36 76 56 or go to [www.elections.org.nz](http://www.elections.org.nz) and apply for one.

### **What if I ask for a new one and the old one turns up?**

If you are issued with a replacement voting paper you must use the replacement voting paper. The old one will be cancelled and will not be counted.

### **If I am overseas can I take part?**

Yes. If your enrolment details include an overseas postal address, your voting papers will be posted directly to you. If you don't have an overseas postal address on the electoral roll, your voting papers will be sent to your New Zealand postal address. You will need to make arrangements to have them forwarded to you overseas. You can arrange a temporary redirection of your mail with New Zealand Post or online at [www.changemyaddress.co.nz](http://www.changemyaddress.co.nz).

If you are unable to make arrangements to have your original voting paper forwarded to you, from 22 November you can apply for a replacement voting paper to be posted to your temporary postal address. To apply for a replacement voting paper visit [www.elections.org.nz](http://www.elections.org.nz) or phone +64 9 909 4182.

### **If I am overseas can I fax or scan my voting papers and send them back electronically?**

No. All voting papers must be posted back. Your voting paper will need to be postmarked no later than Thursday 12 December and be back with the Returning Officer by noon on Tuesday 17 December to be counted.

## **I have a disability, what are my options for voting?**

Your voting paper will be sent to your postal address. You can ask any person including a friend or family member to help you to read the voting paper or to mark your voting paper if you need help to do so. However, it must be done under your direction. No one, not even a person with a power of attorney, can cast another person's vote for them.

## **I can't fill in the voting paper myself, can I get someone else to do it for me?**

Yes. You can ask any person including a friend or family member to help you to read the voting paper or to mark your voting paper if you need help to do so. However, it must be done under your direction. No one, not even a person with a power of attorney, can cast another person's vote for them.

## **Why are there QR codes on the voting paper?**

The QR code enables voters' names to be marked off the electoral roll when their voting papers are returned - while at the same time protecting the secrecy of the ballot. This is required by law to identify any cases of dual voting.

When the voting paper is returned, the QR code is scanned to mark off the voter's name on the electoral roll. The voter's tick is recorded, but not counted, in a separate database from the electoral roll to preserve the secrecy of the ballot. The votes are not counted until after the voting period has closed at 7pm on 13 December.

## **Results**

### **When will the results be known?**

The preliminary results will be announced after 7.00pm on Friday 13 December.  
The target time for the release of the preliminary results is 8.30pm

The official results will be announced on Tuesday 17 December. The target time for the release of the final results is 5.00pm

The results will be available from [www.electionresults.govt.nz](http://www.electionresults.govt.nz) and [www.elections.org.nz](http://www.elections.org.nz)

### **What happens to the referendum results?**

The results of citizens initiated referenda indicate the views held by voters on specific questions and are not binding on a government to act on the result.