

Board Election Procedure and Protocols

Applicable to: Whanganui District Health Board members, staff and all candidates for the 2019 WDHB election	Authorised by: Whanganui District Health Board Contact person: WDHB Chair
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1 Introduction

District health board elections will be held on **Saturday 12 October 2019**.

The 'pre-election period' commences on Friday 12 July 2019 and all candidates (including existing board members) and Whanganui District Health Board (WDHB) staff are expected to follow these procedures and protocols, which apply to all campaigning activities.

2 District health board staff must remain politically neutral

It is important that WDHB staff remain politically neutral at all times in their dealings with board members, potential board members and the public in general.

Staff should not take part in any activity related to the election campaign of a current or potential elected member (apart from their own, should they choose to stand). This includes:

- attending campaign meetings in their capacity as employees of the Whanganui District Health Board
- attending private campaign strategy meetings
- taking part in any activity that could be seen to be a campaign activity (eg canvassing, social media comments, writing letters, media releases or speeches) that could be linked to a candidate's campaign.

Staff may attend activities related to the election campaign of any sitting board member or candidate in order to help them make their own judgements on their choice of candidate(s). It is acceptable for staff to attend, or even help organise, meetings where competing candidates present themselves for scrutiny, but it is not acceptable for staff to obviously align themselves with or publicly support a particular candidate.

3 No political activity or campaigning on site

No district health board forums or meetings (for example, district health board public meetings) should be used for political purposes.

The WDHB site must not be used for any campaigning purposes, including taking campaign photos, using premises or displaying posters or other signage.

4 District health board resources should not be used for campaigning

No district health board resources (including computers, e-mail, cell phones, faxes, stationery, photocopiers, stamps, cards, notice boards on WDHB sites) should be used for campaigning purposes.

Staff must not send or forward emails seeking support for a particular candidate or candidates.

5 Information should be available to all candidates

Where district health board information is supplied to a candidate for campaign purposes, it will be supplied to other candidates on request.

6 Employees of district health boards may stand for elections

DHB employees have a statutory right (Clause 7, Schedule 2, NZ Public Health and Disability Act 2000) to be elected as a member of a district health board.

"A person is not prevented from being elected as a member of a district health board simply because the person is an employee of the district health board."

There is a possibility that a conflict of interest could arise during the campaign period, so employees who offer themselves for election to public office must notify the chief executive immediately they do so. This is in accordance with the WDHB's Conflict of Interest Policy.

7 District health board publications and website information

The WDHB's website includes profiles of current board members and these will be removed during the pre-election period commencing on 12 July (names and photos will remain). Following the close of nominations on 16 August, the candidate profile statements of all candidates will be available through the Whanganui District Council's website.

Care will be taken that WDHB publications do not provide an inappropriate high profile for any current board member. This is a matter of judgement, taking into account the spokesperson role of the board chair and the ongoing activities of the district health board.

Where to go for further help

- 1 For general information regarding the district health board election processes:
www.moh.govt.nz/dhbelections.
- 2 For further detail on communications in a pre-election period, see the website for the Report of the Controller and Auditor-General – Good Practice for Managing Public Communications by Local Authorities:
http://www.oag.govt.nz/HomePageFolders/Publications/Public_Communications/Public_Communications.htm
- 3 Whanganui District Health Board staff can refer to the WDHB's 'Employees as Board Members Policy.'
- 4 If you are unsure whether or not certain requests or activities are a breach of these procedures, please discuss the matter with your manager or Whanganui District Health Board's election contact, Margaret Bell on 348 3424 or extn 8424 (email margaret.bell@wdhb.org.nz)