



INCLUSIVE CAMPAIGNING GUIDELINES

Ko Tatou
LGNZ.

As a public and community leader take the opportunity to be an upstander. Inclusive campaigning and respectful debate supports diversity and inclusion in our communities.

Inclusive

campaigning

guidelines

Message from Meng Foon

Race Relations Commissioner

As Race Relations Commissioner I encourage every candidate to run a campaign that supports building harmonious communities and gives nothing to racism. Serving in local government is an important leadership role and campaigns are an opportunity to demonstrate leadership values of inclusivity, non-discrimination and belonging.

Everyone has the right to live a life that is free from discrimination. This is enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1993, that no one should be discriminated against on the grounds of colour, race, religion, ethnic or national origins, gender, marital status, disability, age, political opinion or employment status. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, and I have in the past seen public discussions and political campaigning that have lost focus on the issues and instead become racist.

Our community and country is ethnically diverse, in Aotearoa New Zealand there are 214 ethnic

groups and over 300 dialects spoken. Our diverse communities bring richness to all aspects of Aotearoa New Zealand. We celebrate our diversity. Inclusive campaigns support diversity and inclusion in our community, facilitate the participation of everyone and demonstrates inclusive leadership.

Political campaigning and rhetoric can be a tool for change, but if used in a way that discriminates against people, it can be a tool for harm. Racist conversations often negatively impact members of ethnic, religious and diverse communities, which can do real harm to people and in turn the social cohesion of our communities and country.

It is important to debate issues in a way that doesn't discriminate but instead upholds the dignity of everyone. As a public and community leader take the opportunity to be an upstander – someone who stands up against racism in the community. Give nothing to racism.

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Message from Susan Freeman-Greene

Chief Executive, Local Government New Zealand

We need everyone across Aotearoa New Zealand to see local government as a powerful platform for positive change for the benefit of current and future generations. A wide diversity of candidates must stand in our local elections to represent their communities when decisions are being made.

Ultimately it's about making sure that all voters can see themselves in their elected representatives.

We know that a lack of inclusion is one of the barriers to getting diversity into local councils and is an issue that has built up over time. For candidates from diverse and under-represented backgrounds and communities, this barrier can start even before they have even been elected through harmful campaigning rhetoric aimed at them and the communities they represent. Unsafe and harmful rhetoric can be a major deterrent for candidates looking to stand as well as residents who are wanting to engage with local issues.

All communities in Aotearoa are affected by the changes occurring across our nation, including the significant programme of reform underway in the local government sector that will change the forms and functions of local government.

Candidates can debate these important issues robustly yet respectfully to uphold the dignity of their fellow candidates. This means focusing on the issues – not the person.

Differences in opinion are an important part of our democratic process. However, racist and discriminatory rhetoric is unacceptable - it damages our democracy. Inclusive campaigning and respectful debate supports diversity and inclusion in our communities by ensuring that everyone feels safe to participate in these important conversations.

This election, let's have respectful and constructive debate and let's campaign about the important issues and opportunities facing local government and communities – there are plenty of them. We know that this sometimes toxic and challenging environment has built up over a long time, so we acknowledge that shifting what's acceptable – and what is not – will take more than one election cycle. We need to start somewhere though.

We want these guidelines to be enduring. We hope they will form the basis for all future local body campaigns.

Things to consider:

Running an inclusive campaign

RESPECT AND UPHOLD TE TIRITI O WAITANGI

Te Tiriti is Aotearoa New Zealand's founding document and informs us how we should approach partnering with mana whenua and Māori.

VALUE TE REO MĀORI

It is an official language of Aotearoa New Zealand and it is a taonga unique to New Zealand.

REFRAME DEBATES TO AVOID RACISM

Some debates can be framed in racist and derogatory terms. This has recently included Three Waters and Māori wards which have, at times, become derogatory towards Māori. This is racist and not based on fact. Take time to get to know the issues and the facts.

SUPPORT THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Candidates who value diversity and inclusion in our communities should be able to identify actions they would take in office to support diversity, inclusion and build belonging.

DON'T PERPETUATE STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes and generalisations are not based on facts and can be harmful to communities. Consider what language you use and how you speak about a topic to avoid creating prejudice and stigmatisation that could result in harm being done to others.

AVOID 'RACE BAITING'

Targeting 'immigration' or 'migrants' as the cause of national issues is often inaccurate and discriminatory. This can be hurtful and detrimental to people who are new to Aotearoa New Zealand and are part of our diverse community.

SUPPORT ACCESSIBILITY

Participating in elections is part of being engaged in civil society. Having an accessible campaign means reducing barriers for people to connect and engage with you – as well as going out to meet people who may not come to you.

Actions you can take

01/

Take time to engage with Te Tiriti o Waitangi by learning your local iwi history.

02/

Have a look at examples of partnership with mana whenua and Māori in local government.

03/

Attend cultural, ethnic, and diverse public events. Meet community groups you may not have engaged with before. Listen to what their priorities and aspirations are and what their experiences are in engaging with local government.

04/

Using multilingual greetings when you speak helps connect with the community and shows you value diversity. Pronounce words and names correctly – check first if you're not sure.

05/

Attend community meetings in diverse settings including on marae, at religious venues such as mosques, churches or temples, migrant and community centres.

06/

Monitor your social media and ensure any racist or discriminating comments are removed.

07/

Be an upstander against racist and discriminating comments when engaging in public debate or conversations.

08/

Use inclusive language and words when referring to people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, to avoid stereotyping, prejudice or confusion.

If you want further information or if you have any questions please contact www.hrc.co.nz

