

Election Signage Policy

He Kaupapa Here: Tohū Pōtitanga

Team/Directorate	Democracy Services / Corporate Services
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1 OVERVIEW

This document contains the framework and principles for the placement of election signage in the Queenstown Lakes District for local and central government elections and by-elections.

2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide election candidates and their agents with guidance on the placement of election signs

3 SCOPE

QLDC is committed to the principles of fairness and open democracy. It will not align itself with any political party, individual candidate, or interest.

This Policy applies to signage used to publicise election candidates and/or parties. Elections may include the following:

- > Local elections and by-elections
- > Central government general elections and by elections
- > Elections of local trusts, including licensing trusts
- > For the avoidance of doubt, this policy also refers to signage associated with any referendum conducted under the Local Electoral Act 2001.

4 POLICY

4.1 DEFINITIONS

- > **"Billboard"** means any sign used to advertise an election candidate and/or party.
- > **"Election"** means any formal and organised choice by public vote of a person for a political office or other position.
- > **"Council"** or **"QLDC"** means the Queenstown Lakes District Council.

4.2 POLICY

Election signs are hoardings, posters, signs etc. that are used to display information relating to the election of candidates and/or choice of a political party, and/or the promotion of issues relating to a referendum.

Subject to the following restrictions election/by-election and referendum signs may be placed on business and residential zoned land and on approved Council owned or controlled sites.

No election/by-election or referendum signs shall be placed on any Council property or in any public place except in defined areas as nominated by the Council.

The period of display of election/by-election or referendum signs on approved Council owned or controlled sites shall be limited to two calendar months prior to the election date. All such signs shall be removed before the election/referendum day.

Election/by-election or referendum signs advertising, promoting, or announcing any candidate or political party shall not exceed one (1) for any single candidate or any single political party, on any site and no such sign shall exceed 3m² in area.

A Monitoring Enforcement and Environmental Officer may remove any sign that does not comply with the above requirements. The Council may pull down, alter, or remove any sign that does not comply with the above requirements and recover all costs incurred with the removal from the person who authorised the sign or at whose direction the sign was erected.

All signs;

- > must comply with the requirements of the Local Electoral Act 2001 (section 113),
- > must not detrimentally affect the amenities of the area or be visually inappropriate to the neighbourhood,
- > must not be illuminated or flashing,
- > must not be erected on or protrude over a public street or footpath.

4.3 APPROVED COUNCIL SITES

The approved Council owned, or controlled sites are as follows:

ARROWTOWN

- > Road reserve adjacent to Millbrook corner

GLENORCHY

- > Road reserve on the corner of Oban and Mull streets

KINGSTON

- > Road reserve at the library/tennis reserve on Kent Street

QUEENSTOWN:

- > Frankton marina and marina drive reserve land
- > State Highway 6 Local Purpose reserve (opposite Lucas Place entrance to Queenstown Airport)
- > Queenstown Events Centre road reserve
- > Ballarat Street car park road edge
- > Reserve on the corner of Stanley and Shotover streets
- > Gorge Road on either side of the road at the bottom of Industrial Place and back towards Arthurs Point
- > At the top of the hill towards Sunshine Bay (on the left going towards Glenorchy)
- > On the Kelvin Heights corner

WĀNAKA:

- > Cardrona Valley Road reserve opposite the Aspiring Retirement Village

- > Showgrounds corner (corner of McDougall and Mt Aspiring roads)
- > Two road reserves at the corner of Beacon Point and Plantation roads
- > Road reserve by the Department of Conservation land down from the Anderson Road roundabout (between Macpherson Street and Ballantyne Road).

No Council sites are currently identified in Makarora, Luggate, Hāwea and Albert Town. Road reserve options will be limited in these areas because of conditions around signage in certain State Highway speed environments.

Election signs will be permitted on other Council land by application to Council. Applications should be forwarded the Roding Operations Contract Manager at Queenstown Lakes District Council (03) 441 0499.

4.4 OFFENSIVE, HARMFUL OR UNLAWFUL CONTENT

QLDC reserves the right to remove election signage that:

- > Displays harmful content that includes (but is not limited to) disinformation, swearing, hate speech, threatening, offensive, defamatory or otherwise unlawful content; or
- > Includes personal attacks on individuals (including other candidates or Council staff);

Serious breaches may be reported to the Electoral Commission and/or Police.

5 WAKA KOTAHI NZTA REQUIREMENTS FOR MANAGING ELECTIONEERING SIGNS ON STATE HIGHWAYS

The guideline objectives are to minimise the potential for road crashes arising from drivers being distracted by indiscriminate installation of electioneering signs and to ensure consistency of application of Waka Kotahi NZTA policy on such signs with minimal involvement by Waka Kotahi NZTA.

Note that the provisions of the New Zealand Transport Agency (Signs on State Highways) Bylaw 2010 apply to electioneering signs and therefore approvals of them must be handled in accordance with that bylaw.

The Electoral (Advertisements of a Specified Kind) Regulations 2005 sets out the requirements for electoral signs displayed in any public place (including those visible from the State Highway) or on a private property that do not exceed 3m² in area.

Lettering size	> Speed limit less than 70 km/hr: At least 120 mm > Speed limit 70 km/hr or more: 160 mm
Spacing	> Spacing between lines of text: at least 50 mm

1. On Rural State Highway Reserves [Waka Kotahi NZTA to Manage]

- 1.1. Signs should be located off state highway reserves. In exceptional circumstances only, signs may be erected within the State highway reserve with the written approval of Manager System Management.
- 1.2. For the exceptional circumstance to apply, the applicant must be able to demonstrate that all other options have been exhausted and that there is no other appropriate safe location for the sign. Such an exception may exist for

example where the State highway reserve is much wider than usual, allowing safe location of the sign.

1.3. Signs must:

- > not be illuminated or made from materials likely to reflect headlights from an approaching vehicle;
- > be located well clear of intersections, other signs and give consideration to visibility and traffic safety;
- > not be on or adjacent to motorways;
- > not be erected in a manner that will create distraction or danger to road users;
- > not be similar or the same as any traffic sign in shape and colour, and unlikely to be mistaken for a traffic sign or signal; and
- > not have any moving parts, flashing or revolving mechanisms to attract road users' attention.

1.4. For safety reasons, vehicle mounted signs situated on State highway reserves are to be discouraged.

1.5. To minimise staff involvement, Waka Kotahi NZTA shall:

- > act quickly on inquiries from political parties and the public;
- > instruct network consultants to inspect all State highways for compliance every 7 to 10 days;
- > phone/fax the parties/candidates where there is non-compliance, requesting action/removal within 48 hours; and
- > instruct consultants to remove the signs if there is no action after 48 hours.

1.6. Where any sign is erected without Waka Kotahi NZTA approval in an obviously unsafe location it must be removed immediately and stored undamaged. The party must then be advised of the storage location for retrieval at a fee of \$50 to cover Waka Kotahi NZTA costs.

2. On Property Adjoining Rural State Highways and On Urban State Highway Reserves and Adjoining Property [Local Authorities to Manage] (Where urban areas relate to State highways with speed limits of 70 km/h or less)

2.1. Waka Kotahi NZTA shall refer all applicants/parties to the appropriate local authority.

2.2. Although it is expected that local authorities will administer their own controls in terms of district plans, the NZTA should make known its views that any signs should meet the Waka Kotahi NZTA policy requirements set out in paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 above.

2.3. Beyond appropriate liaison with local authorities to convey the above policy, Waka Kotahi NZTA shall have no other involvement with signs in these areas.

6 ELECTION SIGNAGE AND CABLE STRIKE RISK

All the permitted Council sites have been reviewed for underground services and we believe that the risk of cable strike in these locations is low. However, please take care before digging in any location and your attention is drawn to the following advice from Aurora Energy Ltd:

- > Check before you dig – be aware that there are live electricity assets in the ground – always check for underground assets before installing stakes for signs, whether that is on private or public land
- > Only install signs in designated areas where it is safe to do so
- > Only use wooden stakes when installing signage to a maximum buried depth of 30cm (Aurora cables are laid at

different depths in the ground, varying from 400mm to over 1200mm¹).

- > Note that the original location and buried depth of underground cables can change over time due to subsequent ground movement, landscaping, and excavation, etc.
- > Review safety information on Aurora Energy's website including on checking before you dig and our guide to working safely around Aurora Energy's electricity network:
 - <https://www.auroraenergy.co.nz/for-home-and-business/safety-around-your-property/working-near-power-lines-and-cables>
 - <https://www.auroraenergy.co.nz/for-contractor-and-trade/staying-safe-on-and-around-the-network>

The website beforeUdig.co.nz provides useful information on this issue: <https://www.beforeudig.co.nz>

The beforeUdig.co.nz service aims to:

- > Simplify the process of requesting plans from asset owners
- > Reduce the number of personal injuries
- > Protect underground assets from interruption and preventable damage
- > Provide a single point of request for information on where underground assets are located
- > Coordinate with contractors, asset owners and government to set standards for essential infrastructure protection

To use this free service, register on their website to request plans.

7 FURTHER ADVICE

For further advice regarding election signs please contact the Election Officer via 03 441 0499.

8 REFERENCES

Local Electoral Act 2001	https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2001/35/en/latest/?active_tab=version#DLM93301

¹ Source: <https://www.auroraenergy.co.nz/assets/Files/Safety/Safety-Working-Guide-Final.pdf>

Local Electoral Regulations 2001	https://www.legislation.govt.nz/secondary-legislation/pco-drafted/2001/145/en/latest/#DLM49294
Electoral Act 1993	https://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1993/87/en/latest/#DLM307519
Electoral (Advertisements of a Specified Kind) Regulations 2005	https://www.legislation.govt.nz/secondary-legislation/pco-drafted/2005/147/en/latest/#DLM332261
Waka Kotahi NZTA General Election Sign Guidance	https://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/requirements-for-general-election-signage-on-or-near-state-highways/general-election-sign-guidance.pdf
Aurora Energy	https://www.auroraenergy.co.nz/for-contractor-and-trade/staying-safe-on-and-around-the-network
Electoral Commission	https://elections.nz/guidance-and-rules/advertising-and-campaigning/election-signs