

Maori option face-change

This year's "Maori option" may drastically change the face of New Zealand politics.

The results of the option will have a big effect on the new electoral boundaries — and possibly on the future of four Maori seats.

As this issue went to press, final figures on the two-month Maori option were not available.

But figures from the half-way point — at the end of March — show a significant drift of voters away from the Maori seats.

Maoris leaving Maori electorates outnumbered by 2-to-1 Maoris who decided to shift to a Maori roll.

On average, each of the four Maori electorates lost more than 900 voters.

Those Maori voters who shifted into general seats could have a big effect on the next general election.

They will predominately be Labour voters — and that could mean significant changes in marginal seats like Helensville, Gisborne, Taupo, and Eden.

The new Maori voters in those seats could give them to Labour at the next election.

Further, the new Maori voters in the general seats will have an unknown effect on the electoral boundaries, which will be re-drawn this year once the final results of the Maori option are known.

In the long term, the drift away from the Maori seats could affect whether those seats continue to exist.

As Southern Maori MP Whetu Tirikatene-Sullivan points out, it's hard to justify having Maori electorates if Maoris themselves are choosing not to vote in them.

She says on provisional figures taken just before the close of the recent option change, it was shown that each of the four Maori electorate rolls were down on average by three and a half thousand voters.

Mrs Tirikatene-Sullivan says while the average number of voters on the 88 General Rolls was 22,427, for the four

Maori Rolls it was 18,793. She believes from comments to her that Maoris who opted for the General Roll did so because they thought their vote would be of more value. But she says these same people, when confronted with the decreasing numbers on Maori Rolls, says they didn't realise they were putting the seats at risk.

The MP is now encouraging kaumatua and pakeke to make a special effort to see their 18 year olds are enrolled.

Justice Minister Jim McLay discounts the effect the Maori option will have on the future of the four Maoris seats. He says the government is committed to keeping the seats, and the Maori option is only one element in deciding whether the seats still have the support of the Maori people.

He notes that even though initial results of this year's option show Maoris drifting away from the seats, "the majority of electors have opted for no change."

Look to the future with State Insurance

For over 75 years the State Insurance Office has protected New Zealanders by offering a range of policies and options to meet every insurable risk. At the same time, premiums have been kept within reach of all New Zealanders, ensuring that no one need accept the risk of under-insurance, or go without insurance protection. This has made the State Insurance Office what it is today — the largest risk protector in New Zealand with over 1,500,000 current policies.

State Insurance is yours. It belongs to New Zealand. It invests everything here. Not one cent is invested overseas. There are offices in 54 New Zealand towns and cities, which are backed up with an extensive agency network.



Let State Insurance help you.

The staff at your nearest State Insurance Office will welcome any enquiries.

Publisher needed for Biographies

A manuscript tracing the life and times of early Maori people has been written but needs a publisher in order for it to see the light of day.

Written by George Hori Kiwi Howe, the manuscript traces the lives of thousands of ancestors from the 1800s up to 1960. It has chapters devoted to: Members of the House of Representatives; Royal Honours; Government Service; Maori Kings; Leaders of the Past; Women of Note; 28th Maori Battalion; Scholars; Music and Drama and Sport.

The author was born in 1917 in the Waikato, the son of Edwin Moanaroa Howe and Stella Vinson. He compiled the records and following his death in 1962, his wife placed the manuscript with the supervisors of the Polynesian Department, Genealogical Society of Salt Lake City Utah, for safe-keeping.

George Howe and his wife were great genealogists, starting the first genealogy classes in the Mormon Church in New Zealand.