



The Demographic Characteristics of the 2022 Auckland Council Election Candidates and Elected Members

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February 2023

Technical Report 2023/3



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Technical Report 2023/3

ISSN 2230-4533 (Online)

ISBN 978-1-99-106040-2 (PDF)

The Peer Review Panel reviewed this report
Review completed on 24 February 2023 Reviewed by one reviewer
Approved for Auckland Council publication by: Name: Dr Jonathan Bengé Position: Head of Research, Evaluation and Monitoring (RIMU)
Name: Alison Reid Position: Manager, Economic and Social Research and Evaluation (RIMU) Date: 24 February 2023

Recommended citation

Allpress, J. A. and D. David (2023). The demographic characteristics of the 2022 Auckland Council election candidates and elected members. Auckland Council technical report, TR2023/3

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Executive summary

This report presents a summary of the demographic characteristics of 2022 Auckland Council election candidates, as well as a comparison between candidates and the Auckland adult population (aged 18 years and older).

The information presented here is from self-reported data. All candidates who stood for election were invited to provide their demographic details, and over half (260 out of 431 unique candidates, or 60%) did so. The voluntary nature of the survey, and associated non-response from 40 per cent of candidates, means that the percentages reported are an estimate of candidate characteristics only.

The analysis shows that, for the 2022 Auckland Council election:

- Female candidates were underrepresented within the total candidate pool. A higher percentage of female candidates were elected than male candidates, however, resulting in a more representative balance of male and female elected members.
- The age distribution of candidates tended to be skewed toward 'older' age groups, compared to that of the Auckland adult population. Most candidates were aged 35 years or older; very few younger candidates aged between 18-34 stood for election.
- A higher percentage of European and Māori candidates stood for election than might be expected from looking at the Auckland adult population. Both groups were also more likely to be elected, resulting notable 'over representation' of both groups amongst elected members, compared to the characteristics of the Auckland population. The percentage of candidates standing who identified as Pacific Peoples or 'Middle Eastern/Latin American/African (MELAA) and other ethnic groups' was similar to the underlying Auckland population. Asian candidates were notably underrepresented, however, with only 12 per cent of candidates identifying as Asian (compared to 29% of the Auckland population).
- Candidates were more likely to be born in New Zealand than the Auckland adult population, with 74 per cent of candidates born in New Zealand, compared to 51 per cent of the Auckland adult population.
- Almost one third (30%) of candidates were able to hold a conversation in at least one language other than English. This percentage was higher for unelected candidates (34%) than elected candidates (22%).

Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Method	2
2	Gender	3
2.1	All candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates	3
2.2	Election rate	4
3	Age	5
3.1	All candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates	5
3.2	Election rate	6
4	Ethnicity	7
4.1	All candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates	7
4.2	Election rate	8
5	Country of birth	9
5.1	All candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates	9
5.2	Election rate	9
6	Languages spoken	11
6.1	All candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates	11
7	Summary	12

1 Introduction

Collecting information on the characteristics of candidates standing for election is an important step in understanding how the experiences, views and cultural backgrounds of all residents are represented in government.

This report presents a summary of demographic information collected from candidates running for election to Auckland Council in 2022. These data enable the pool of candidates to be compared to the Auckland population, as well as comparisons to be made between elected and unelected candidates.

Comparisons are made throughout the report between candidates and the Auckland adult population (aged 18 and over). This comparison was chosen – as opposed to Auckland’s total population, including children – to reflect as closely as possible the population of Aucklanders who are eligible to stand for election.¹ If the likelihood of standing for election is similar across different sociodemographic groups, one would expect the demographic characteristics of candidates to closely match that of the Auckland adult population.

This report presents information on candidates, in terms of:

- gender
- age
- ethnicity
- country of birth, and
- languages spoken.

Two comparisons are made for each of the demographic variables above:

- All candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates are compared to the Auckland adult population, aged 18 and over (henceforth referred to as the “Auckland population”).
- The election rate for each group is compared to the overall average rate of election for all candidates.

Note, the analysis reflects the characteristics of the whole candidate pool. Due to an incomplete response rate, more detailed summaries for the Governing Body and specific local boards are not possible.

¹ Note, this is not a perfect comparison. To stand for Auckland Council, one must be a New Zealand citizen aged over 18 and enrolled on the parliamentary electoral roll. Demographic statistics for the sub-group of Aucklanders who are New Zealand citizens and enrolled on the electoral roll are not available.

1.1 Method

All candidates were sent a survey form with their candidate nomination forms asking for their demographic details. Completion of the survey was voluntary, and 177 responses were received via this initial survey. Candidates who did not complete this survey were contacted after the election and asked again to provide demographic details, this generated a further 83 responses. The questions asked of candidates are shown in the Appendix.

A total of 60 per cent of individuals provided their information (260 out of 431 unique candidates).² This compares to a 70 per cent response rate in 2019, and 71 per cent in 2016.

Note that the voluntary nature of the surveys, and associated non-response from 40 per cent of candidates, means that the percentages reported are an estimate of candidate characteristics only.

To test for potential issues of representativeness, the gender distribution of survey respondents was compared with the primary author's subjective coding of candidate gender using official candidate photos. The distributions were very similar: 43 per cent of survey respondents stated they were female, whereas 40 per cent of candidates were subjectively coded as female using photographs. This indicates that, for gender at least, the candidates who completed the demographic surveys were broadly representative of the total candidate pool.

Information was collected and analysed by Auckland Council's Research and Evaluation Unit (RIMU), in collaboration with Auckland Council's Governance Services Department, Democracy and Engagement Department, and Independent Election Services Limited.

² Note, nominations were received for 466 positions in total, however some people stood for more than one position. A total of 30 individuals stood for two positions, and two individuals stood for three positions. Because demographic characteristics are connected to the individual, the response rate is based on the total number of unique individuals putting themselves forward for election.

2 Gender

Candidates were asked to indicate whether they were female, male or gender diverse. A total of 258 respondents answered this question.

2.1 All candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates

Figure 1 shows the percentage of all candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates who identified as female and male.³ Note that the ‘all candidates’ group contains both elected and unelected candidates.

Comparing all candidates with the Auckland adult population (horizontal bars) shows that female candidates were somewhat underrepresented in the 2022 election candidate pool: 43 per cent of all candidates identified as female, compared to 51 per cent of the Auckland population. Conversely, male candidates were overrepresented (57% of all candidates, compared to 49% of the Auckland population).

Elected candidates were more closely matched to the Auckland population. Forty-seven per cent of elected candidates were women, similar to 51 per cent for Auckland as a whole.

Candidate gender distribution

Comparing all candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates to the Auckland population (horizontal bars)

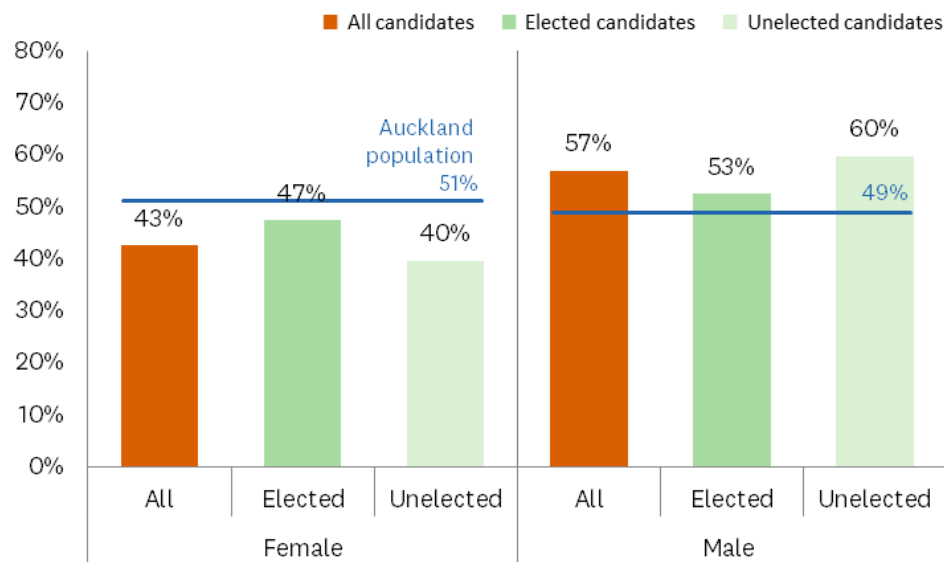


Figure 1. Candidate gender distribution

³ One unelected candidate identified as ‘gender diverse’. Because this individual represents a (rounded) 0% of the candidate pool, they are not shown in the figures.

2.2 Election rate

The 'rate of election' for each gender group was investigated by calculating the percentage of candidates within each gender who were elected. This analysis shows that, although fewer women put themselves forward for candidacy overall than men, a greater percentage of women were elected (44%) than men (35%).

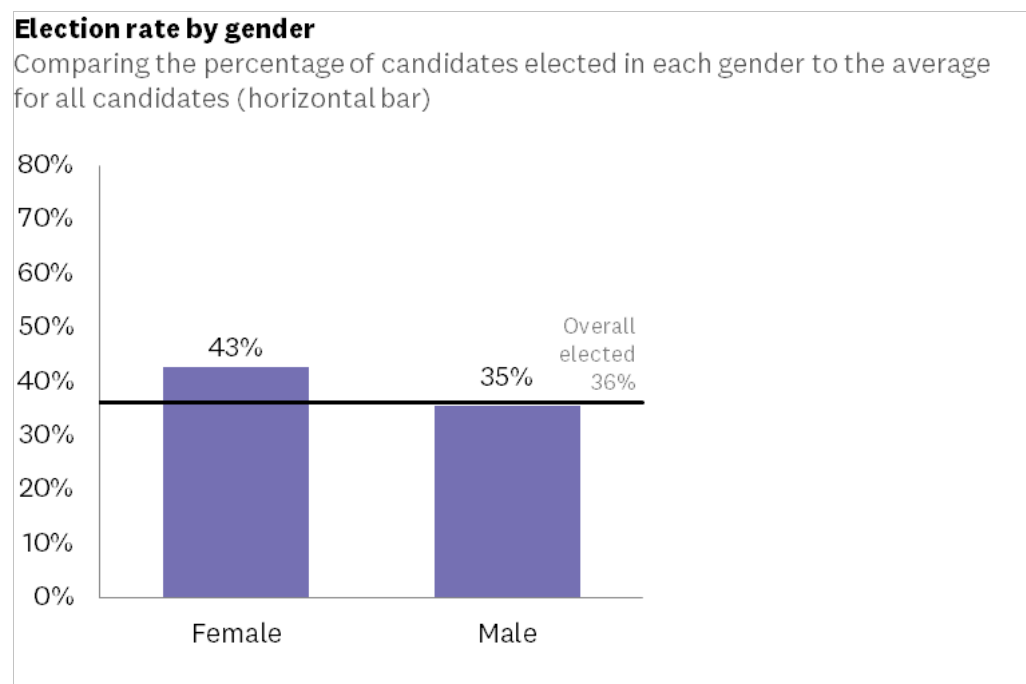


Figure 2. Election rate by gender

3 Age

Candidates were asked to indicate their age within broad age bands. A total of 256 respondents answered this question.

3.1 All candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates

Candidates tended to be older than Auckland’s adult population. Most candidates were aged 35 and older, with relatively few candidates aged between 18-34 years. Figure 3 shows, for instance, that 23 per cent of candidates were aged between 65 years and over, whereas only 16 per cent of the Auckland adult population is in this age range.

Candidate age distribution

Comparing all candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates to the Auckland population (horizontal bars)

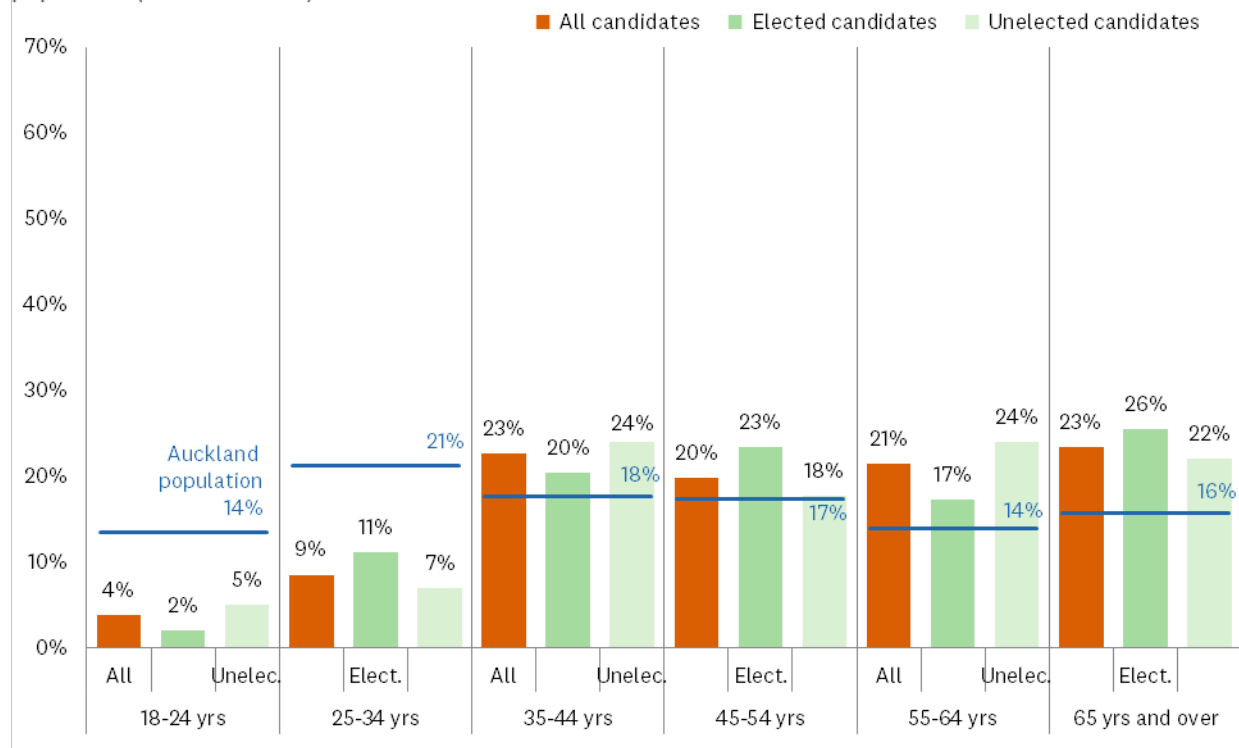


Figure 3. Candidate age distribution

3.2 Election rate

Comparing the percentage of candidates elected within each age group to the average across all candidates shows a reasonably uniform pattern across the age groups.

Candidates in the 18-24 year age group were elected at a lower rate than average (20% compared to the all-candidate average of 36%), and those in the 25-34 year age group were elected at a higher rate (50% vs 36%). Both of these groups are small, however, and these findings should be interpreted with some caution.

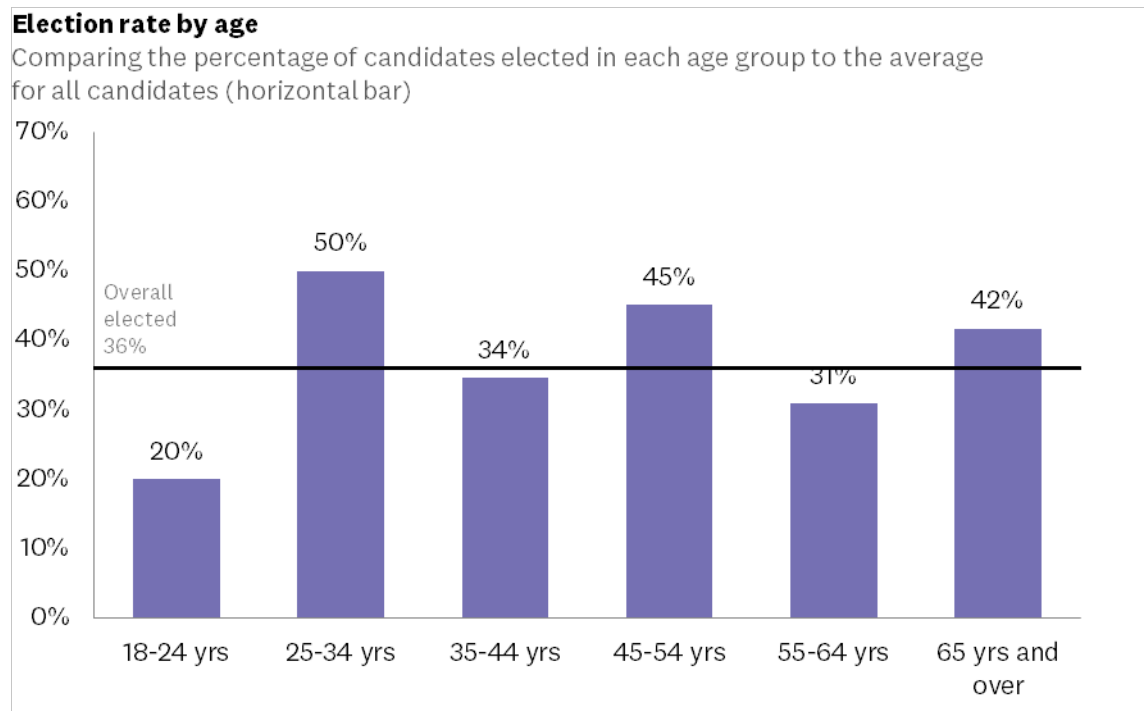


Figure 4. Election rate by age

4 Ethnicity

Candidates were asked to indicate their ethnic identity, which may be multiple. A total of 299 respondents answered this question.

4.1 All candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates

Figure 5 shows the percentage of all candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates who identified with each ethnic group.⁴

Comparing all candidates with the Auckland adult population (horizontal bars) shows that European candidates were overrepresented in the 2022 election, as were Māori candidates, to a smaller extent.

The percentage of all candidates who identified as Pacific Peoples or ‘Middle Eastern/Latin American/African (MELAA) and other ethnic groups’ was similar to the underlying Auckland population. Asian candidates were notably underrepresented, however, with only 12 per cent of candidates identifying as Asian (compared to 29% of the Auckland population).

For European, Māori and Asian groups, the differences were even greater between elected candidates and the Auckland population. Amongst the group of elected candidates, Europeans and Māori were more strongly overrepresented, whereas Asian candidates were more strongly underrepresented.

⁴ Stats NZ level 1 ethnic groups are shown for ease of reading. Similar levels of representation were seen within Pacific (i.e. Samoan, Tongan), and Asian (i.e. Indian, Chinese) ethnicities.

Candidate ethnicity distribution

Comparing all candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates to the Auckland population (horizontal bars)

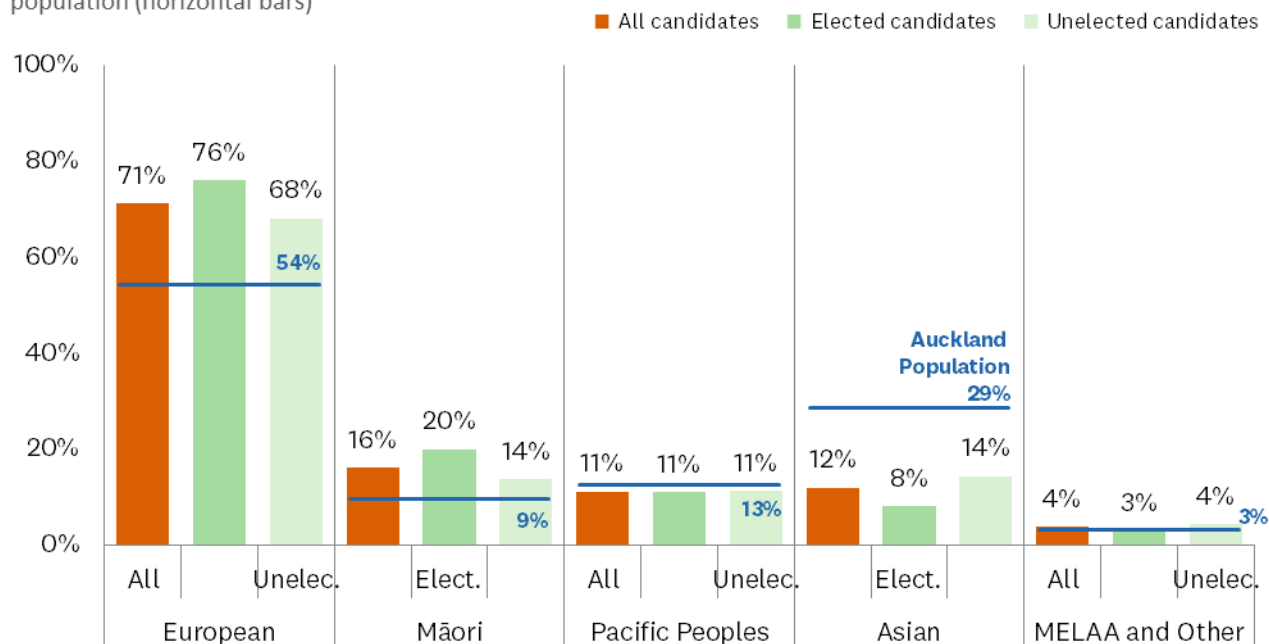


Figure 5. Candidate ethnicity distribution

4.2 Election rate

Comparing the percentage of candidates who were elected within each ethnic group to the average across all candidates confirms the finding described above: European and Māori candidates were elected at higher rates, while Asian candidates were elected at lower rates.

Election rate by ethnicity

Comparing the percentage of candidates elected in each ethnicity to the average for all candidates (horizontal bar)

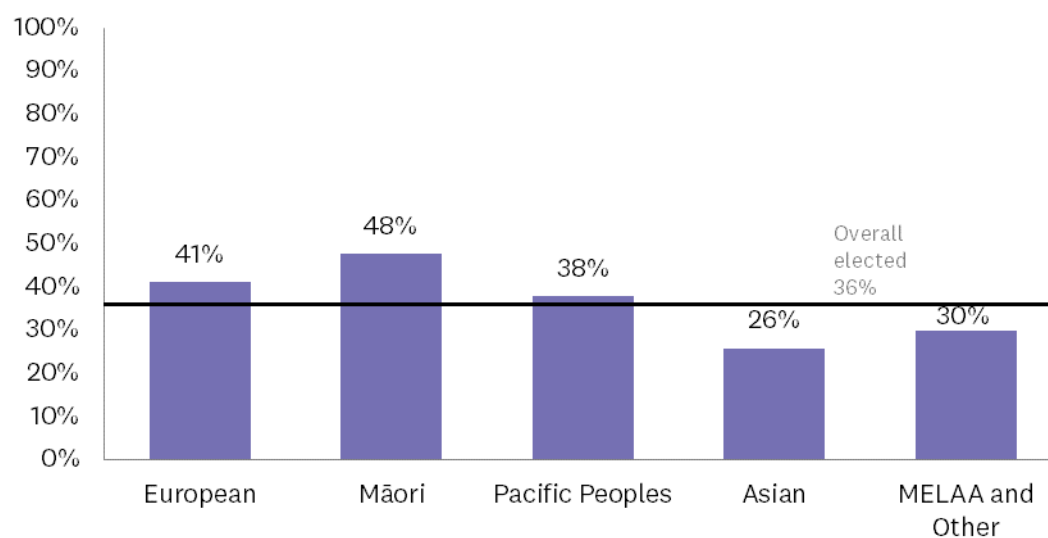


Figure 6. Election rate by ethnicity

5 Country of birth

Candidates were asked to indicate whether they were born in New Zealand or overseas. A total of 301 candidates answered this question.

5.1 All candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates

Candidates were more likely to be born in New Zealand than the Auckland adult population, with 74 per cent of candidates born in this country compared to 51 per cent of the Auckland population.

This difference was amplified for elected candidates, with 81 per cent born in New Zealand.

Candidate country of birth distribution

Comparing all candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates to the Auckland population (horizontal bars)

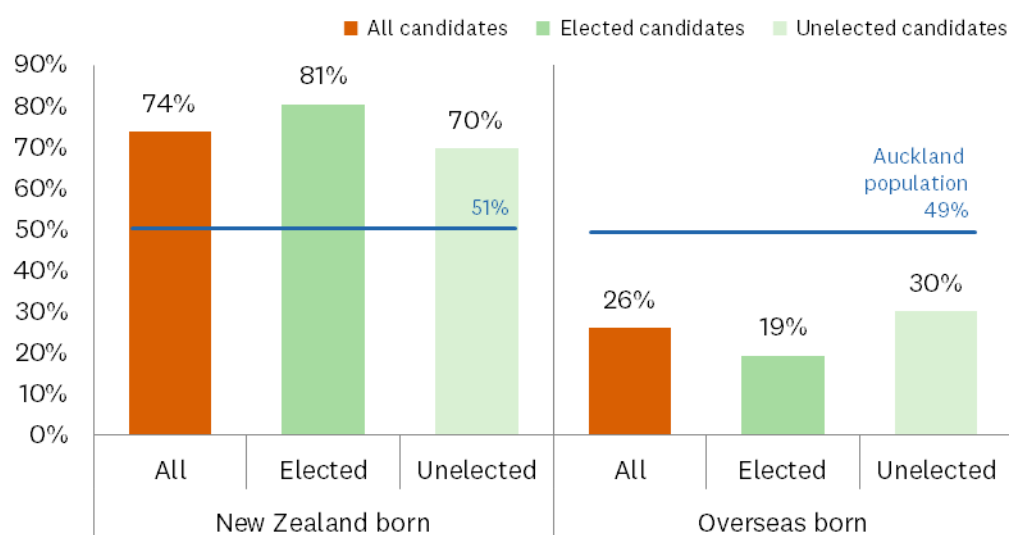


Figure 7. Candidate country of birth distribution

5.2 Election rate

Comparing the percentage of candidates elected within each group to the average across all candidates shows that overseas born candidates were elected at a lower rate than the average for all candidates.

Election rate by country of birth

Comparing the percentage of candidates elected to the average for all candidates (horizontal bar)

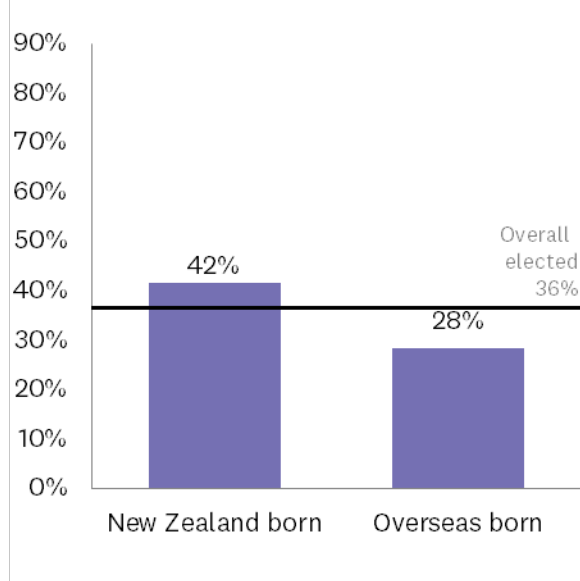


Figure 8. Election rate by country of birth

6 Languages spoken

Candidates were asked which languages they could comfortably hold an everyday conversation in. A total of 260 candidates answered this question.

6.1 All candidates, elected candidates and unelected candidates

Almost one third (30%) of all candidates reported being able to converse in one or more languages other than English. This percentage was higher for unelected candidates (34%) than elected candidates (22%).

As Figure 9 shows, 10 per cent of all candidates reported being able to hold a conversation about a lot of everyday things in Māori, one per cent reported being able to do so in NZ Sign Language, and 21 per cent in another language.

Ability to speak languages other than English

Comparing all candidates, elected candidates and unelected

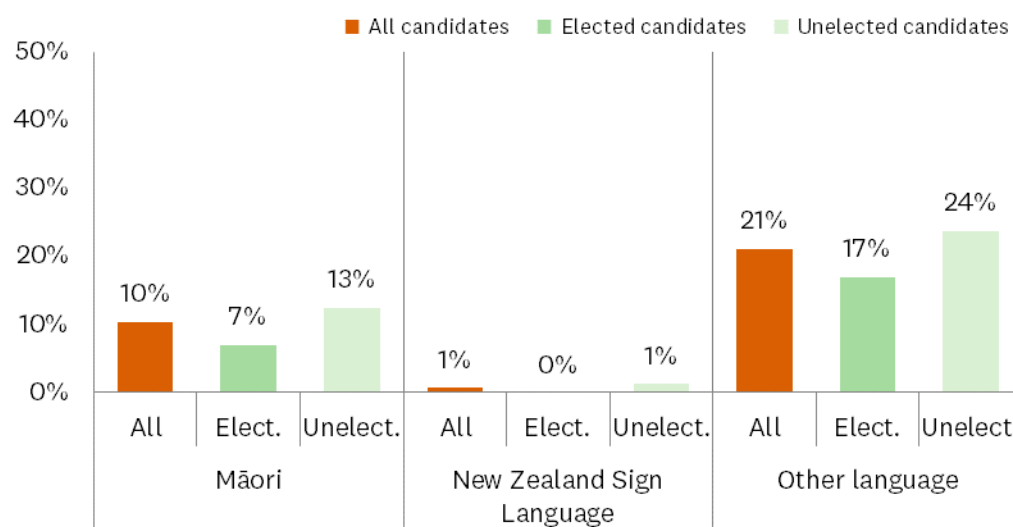


Figure 9. Elected and unelected candidate non-English language ability⁵

⁵ Note, Auckland-level statistics were not available at the time of preparing this report.

7 Summary

This report presents a summary of the demographic characteristics of 2022 Auckland Council election candidates.

The analysis shows that, when compared to the Auckland adult population, the overall candidate pool tended to have higher proportions of male, older, New Zealand European, Māori, New Zealand-born candidates. Elected candidates are more gender balanced, but are even more likely to be New Zealand European, Māori, and New Zealand-born.

It is important that the diversity of Auckland's communities is represented in people who stand for election, whether to their local board or the Governing Body. Continued collection of candidate demographic characteristics will enable elections staff to better encourage a diversity of candidates to stand for future elections. Encouraging candidates to provide their details when standing would also strengthen the data.

Appendix: Demographic survey

2022 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS CANDIDATE SURVEY

(This survey is optional)



Disclaimer: All reporting of demographic information will be at an aggregate level – no individual-level information will be shared or released.

POSITION:

BARCODE ID

This survey is designed to help us better understand who is standing for elected office, and who is elected. The information will help us better support candidates and elected members in the future.

1. Gender

What gender do you identify as?

- Male
- Female
- Gender diverse
- Prefer not to state

2. Age

What is your age?

- 18-19 years old
- 20-24 years old
- 25-29 years old
- 30-34 years old
- 35-39 years old
- 40-44 years old
- 45-49 years old
- 50-54 years old
- 55-59 years old
- 60-64 years old
- 65-69 years old
- 70-74 years old
- 75-79 years old
- 80-84 years old
- 85 years or older

3. Ethnicity

Which ethnic group(s) do you belong to?

Select the choice or choices which apply to you.

- New Zealand European
- Māori
- Samoan
- Cook Island Māori
- Tongan
- Niuean
- Chinese
- Indian
- Other, please state:

4. Country of birth

Which country were you born in?

- New Zealand
- Other, please print the present name of the country:

5. Languages

In which language(s) could you have a conversation about a lot of everyday things?

- English
- Māori
- New Zealand Sign Language
- Other language(s), please state:

Find out more: phone 09 301 0101, email rimu@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz or visit aucklandcouncil.govt.nz and knowledgeauckland.org.nz

