



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** All Staff  
**FROM:** General Manager Governance and Compliance  
**cc:** Board Members  
**DATE:** 11 June 2007

---

### SUBJECT: ELECTION PROTOCOLS FOR BAY OF PLENTY DHB STAFF - 2007

---

The Bay of Plenty District Health Board Elections will be held in October 2007. All Bay of Plenty DHB staff are required to remain politically neutral in their dealings with Board members or potential Board members.

The following are the protocols all staff and board members are asked to follow in the lead-up to the election:

**1. Employees of DHBs may stand for elections**

District Health Board employees have a statutory right (Clause 7, Schedule 2, NZ Public Health and Disability Act 2000) to stand for election as a member of a DHB Board.

“A person is not prevented from being elected as a member of a DHB simply because the person is an employee of the DHB”

**2. BOP DHB staff should not take part in political campaigns in their role as employees of the BOP DHB**

New Zealand operates under a tradition of public sector political neutrality. As such no staff member should participate in any political campaign in a way that emphasises or attempts to draw credibility from their role as an employee of the BOP DHB.

**3. BOP DHB staff, even in a personal capacity, should carefully consider whether to take part in political campaigns – apart from their own**

Even in a private capacity, staff should carefully consider whether to take part in any activity related to the election campaign of a current or potential elected member. The reason for this is that to some extent all of us “are our job”. Areas where issues may arise include:

- Attending campaign meetings as an advocate for a particular candidate
- Taking part in any activity that could be seen to be a campaign activity (eg: canvassing, writing speeches)
- Writing letters, media releases or speeches that could be linked to the candidate's campaign.

*NB: Staff are clearly free to 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). Similarly, it is okay for staff to attend, or even help organise<sup>1</sup>, meetings where competing candidates present themselves for scrutiny, but it may not be okay for staff even in a personal capacity to obviously and publicly support a particular candidate.*

It is acknowledged that some staff have regular duties which require writing media releases, letters, speeches or carrying out administrative tasks that may feature current elected members. Extreme care should be taken to ensure such activities cannot be linked in any way to a political campaign.

#### **4. DHB resources should not be used for campaigning purposes**

No DHB resources (including work time, computers, e-mail, cellphones, faxes, stationery, photocopiers, stamps, cards and use of DHB premises, including the erecting of electoral signs) should be used for campaigning purposes. "Passive" use of BOP DHB resources is also not acceptable. For example, the internal mail should not be used to distribute campaign material to staff and campaign photos should not be taken on site.

No DHB provided forums or meetings (eg DHB public meetings) should be used for political purposes.

#### **5. DHB information should be available to all candidates on an equal basis**

BOP DHB information supplied to a candidate for campaign purposes should be supplied to other candidates as a matter of course unless the information is generic or freely available such that no particular advantage arises from having it.

#### **6. DHB publications, website and other communication vehicles (eg: radio spots) should not be used for campaign purposes.**

### **WHERE TO GO FOR FURTHER HELP:**

1. For General Information regarding the DHB Election processes:  
[www.moh.govt.nz/dhbelections](http://www.moh.govt.nz/dhbelections)

---

<sup>1</sup> In general, candidates may only enter BOP DHB property by invitation. Permission must be obtained from the Chief Executive for this.

2. For further detail on Communications in a pre-election period, see web site 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](http://www.oag.govt.nz/HomePageFolders/Publications/Public_Communications/Public_Communications.htm)

3. If you are unsure whether or not certain requests or activities are a breach of the preceding protocols, please discuss the matter with your manager or Gail Bingham, BOP DHB Election Contact on Ext: 8990.

**GAIL BINGHAM**

G M Governance and Compliance