



TELEVOTING

THE

BOOKLET

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Section One

Televoting - The Reasons

THINK ABOUT THIS

- When you, the elector, cast your vote at the polls, you transfer your entire democratic power to the Politicians with only one proviso; you get to do it again in another three years' time or less.
- That's it! Your opinions/preferences thereafter, are of little, or no consequence to Politicians until the next election.
- There is no continuing, convenient, and meaningful way to make your preferences known **between** elections.
- Governments **break promises** and **do U-turns** unchecked.
- Politicians remain largely **unaccountable**.
- **The NZ Super Democratic Party** believes that all electors, through the power of modern technology, should be able to further express their democratic rights regularly, **between** elections, on any important issues of the day, **should they choose to....** by a process known as **Televoting**.

(NB. *Televote facilities were installed throughout NZ in 1989.*)

- Politicians, the media, and the people, would actually know 100% (no polls or estimates), what **the preferences and priorities of the people** actually were, pretty much at all times.
- As a consequence, all political parties, and the media, would inevitably be drawn into becoming considerably **more accountable**.
- Governments can't be expected to do what the electorate wants if they don't know accurately what the people's preferences are.
- Under a **Super Democratic Government**, your views would always count! Not just once every three years,

BUT EVERY QUARTER !



Televoting - The System



What is it?

First invented in 1940 by Buckminster Fuller in his book “No More Second Hand God”, televoting is a system for holding elections and regular referenda, using the telephone and other modern technologies. It is hoped that such a system will bring about better, more responsive government, by giving politicians a more direct insight into the wishes of the people.

Overview

Televoting allows everyone aged 12 or over to vote.

Using a touch-tone phone or an array of other modern technologies, people will be able to vote on issues selected by the people themselves, and approved by a specially formed **New Zealand Televote Council**.

Issues will be brought to Televote every three months, and you will have a week to cast your votes on the various issues presented.

Voting

Who Votes?

ADULTS

Every registered voter will be issued a Televote security PIN code and will be able to televote on any issue they wish to.

YOUNG PERSONS

Young people (those aged 12 years and over, but under 18) will also be able to apply for a security Televote PIN code. They will then be able to televote on any issue they wish to.

Youth votes will be counted separately and be indicative only.

What Do We Vote On?

ELECTIONS AND BY-ELECTIONS

Televoting would be used for general and local body elections and by-elections. This would be much like any other range of televote options, only the options would be candidates and where appropriate, political parties.

Naturally only people from the appropriate areas would get to vote for each seat, and for each local body. Televote PIN codes will simplify screening.

ISSUES

Issues for national televoting may be on any subject that involves government or is of national importance. They may deal with existing or proposed legislation, forward planning, social and/or welfare problems etc.

Similarly, local televotes may be on any issues involving local government or of local importance.

NO CONFIDENCE

A special case televote is a “No Confidence” televote, in which the public is asked whether they have confidence in the government.

This special televote may **only** be used if the government defies the outcome of a previous televote that carried a “level of interest” of 51% or better, plus a “margin of preference” of 5% or better.

It takes a higher qualifying “level of interest” by sample poll, to get a “No Confidence” televote approved, and the final televote result must reach a certain criteria called the “binding vote” criteria to unseat a government.

How Do We Vote?

TECHNOLOGIES

Televoting allows people to vote using a touch-tone phone or via the internet. Other potential voting technologies include Lotto terminals, ATM machines and the good old fashioned ballot-box, held at local Televote Returning Offices.

Special public cell phones (only connected to Televote Centres) would be available at most public/local body centres for those without phones or any other means of voting.

To help prevent vote fraud, voters will be required to nominate up to five telephone numbers from which they will cast their votes. Similar precautions are under development for internet and other methods of voting.

THE OPTIONS

In most Televotes you will be asked to vote 'Yes', 'No', or 'Uncommitted'.

In some cases you will be offered a range of options. Sometimes you will be asked to choose one option. Other times you will be asked to vote for one or more options in order of preference. There will be a 'No Preference' and 'Uncommitted' option in both of these kinds of vote, too.

The 'Uncommitted' option allows you to register your interest in the issue, without committing to any of the options. You may wish to do this if you care about the issue, but feel you are not well enough informed, are undecided, or don't mind what is decided on the issue.

CASTING YOUR VOTE

Voting using your touch-tone phone is easy. Casting a vote by telephone will go something like this:

- Dial the Freephone Televote number from one of your nominated telephone numbers.
- A recorded voice will ask you to enter your Televote PIN code.
- You will be asked to enter the issue number of the issue you wish to vote on: "Please enter an issue number, or press hash for a list of current issues and their numbers."
- A recorded voice will read the issue question to you.
- Follow the instructions to cast your vote. In most cases this will be: "To vote 'Yes' on this issue press 1, to vote 'No', press 2, to vote 'Uncommitted' press 3, or press star to exit without voting."
- You will then be asked to confirm your vote: "You have voted 'Yes' (or 'No' or 'Uncommitted') to (the issue, which will be read to you again). To confirm your vote, press 1, to change your vote, press 2, or press star to cancel your vote and exit without voting."
- The system will then confirm that your vote has been recorded (or cancelled) and ask if you wish to vote on another issue.
- Once you have confirmed your vote, it may not be changed.

Voting using other technologies will be similarly simple.

Infrastructure

The New Zealand Televote Council

WHO ARE THEY?

The New Zealand Televote Council is an independent body, which will be formed to run the televote system.

They will be guided and controlled by a new Televote Act of parliament, which will spell out in every detail all the necessary criteria and requirements for the running and the public promotion of the televote system.

The council will consist of:

- One MP from each political party represented in parliament. (Appointed by the parties themselves.)
- Two media representatives. (Appointed by the combined media, using whatever system they decide upon between themselves.)
- One member of the Electoral Commission. (Appointed by the commission.)
- Three people appointed by the Justice department, including at least one High Court judge, who will chair the council.

Each councillor gets one vote, except the chairperson, who will have only a casting vote in case of ties.

The term of office for each councillor is one parliamentary term. New appointments are made within 30 days of the formation of a government after each general election. Councillors are not allowed to serve consecutive terms.

WHAT DO THEY DO?

The NZTC will administer the Acts of Parliament relating to televoting. In short that means they will run the televote system.

Some of the duties included in this role are:

- Vetting issues to be presented for televote
- Conducting sample polls to determine which issues are of sufficient interest to the public to warrant a televote.
- Ensuring that issues put to televote do not endanger any of the rights set out in the Bill of Rights and/or the new Constitution* (including any amendments that may be required in response to the change to a televoting system).
- Ensuring that information relating to issues to be put to a televote is widely publicized, so that people can make an informed decision on which way to vote. The prime time professionally generated uncensored TV/Radio/Press promotions of all differing points of view will probably be the biggest and most important responsibility of the NZTC.
- Releasing and confirming results and other information related to televoting.

** A new Constitution will be enacted that can only be changed by the people (not by parliament) by “binding vote” criteria only – that protects the televote system and protects legal minorities from “bullying” by the majority – together with the inclusion of many other constitutional requirements.*

Televote Control Centres

WHAT ARE THEY?

Televote Control Centres are secure facilities, which will be set up to house and protect the systems and records of the televote system.

For security and redundancy of record-keeping, there will be three TCCs, well separated geographically from each other, and physically from each other. One of these will be a centrally located National Televote Control Centre, which will also serve as headquarters for the NZTC. The most likely locations for the TCCs are Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

The TCCs will be staffed by appropriately qualified and security cleared technical and administration staff, under the direction of the NZTC and the Electoral Commission. At televoting time scrutineers nominated by interested parties (political parties and lobby groups who apply to the NZTC) will be allowed into secure areas under supervision, to ensure the proper operation of the system.

WHAT DO THEY DO?

The TCCs house the computers and any special telephone or other systems necessary to run the televote system.

Each TCC will keep separate, identical copies of all televoting records in as secure and tamper-proof a fashion as possible. These records will be kept for at least 100 years, for future reference.

Releases of information relating to televoting will have to be checked for accuracy against the records of all three TCCs before being endorsed by the NZTC.

Government

Government's Role in Televoting

FUNDING

Televoting, the NZTC, and Televote Control Centres will be funded by central government (vote Internal Affairs). Costs may be off-set by contracting services of the Televote Control Centres for commercial purposes, so long as this doesn't interfere with the operation and security of core services.

DEBATE

Parliament is expected to take a leading role in the debate about issues presented for televote.

THE SYSTEM

Any changes to legislation supported by a televote will still have to be passed into law by an Act of Parliament or by appropriate regulation/legislative amendment.

Only televotes that reach “binding vote” criteria can make changes to the televote system itself, which is protected by the new Constitution, and any other changes or amendments to the new Televote Act or other Acts of parliament, such as the Electoral Act, must never conflict with the new Constitution which will always take priority.

Televoting's Role in Government

THE PEOPLE'S VOICE

The primary aim of televoting is to allow the people to make their wishes known to the government of the day.

Any registered televoter can submit an issue for televote. Interest in the issue will be gauged by sample polls across all electorates, conducted by the TCCs. If there is enough interest, a televote on the issue will be held in the next quarterly televoting round.

BINDING AND NON-BINDING RESULTS

Most televotes will not be binding on government.

Televotes *will* be binding if the following **total** criteria are met:

- The interest level (the proportion of people who cast a televote, even an 'Uncommitted' vote) is 75% or higher;

plus -

- One option (eg. 'Yes', or 'Option B') beats the most popular of the other options (not counting 'Uncommitted') by a margin of 38% or more.

Governments may also declare that the result of a particular televote will be binding, if they wish.

It should also be noted that it would not be in the interests of a government that wanted to be re-elected or remain in power to ignore a reasonably substantial result of a televote, even if it did not reach the “binding vote” criteria. Though, by the same token, results that are close and/or do not have at least a 50% “level of interest” will allow governments to follow their own agendas without fear of reprisal from the electorate.

NO CONFIDENCE

“No Confidence” televotes are a special case. For the sake of stability, the provisional level of interest required, (per random sample polls in every electorate), before this kind of televote would be held will be higher than for ordinary issues, (20% of voters polled by the NZTC, cf. 10% for ordinary issues).

The System

Scheduling

- Televotes would be held every three months.
- A period of **7 days** would be allowed for televoting in each quarterly round, starting and ending at 7.00pm on a Sunday evening.

Preliminaries

SELECTING ISSUES

Any registered televoter can submit an issue for televoting.

The NZTC will have the authority to approve or reject issues submitted.

The grounds for rejection (as per the new Televote Act) include:

- The issue being too trivial or commercially oriented.
- The issue breaching the Bill of Rights and/or the new Constitution.
- The wording being insufficiently specific, ambiguous or otherwise unclear (though in such a case the NZTC may choose to approve a re-worded televote on the issue, rather than rejecting it outright).
- A repeated issue within a 12 month period unless otherwise allowed by the NZTC in the greater public interest.

The decision of the NZTC to approve or reject an issue may be appealed in the High Court.

Having provisionally accepted an issue, the NZTC will then conduct a random sample poll of 100 people in each electorate, asking whether they are interested in having a televote on the issue. (These polls will combine several similarly provisionally accepted issues, to keep costs down.)

If there is sufficient interest (10% of **the total** voters polled, or 20% for a 'No Confidence' vote) a televote will be scheduled and the NZTC will call for all interested parties to make themselves known. Following that, they will allow all differing points of view to be presented to the satisfaction of the participants. Professional staff and presenters shall oversee all the necessary preparation including provision of experts, expertise, relevant information, Q&A sessions, debates and discussions etc. to dynamically assist the lead-up promotion campaign in order to encourage people to become better informed - and help with decisions on how to vote.

ISSUE NUMBERS

Every issue that goes to televote will be assigned an Issue Number.

Issue numbers will be gazetted and widely publicized by the NZTC

EDUCATION

During the 3 months leading up to each televoting week, the NZTC will deliver a televoting guide to each registered televoter.

The guide will clearly define the issues to be voted on, and list their issue numbers and the main points voters need to consider when deciding how to vote on each one.

The guide will also include a brief "refresher" explanation of how to cast a televote, and what to do if you have forgotten your Televote PIN code.

When the issues are complex this guide may be a larger booklet, but in many cases a small leaflet will suffice.

The NZTC will also ensure that the media provide uncensored appropriate and accurate coverage.

Results

PROGRESS RESULTS

No progress results will be available during televotes, and the current provisions of the Electoral Act will apply to each and every entire televoting week.

Final Results:

When the televote closes, the NZTC will release the final results. This will be a much quicker process than today, as all the votes will be counted and collated by computers.

Total results and break-downs on the basis of any recorded demographic data (eg. gender, ethnicity, urban vs. rural, etc.) will be available from any TCC, or Returning Office and will be published by the NZTC both in booklet form and on its web-site.

Sample Televote

FINAL RESULT

Issue No. 12344

That Televoting be made available throughout New Zealand in accordance with the booklet entitled "NZ Televoting Format".

NATIONAL TELEVOTE - FINAL RESULT

	<u>Total votes</u>	<u>Percent</u>	
"Yes"	1,250,000	50.00 %	
"No"	237,500	9.50 %	
"Uncommitted"	12,500	0.50 %	
"Didn't Vote"	1,000,000	40.00 %	
<u>Margin of Preference</u>	1,012,500	40.50 %	(Y – N)
<u>Level of interest</u>	1,500,000	60.00 %	(Y+N+U)

[Issued by The NZ Super Democratic Party – P O Box 480 Orewa]

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Televoting - The Benefits



WHY IS TELEVOTING SO IMPORTANT ?

- **The NZ Super Democratic Party** believes that no democracy functions to its fullest potential unless there is significant participation by the people. **Televoting** is the best means to achieve this.
- **The NZ Super Democratic Party** directly opposes the notion that elected authorities usually know best.
- **The NZ Super Democratic Party** fully supports the belief that the majority of people usually know best, and that nobody **always** knows best.
- **The NZ Super Democratic Party** believes that any political system will invariably fail, or even lend itself to corruption or worse, where total political authority is vested in a comparatively small number of people, without any public means of monitoring or regulating such a system regularly.
Apart from being adequately in touch with the electorate, politicians must be **accountable** at **all** times, not just at each general election.
Televoting provides such a means.
- **Televoting** on matters that interest us, is not just a telephone game. It is a whole dimension of the democratic process, which currently, is virtually missing. It is a vital input concerning the real priorities of society, as society sees it, and not what is necessarily perceived by a comparatively small number of politicians or dedicated pressure groups.
- **Televoting** minimises the frustration of not being able to be heard by those that need to hear, of not being counted, or, of not being part of the decision making process. Everybody matters !
- **Televoting** makes redundant, costly referendums, petitions, polling booths, unseemly and uncivilised demonstrations and civil commotions. **Televoting** enhances less violence in society.
- **Televoting** massively dilutes oppression, high-handedness, and irresponsibility by elected authorities because its results are always 100% accurate and publicly known to all.

- **Televoting** is a monitoring system, not a system of government. Government may well decide to make certain televotes binding but that will be their prerogative. Government has a duty to the public, to inform and convince them of the wisdom of it's decisions.

WHAT TELEVOTING DOES FOR YOU – THE ELECTOR

- **Televoting** and **Superdemocracy** is the way of the future. **The NZ Super Democratic Party** believes it is wrong to complain about government, politicians, or a political system, if you would not lift a finger to make any worthwhile changes. The fact is, **you** have the power. **You** are the elector. However, you must make the effort, and the best time is always now.
- A **Super Democrat** (or, **Superdem**) accepts three fundamental principles:
 - (1) That **televoting** is the acceptable means of establishing the **majority consensus**, (always providing the rights of recognised legal minorities are upheld).
 - (2) That the government remains free to govern, choosing whether to accept or defy any **televote** excepting only when the “binding vote” criteria applies.
 - (3) That **the individual** is free to fight for what is believed to be right, but must convince the majority to succeed in any proposal.
- Today you virtually have no voice, except at election time. You have no vote regarding political matters that often indirectly or directly affect your lifestyle **in between** election years. As a taxpayer and financial contributor, why shouldn't you have a **meaningful say**? It's **your money** that's paying for everything afterall!
- The current means of political redress is by petitions, demonstrations, letters to politicians, media attention and the like. These all involve a considerable amount of time, trouble and expense, such that many people simply don't bother to air their grievances. Other alternatives, such as citizens initiated referenda, are often just ignored by government. This is not the sign of a healthy up-to-date modern democratic political system. Nor is it the sign of enough democracy either. But modern technology can provide an excellent **Superdemocratic** political system where both democratic choice and redress are catered for, called **Televoting**.
- **Televoting** is free, fast, convenient, accurate, secure, effective, helpful to future planning etc. You don't have to be an accomplished speaker or writer to make your preferences known. All you need do is pick up your phone and push the right buttons, in the comfort and privacy of your own home, or wherever.
- **Televoting** is available to minors, 12 years and over, thus encouraging youth to take an even more positive part in the community and young peoples' affairs, becoming more socially aware, responsible and better informed.

- **Televoting** is not necessarily restricted to National politics. It is available to local bodies, commercial interests, the media etc. It is infinitely superior to polls because it is less expensive, 100% accurate, and can provide any statistical breakdown required. Minority groups can therefore be more readily identified and better served.
- **Televoting** will provide a vast and valuable public communication between the people and politicians that we have never known before. More importantly, the politicians will have the benefit of knowing exactly what the people want at all times, and therefore be able to do their job far better, and with greater confidence. The people will derive a greater appreciation and understanding of politics, because **Televoting** necessitates they become much better informed.
- **Televoting** may not initially seem relevant to you, perhaps because there aren't any issues you would want to vote for. This will not always be the case. It would be better to at least **have** such a facility, even if you currently feel you probably would not use it? Afterall, you never know. At least if it is there, you could use it, whilst, if it is not, you definitely can't.
- **Televoting** enables the electorate to benefit from the best ideas of all the Parties, issue by issue.
- **Televoting** facilities are installed throughout New Zealand already! It's time to use them meaningfully! It's time that we, the people, took a more responsible attitude towards the governments we elect!
- **The NZ Super Democratic Party** is the most democratic party in the world. All financial members vote on all policy/rules (if they wish) whether they attend meetings or not. The majority consensus decides the final outcomes/policies, **not** the party hierarchy,
- Become a **NZSDP** supporter/member, a **Superdem**, and help make **Superdemocracy** a reality.

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Superdemocracy – Defined

Superdemocracy is like a double-edged sword. It works briefly like this:

(1) Much of current (representative democracy) legislation will probably be acceptable to the majority - without any need to televote at all.

So no televotes will happen for these issues - the democratic tacit acceptance by the electorate being sufficient.

But the Superdemocratic difference is - that any issue chosen by the electorate to be *not* acceptable can be picked out and challenged by televote at any time.

Thus the elected dictatorship and the unaccountability situation is defeated.

(2) Other issues of definite greater interest to the electorate either generated by government or by individuals can be decided meaningfully by televote. Slender margins of preference allowing the government to justify their elected mandate to carry out their policy; larger margins of preference causing them to weigh up whether they will risk defying the electorate or not, and “binding vote” criteria compelling government to either enact the electorate's preferences or resign.

Superdemocracy therefore ensures the majority consensus of the people always has the upper hand and the final Superdemocratic say.

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