



PARLIAMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAMME

🌸 WOMEN & PARLIAMENT 🌸

Cook Islands Women – Getting Elected

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● 1. OPENING – REALITY CHECK

“Kia Orana kotou katoatoa. I’m not here to give a motivational talk. I’m here to tell you how elections are actually won in the Cook Islands.”

👉 “In our country, you don’t win because you’re the smartest, the most qualified, or even the most passionate. You win because enough people decide:

- We know her
- We trust her
- She shows up
- She will fight for us”

👉 “Some of you in this room will contest for the 19th Parliament. So my message is simple:
Don’t prepare to participate — prepare to win.”

● 2. HOW ELECTIONS ARE ACTUALLY WON

◆ Point 1: You need a win path

“You don’t just ‘stand’. You build a path to win.”

Check:

- Who votes for you?
- How many votes do you realistically need?
- Where will those votes come from?

👉 “Family, church, community, youth, workplace — map them *(use Traffic Light Model)*.”

◆ **Point 2: Relationships win elections here**

“In the Cook Islands — relationships are not optional. They are everything.”

- Everyone knows someone who knows you
- Your reputation travels before you do
- Voters can meet you directly

👉 “This is not a disadvantage. This is your advantage — especially as women.”

◆ **Point 3: Voters need multiple contacts**

“People don’t vote after one interaction.”

- Minimum 2–3 real interactions
- Visit, meeting, follow-up

👉 “If they only see you once — they won’t vote for you.”

● **3. BUILDING YOURSELF AS A CANDIDATE**

◆ **Point 4: Your story (very important)**

“People don’t remember policies — they remember stories.”

Give them the formula:

- Who are you
- Why now
- What will you deliver (3 priorities only)
- Why should we trust you

👉 “If your message is longer than 15 seconds — it won’t stick.”

◆ Point 5: Your campaign team

“No one wins alone — and trying to do it alone is how campaigns fail.”

Minimum roles:

- Campaign lead – Manager (Strategy)
- Committee (Policy)
- Treasurer
- Field organiser
- Communications/Research

👉 “If your campaign looks like chaos — voters will assume you can’t run a country.”

◆ Point 6: Your platform

“Keep it simple or lose.”

Rule:

- 3 priorities only
- 1 local issue (very important)

👉 “If voters can’t repeat your message — you haven’t done your job.”

● 4. CAMPAIGN STRATEGY THAT WORKS HERE

◆ Point 7: Ground campaign beats everything

“Door knocking beats Facebook. Every time.”

- face-to-face builds trust fast
- especially powerful for women

Give them the script:

👉 “Kia Orana, I’m ____, I’m standing for _____. I’m here to listen — what issue matters most to you?”

👉 “Then listen. Not talk.”

◆ Point 8: Handling gender questions

“You will be questioned in ways men are not.”

Examples:

- family responsibilities
- capability doubts

👉 “Answer calmly and confidently:

- My family supports me
- I am ready
- I’ve handled pressure before”

👉 “Never apologise for standing.”

◆ **Point 9: Protect your name**

“In the Cook Islands — reputation is everything.”

Non-negotiables:

- clear finances
- no gossip
- no promises you can’t keep

👉 “People forgive mistakes. They don’t forgive shame.”

● **5. FINAL PUSH – HOW YOU FINISH STRONG**

◆ **Election Day Reality**

“Close elections are won by turnout — not speeches.”

Checklist:

- transport voters
- reminder calls
- scrutineers ready
- calm Headquarters

👉 “If you ignore election day planning — you lose votes you already earned.”

◆ **30-Day Reality**

“If you’re serious about the next election — the campaign starts now.”

Quick version:

- Week 1: plan + team
- Week 2: visibility
- Week 3: persuasion
- Week 4: turnout

👉 “Discipline wins elections — not talent.”

● 6. STRONG CLOSE

“Let me leave you with this. The Cook Islands does not need more capable women. We already have them.”

“What we need — are women who are prepared to contest, to campaign properly, and to win.”

“If you decide to stand for the 19th Parliament in September or October — don’t go in to try. Go in to win.”

🎯 Quick Question:

- “Who here is seriously thinking about standing for the 19th Parliament?”
- “What is holding you back?”