TWO CHOICE PARTY VOTING: HOW IT WOULD WORK FOR YOU

1. FOR THE VOTER

You can place three ticks on your voting paper. Two for your party vote, the other to choose your electorate MP. Party votes help decide which party or parties will form the next government. The electorate vote helps decide exactly which people will be Members of Parliament, but does not normally change the number of seats held by each party.

First you choose your preferred party, and place a tick beside that party's name under 'first choice'.
Then you may choose another party, in case your first choice does not get at least 5% of the first choice votes. Place a tick beside that party's name under 'second choice'. Or leave the 'second choice' column empty.

Then choose your preferred electorate MP, and place a tick beside this person's name under 'Electorate MP' .

To ensure that your vote is counted, you should choose any party for your first choice, and for your second choice a party which you think is very likely or certain to reach the 5% minimum.

If you vote only in one party vote column, don't worry, your vote will still be counted provided your chosen party reaches the 5% threshold.

The results will tell how many people voted for each possible combination of first and second choices.

You can send messages to parties by your choice of vote. If you support a minor party for first choice, your second choice can tell which of the major parties you prefer. If you are a firm supporter of one major party, you can tick for the same party under both first and second choices. If you want to support a major party, but tell that party that you have sympathy for policies of another party, you can include that party as your second choice.

Explanation of a proposal for two-choice party voting in New Zealand MMP elections.
By EFH 1/5/2018

2. FOR ORGANISING AND MANAGING VOTING

Voting day processes are little changed. A slightly different voting paper is needed.
Some voters will need to have the modified system explained to them.

It will still be useful to have voting papers that can be separated into two parts, one for party votes, the second for electorate votes.

The risk of invalid votes is small. Provided there is a tick in one or both columns for party votes, the voter's intention is clear.

3. FOR COUNTING VOTES

If votes are to be counted manually, the following process should suffice:

1. Separate the electorate and party sections of each voting paper in the ballot box.
2. Sort party voting papers according to first choices into separate piles.
3. Sort papers from each first choice according to second choice, into separate piles
4. Count and record the number of voting papers in each pile.

These numbers are then accumulated on a national basis.

Any threshold rules are then applied, to get vote counts for use in allocating seats.

This method works well for thresholds based on number of votes, on whether an electorate seat is won, or on almost any other criterion.

4. FOR ALLOCATING SEATS IN PARLIAMENT

The existing St Lague system is used for allocating seats according to the number of votes for each qualifying party.

Explanation of a proposal for two-choice party voting in New Zealand MMP elections.
By EFH 1/5/2018