

# STANDING FOR COUNCIL – INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES



## Why are local government elections important?

Local government is an integral part of the system of government both in Western Australia and nationally. It is also an economically crucial sector as local governments in Western Australia spend close to five billion dollars each year.

Local government's strength is its closeness to the community and its ability to take account of, and to respond to, local views and ideas.

## Mayor or president

Mayor is the title given to the chief elected officer of a city or town council. President is the title given to the chief elected officer of a shire council.

The role of the mayor or president is to:

- preside at council meetings (ensure meetings are conducted in a correct and orderly manner while remaining impartial);
- carry out civic and ceremonial duties (such as conducting citizenship ceremonies);
- speak on behalf of the local government;
- liaise with the CEO on the local government's affairs and the performance of its functions; and
- provide leadership and guidance to the community.

The role of a mayor or president also includes the role of a councillor. A mayor or president has no authority to make decisions as an individual other than to authorise expenditure in an emergency.

Note: Mayors or presidents may be elected either by the members of the council for two years, or by the electors of the district for four years.

## Candidate Information

Prior to nominating, an elector must have completed the online *Local Government Candidate Induction* course which is available on the Department of Local Government, Sports and Cultural Industries, and of Local Government's official website.

<https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/local-governments/council-elections/induction-for-prospective-candidates>

## Important

**It is compulsory to complete this induction before you nominate. The induction should take approximately thirty minutes to complete. At the end of the course, you must complete the online registration to receive an email from the department which is an official record of your completion of the induction.**

If you decide to nominate as a candidate, the department strongly recommends that you show a digital or print copy of this email when you submit your nomination to the Returning Officer.

You will be asked to declare that you have completed the induction when you submit your candidate nomination form. It is an offence to make false or misleading statements on the nomination form, and penalties may apply.

If you have any difficulties in completing the induction, please contact the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries at [LGTraining@dlgsc.wa.gov.au](mailto:LGTraining@dlgsc.wa.gov.au)

## **Nominations**

Nominations can only be made to the Returning Officer during the designated nomination period. When a candidate makes a declaration, they are attesting that they are an elector of the district and are not disqualified from holding office. The Returning Officer can witness a candidate's declaration.

An effective nomination consists of the following:

- a completed nomination form; (if by proxy this needs to include a letter from the candidate);
- a profile of the candidate, prepared in accordance with the regulations;
- a nomination deposit of \$80; and
- a photograph (optional).

A candidate can nominate for both mayor/president and councillor. A candidate will need a separate online form, profile and \$80 nomination deposit for each nomination.

A nomination may be withdrawn at any stage up to the close of nominations, but not thereafter. Withdrawal of a nomination must be in writing and received by the Returning Officer at the nomination place. It is either signed by the candidate or accompanied by evidence that the candidate has consented to the withdrawal of their nominations.

## **Nomination Form**

The candidate should specify how they wish their name to appear on the ballot paper. This may be:

- given name;
- an initial; or
- a commonly accepted variation.

The Returning Officer has discretion as to what is acceptable. A candidate's surname will always appear first on the ballot paper.

## **Candidate Profile**

Profiles must:

- be written in English and contain no more than 800 characters;
- be able to be printed on a single A4 page;
- stay confined to biographical information about a candidate and statements of their beliefs, and
- include the Candidate's name (in the form to which it is to be included on the ballot paper).

The Local Government and ward name, candidate's name and contact details will not be counted in the 800 character limit.

It is suggested that your profile be provided to the Returning Officer for review prior to nomination. If it is longer than the permitted limit, the Returning Officer may amend the wording but will endeavour to consult with the candidate in the time available.

Profiles are also published and posted out to all electors as part of the election package as well as being displayed on the Local Government public noticeboard.

All profiles for this purpose are printed in a standard style with all formatting removed.

### **Deposit**

An \$80 deposit must be paid to the Returning Officer. Cash, bank cheques and money orders (made payable to the Local Government) are acceptable but personal cheques cannot be accepted. The Returning Officer will only accept electronic payment of the deposit by bank transfer or other means (e.g. credit card), if proof can be provided that the deposit has been credited to the Local Government's trust account before close of nominations. Arrangements for paying the deposit like this must be made in advance.

The Returning Officer will advise the Local Government to refund deposits under the following conditions:

- if a candidate receives at least 5% of the total number of votes included in the count;
- nomination is withdrawn not later than 4.00 pm on the day before the close of nominations ;
- successful candidate in a principal office election (e.g. for mayor) where an additional deposit was paid to nominate for election as a councillor for the same Local Government;
- election is declared invalid by a Court of Disputed Returns; or
- the death of candidate occurring after the close of nominations but before the election.

### **Candidate Photograph**

The inclusion of a photograph with the profile is optional. If a photograph is supplied, it must be passport photo size of the candidate's head or head and shoulders, have a clear background, and be not more than six months old. The Returning Officer may use their discretion and reject a photograph if they believe it is not a true representation of the candidate.

### **Rejection of Nomination**

A nomination may be rejected if:

- it is incomplete - the deposit is unpaid, missing the nomination form or profile;
- a candidate was not an elector of the district as at the close of enrolments;
- a candidate is standing for office as councillor at another election; or
- a candidate is the holder of an office or a member of the council whose term of office expires later than election day.

### **Declaration of Nominations**

Immediately after nominations have closed (9<sup>th</sup> September 4pm), the Returning Officer publicly declares all nominations that have been accepted. The declaration will be made at the Shire Office in the presence of any candidates and other people who wish to attend.

**If at the close of nominations, the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of vacancies to be filled, the candidate(s) are elected unopposed.** If the vacancies are for varied terms, they are filled by the Returning Officer drawing lots. The first drawn will be appointed to the longer term. If at the close of nominations, there are more candidates than vacancies, the Returning Officer will draw lots to decide the position in which each candidate will be placed on the ballot paper and work towards Election day.

### **Election Day**

16 October 2021, Polling commences at 8.00am and closes at 6.00pm. Ordinary votes are issued from at least one polling place on Election Day.

The location will be at the Shire Office, and posted on both the Commission's and the Local Government's website.

At an in person election, electors may cast an absent vote at the office of another local government or apply for a postal vote if unable to attend a polling place.

A person may not do any of the following inside a polling place or within 6 metres from the entrance to a polling place:

- canvasses for votes
- solicits the vote of an elector
- induces an elector not to vote for a particular candidate
- induces an elector not to vote at the election.

It is unlawful for a candidate, or a person authorised to act on a candidate's behalf, to communicate with, assist or interfere with an elector while the elector is marking a ballot paper. The Act provides a severe penalty for any offence.

**Counting of votes will commence at 6.00pm 16 October 2021 at the Shire Office.**