

We need more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on our local councils



Why not stand for election to local government?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are under-represented on local councils. Across NSW, 3.6 per cent of councillors are Aboriginal and 0.3 per cent are Torres Strait Islander.*

This means that in many communities across NSW, the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are missing from debate and decision-making.

If you're passionate about your community, we encourage you to stand for election to your local council.

If you're elected, you'll have a direct say in local council decisions that influence the daily lives of your mob.

Why should I become a councillor?

Being a councillor provides an exciting opportunity to make a difference. It's also an opportunity to develop new skills and work with a diverse range of people.

Local councillors work with local people and businesses to find out what is important to them and make it happen. They make sure our villages, towns and cities grow and prosper now and into the future.

What do councils do?

Councils provide services that people and businesses in the community rely on every day.

They provide and maintain some types of infrastructure such as community buildings, roads and bike paths.

They protect the environment and provide community services such as parks, recreation centres and libraries. They also plan for sustainable development in their local government area.

What does a councillor do?

Councillors find out what local people want and represent their views.

Working with other councillors, they make decisions on what the council will do to meet these needs and how money should be spent in the best interests of the community as a whole.

What qualities do I need to be a successful councillor?

Being ethical, open and honest are key characteristics of successful councillors. In addition, you'll need:

- to be keen to learn
- communication skills to talk to people in your community and consider different views
- time management and organisational skills
- problem solving skills
- teamwork skills.

It's important to talk to your family about whether you can realistically fit being a councillor into your life, along with any other work and personal priorities. You'll need the time to read council business papers, attend meetings and represent the councils at some events.

To get a feel for what a councillor does, you might like to go to a council meeting, talk to a current or past councillor or people in your community about local issues.

The Office of Local Government is working to increase diversity on local councils.

The Office of Local Government encourages a diverse range of candidates to stand for election. Your local council needs diversity to reflect the different needs of community members.

Diversity brings a variety of experiences to decision making, ensuring councils deliver the best outcomes for their communities. We have partnered with Women For Election who will run information sessions and workshops dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female candidates run by First Nations trainers, ahead of the 2024 NSW local government elections.

What support will I receive?

If you're elected, you'll receive support to understand your role and be successful. Both your council and the NSW Government will provide training for you. Local Government NSW also runs a series of induction courses and professional development training throughout the council term.

Councils meet some expenses and provide other tools to help councillors carry out their role. Expenses can include training, conferences, travel, telephone and care for dependents such as children. Other tools can include computers and office equipment to use on council business. Councils can also provide support to help councillors who have a disability or other special needs.

Councillors receive an annual fee from the council based on a range set each year by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal.

The fee is counted as income for tax purposes. Councillors may also receive a superannuation contribution payment from their council in addition to their fee.

How do I stand for election?

To be eligible to stand for election you must:

- be at least 18 years old and an Australian citizen
- live or own property in the council's area
- be on the electoral roll for the council's area
- not be disqualified from standing for office, for example, if you have committed certain offences.

A proposal nominating you as a candidate needs to be submitted by either:

- at least two eligible people enrolled for the same ward or area you are being nominated for, or
- a registered officer of a registered political party.

To assist candidates and groups to nominate, the NSW Electoral Commission has developed an online application system allowing candidates and groups to complete and lodge their nomination forms and to pay their nomination deposit online.

Candidates and groups will also need to comply with electoral funding laws by registering with the NSW Electoral Commission, which can be done using its online system.

The NSW Electoral Commission can provide further information on how to nominate correctly, and how to plan and organise your campaign including rules about publishing and distributing campaign material such as posters.

You must also lodge information about political donations you may receive to help run your electoral campaign with the NSW Electoral Commission.

Where can I get more information?

You can find more detailed information in the "Become a councillor" section on the Office of Local Government's website and on the websites below.

Your local council

See the NSW Local Government Directory on the Office of Local Government's website (see below).

Office of Local Government

Email: olg@olg.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.olg.nsw.gov.au

Phone: (02) 4428 4100

TTY: (02) 4428 4209

New South Wales Electoral Commission

Email: candidates@elections.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.elections.nsw.gov.au

Candidate and councillor enquiries:

1300 022 011

TTY: 133 677 then ask for 1300 022 011