



Shelley Hancock
Minister for Local Government

MEDIA RELEASE

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****Vision available to download*

STAND FOR YOUR COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE DIVERSITY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

People from all walks of life are being encouraged by the NSW Government to stand for their community and run for their council election as part of a new campaign to increase diversity in local government.

Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock today launched the *Stand for Your Community – Diversity Counts* campaign to increase the number of candidates from under-represented groups at the upcoming Local Government Elections on Saturday 4 September.

“Strong and effective councils are those that reflect the diverse communities they serve,” Mrs Hancock said.

“That’s why we must do all we can to encourage and empower people from diverse backgrounds to stand for their community.

“The *Stand for Your Community – Diversity Counts* campaign is calling on women, young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents, and members of multicultural communities to get involved.

“There’s nothing more rewarding than serving in the level of government closest to the community.”

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Don Harwin said increasing the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in local government across the state, would ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have a seat at the decision-making table.

“It is paramount Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s views and voices are represented when councils make important decisions across NSW,” Mr Harwin said.

“Our local councils are increasingly engaged with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across NSW.

“They play a significant role in supporting the implementation of Closing the Gap and improve the lives of Indigenous Australians through programs and strategies including training and employment opportunities and pathways.”

Minister for Women and former Cooma-Monaro Councillor Bronnie Taylor said the NSW Government is determined to close the gender gap in local government.

“Fewer than a third of NSW’s 1,300 councillors are women so we must do all we can to increase female representation on councils so that they better reflect the make-up of the community,” Ms Taylor said.

“While we have made steps toward equality, we must continue to empower and support more women to become strong community leaders.”

Minister for Multiculturalism Natalie Ward said it is essential local councils reflect the state’s culturally diverse communities.

“Almost a third of people who call NSW home are born overseas and this rich cultural diversity is one of our state’s greatest assets,” Mrs Ward said.

“It’s important to make sure the cultural heritage and views of all communities are heard at a local level, and that councils continue to play a key role in social cohesion and harmony.”

The *Stand for Your Community – Diversity Counts* social media campaign will run for four weeks and include inspiring videos of current councillors from underrepresented groups sharing their positive experiences.

Councillors Rachelle Harika (City of Canterbury Bankstown), Reena Jethi (The Hills Shire Council), Ben Mitchell (Maitland City Council) and Alfie Walker (Goulburn Mulwaree Council) feature in the campaign as ambassadors.

President of Local Government NSW Councillor Linda Scott said the Office of Local Government has also launched a comprehensive online training tool and new guides to provide candidates with detailed information about running for election and the role of responsibilities of a councillor.

“If you have a strong sense of community and are keen to make a difference in your local neighbourhood, you should nominate yourself for the upcoming Local Government Elections,” Cr Scott said.

“Local government offers an exciting and rewarding career working with local residents and businesses and making a real difference to your local community.”

More information about the *Stand for Your Community – Diversity Counts* campaign including videos, promotional materials and other key information and resources can be found on the Office of Local Government website at www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/about-councils/become-a-councillor/stand-for-your-community-diversity-counts.

Vision available to download: <https://bit.ly/3AqnK72>

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