



Shelley Hancock
Minister for Local Government

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW LAW SAFEGUARDS DECEMBER ELECTIONS

Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock today welcomed the successful passage of legislation through Parliament to prevent emerging COVID-19 challenges from interrupting local government elections on December 4.

Mrs Hancock said the *Local Government Amendment (COVID-19 – Elections Special Provisions) Act 2021* would provide her with emergency powers to address COVID-19 risks as they arise.

“We are constantly adapting to the current environment caused by COVID-19, and the Government is leaving nothing to chance to ensure COVID-safe local government elections occur on December 4,” Mrs Hancock said.

“The legislation, which will only apply to the 2021 local government elections, will be used as a fail-safe to protect the health and safety of voters, candidates and election staff in accordance with advice from the NSW Electoral Commissioner.

“It is time our communities were given the opportunity to choose their community leaders after the September 2020 council elections were postponed twice due to safety concerns caused by the pandemic.

“The NSW Government has worked closely with the NSW Electoral Commission and NSW Health to implement a comprehensive plan to allow voters to cast their ballot safely,” Mrs Hancock said.

Mrs Hancock said other measures already introduced will reduce the number of electors attending polling booths on election day to assist with social distancing.

“NSW Election officials have also been empowered to enforce COVID-safe measures including social distancing at polling booths and counting venues to protect voters, candidates, scrutineers and NSW Electoral Commission workers.

“The Government will take all steps necessary to assist the NSW Electoral Commission to conduct COVID-safe council elections and ensure communities across the State can safely exercise their democratic right to vote on December 4,” Mrs Hancock said.

More information from the Electoral Commission can be found [here](#), and from the Office of Local Government [here](#).

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