



**Shelley Hancock**

Minister for Local Government

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Saturday, 4 December, 2021

### **VOTERS GO TO THE POLLS TO ELECT LOCAL LEADERS**

After council elections were postponed twice in response to COVID-19, residents across the State will finally head to the polls today to vote for their community leaders.

Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock appealed to voters to make an informed choice by familiarising themselves with their local candidates.

“Exercising your democratic right to vote is an important responsibility,” Mrs Hancock said.

“The days of local government being just roads, rates and rubbish are long gone. Local councils employ more than 48,000 people and spend more than \$12 billion a year on infrastructure, facilities and services.

“They manage assets worth \$178 billion and maintain 168,000km of roads and 109,000ha of open space.

“That is why it is so important to know what your local candidates stand for and how they intend to make your local community a better place.”

Mrs Hancock said the pandemic meant current councillors were given an extended term of more than five years.

“If you are not happy with them make your vote count and elect someone new,” Mrs Hancock said.

“The elections are also an opportunity to reward strong performing councillors by voting them back in for another term.”

Mrs Hancock echoed her previous calls for voters to consider candidates from under-represented groups in local government including women, younger people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents and members of multicultural communities.

“It is important to remember, strong and effective councils are those that reflect the diverse communities they represent,” Mrs Hancock said.

The NSW Government has worked with the Electoral Commission to ensure COVID-safe elections with additional funding, new powers and extra staff.

Voting in the NSW Local Government Elections is compulsory. Pre-poll voting opened on November 22 with relaxed eligibility to allow anyone to cast their ballot before election day.

Postal voting eligibility was also extended for the first time in council elections.

Voters casting their ballot today are reminded to check in and out of polling places, wear a mask, use hand sanitiser, bring their own pen and keep 1.5m away from others. Unvaccinated electors are permitted to vote in person at polling places.

For more information visit the [NSW Electoral Commission](#) website.

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