

The people we elect to represent us on our local councils should reflect the diversity of our communities.

WHY NOT STAND FOR ELECTION TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT?

Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with a disability and young people are under-represented on local councils.

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

If you are passionate about your community, we encourage you to stand for local council election. If you're elected, you'll have a direct say in decisions that impact future generations.

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 some types of infrastructure such as community buildings, roads and bike paths. They protect the environment and provide parks for children to play in.

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 HAVE 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 and friends 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 council 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.

Your local council needs cultural 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.

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 some training for you. 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 dependants such as children. Other tools can include computers and other office equipment to use on council business. Councils can also provide support to help councillors who have a disability or other special needs.

Councillors also receive an annual fee from the council based on a fee range set each year by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal. The fee is counted as income for tax purposes.

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.

You must complete some forms and officially lodge them by noon on the day on which nominations close and pay a deposit. 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 "Stand for your community" and on the websites below.

Your local council

See **NSW Local Government Directory** on the OLG website (see below)

Office of Local Government

Email: olg@olg.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.olg.nsw.gov.au
Phone: (02) 4428 4100

Local Government NSW

Email: lgnsw@lgnsw.org.au
Website: www.lgnsw.org.au
Phone: (02) 9242 4000

New South Wales Electoral Commission

Email: enquiries@elections.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.votensw.info
Phone: (02) 9290 5999

Australian Local Government Women's Association NSW Branch

Website: www.algwa.org.au