



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
Electoral Commission

MEDIA ALERT

INFORMATION FOR MEDIA: 2019 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

The Western Australian Electoral Commission is conducting elections for 90 councils. A list of those councils is available at www.elections.wa.gov.au/elections/local/current.

Media enquiries

All media enquiries must be directed to the Commission's media mailbox at media@waec.wa.gov.au. Enquiries should set out clearly:

- the subject matter, including specific questions; and
- any reasonable deadline.

Telephone calls or emails that simply ask us to call back will be responded to with a request for further details to be submitted via the media mailbox. This is to ensure fairness in responding to enquiries in the order they are received.

For requested interviews with the Commission, please indicate the topic and preferred time. Suitable topics may include:

- Rolls about to close
- Nominations about to close
- Approaching deadline for return of postal votes.

Please note that the Commission refrains from commenting on matters relating to individual candidates.

Significant Dates

- Roll Close: 5:00 pm Friday 30 August 2019
- Nominations Open: Thursday 5 September 2019
- Nominations Close: 4:00 pm Thursday 12 September 2019
- Lodgement of postal voting packages with Australia Post commences from:
 - Friday 20 September for country local government offices.
 - Wednesday 25 September for metro local government offices.

*Actual delivery dates will depend on the service selected by each local government and Australia Post's processing and local delivery arrangements

- Election Day: Saturday 19 October 2019.

Eligibility Requirements to be a Candidate

- An elector of the Local Government District, either on State Electoral Roll or on the owner/occupiers roll as an owner/occupier in their own right (not as a nominee of a body corporate).
- Completion of the mandatory online candidate induction.

Term in office

Elected members are elected for a 4 year term, with half the elected Councillors up for election every 2 years. Under current legislation, members voted in at these elections will be up for re-election in October 2023 (subject to any changes to the *Local Government Act 1995*).

Ballot paper draw

After nominations close at 4:00pm on Thursday 12 September 2019, the Returning Officer will conduct the draw for positions on the ballot paper. All candidates names are placed in separate opaque spheres, the spheres are placed in a ballot box and the Returning Officer will then remove a sphere, open the sphere and read out the name of the candidate. This candidate's name will be placed on the top of the ballot paper. This process is repeated until all names are drawn from the ballot box

Eligibility to vote

To be eligible to vote electors must be either:

- Enrolled on the State electoral roll for a residence within the relevant local government district; or
- Enrolled for that district on the owners and occupiers roll which is maintained by each local government. (An owner or occupier might be someone who operates a business within a local government district or owns a residential or commercial property that they rent out to someone else.)

Voting

- The vast majority of the elections being conducted by the Commission will be full postal ballots.
- To be admitted to the count, votes must be received by the Returning Officer by 6:00pm Election Day Saturday 19 October 2019.
- Any elector who has left it too late to mail their ballot material on time may hand in their votes in person to their local council office immediately prior to or on Election Day.
- Voting in Local Government elections is encouraged but not compulsory.

The voting system

Local government elections use the 'first-past-the-post' system. This means that electors indicate their preferred candidate (or candidates if there are multiple vacancies) and the candidate with the most votes is elected. Where there are multiple vacancies, the candidate with the most votes is elected first, and the candidate with the second highest number of votes is elected second, and the process continues until all vacancies are filled.

Counting of votes

The counting of votes commences after the close of the poll 6:00pm Saturday 19 October 2019. Ballot papers are counted and the results of the election are declared after the count has been completed on the night.

Unlike a State election where votes are counted at multiple polling places, Local Government ballot papers are counted at one central point – usually the Local Government office. Limited space combined with the number of votes to be counted may mean that results are not available as early in the evening as for a State election.

Key Messages to Electors at a Fully Postal Election

- Electors must sign the Elector Certificate declaration attached to the ballot paper envelope, otherwise their vote will **not** be counted.
- The signed Elector Certificate is removed from the ballot paper envelope when the package is scanned to mark the elector off the roll. The ballot paper envelopes are opened separately to ensure the secrecy of the ballot.
- To be counted, completed packages must be in the hands of the Returning Officer by 6.00pm Saturday 19 October.
- Should electors leave it until the last moment and don't believe it will make it in time through the mail, electors can drop their package into the ballot box at their local government office up until 6.00pm on election Saturday.
- Electors can apply for replacement ballot material at their local government office during normal business hours or on polling day between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm. It should be noted that this does take some time as the first package containing ballot papers must be cancelled before a replacement can be issued.

Election Material and Advertising Authorisation Requirements

- All election material must be authorised.
- The Electoral Commission does not have jurisdiction over the actual content or accuracy of election material.

...ENDS/.

Authorised by the Electoral Commissioner, 28 August 2019

Contact: media@waec.wa.gov.au