

2021 NSW Local Government Elections: Council Update

Bulletin no.2

Issued 3 July 2020

1. Minister's order postponing 2020 local government elections

Order postponing & rescheduling elections

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, on 12 June 2020 the Minister for Local Government made an [order](#) under section 318B(1)(a1) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) that the local government ordinary elections scheduled for 12 September 2020 will be postponed for twelve months.

On 26 June 2020 the Minister made a further [order](#) setting the date for the postponed local government ordinary elections as Saturday 4 September 2021. The NSW Office of Local Government's circular to councils is available [here](#).

The NSW Electoral Commission has commenced planning for the delivery of elections in 2021 and is working towards the new election date.

2. By-elections postponed

The effect of the order postponing the ordinary elections is that all councillor elections have been postponed for the duration of the order, including by-elections. Current Councillors will continue to hold their offices until the rescheduled elections are held in 2021.

3. Service contracts with the NSW Electoral Commission

Many councils have asked whether the service contracts entered into for the 2020 local government ordinary elections will still be valid for the ordinary elections now to be held in September 2021, or whether it will be necessary to enter into new agreements.

The new arrangements for the 2021 ordinary elections, and any measures necessary to address public health risks associated with COVID-19 at that time, will be likely to require changes to service agreements. We will keep councils informed as the public health situation continues to evolve.

4. Political donation and electoral expenditure disclosures by current Councillors and Mayors

Elected members of Council must continue to submit disclosure forms every six months for political donations and annually for electoral expenditure.

The end of financial year disclosures are soon due to be lodged. Political donation disclosures for the six-monthly period ending 30 June 2020 are due by 28 July and annual disclosures of electoral expenditure are due by 22 September. Disclosure forms are now available on our website (elections.nsw.gov.au).

The caps on electoral expenditure for each area and ward will be determined in September 2020 and the capped expenditure period for the election will commence on 1 July 2021.

5. NSW Electoral Commission operations in response to COVID-19

The NSW Electoral Commission continues to deliver its services remotely wherever practical, due to COVID-19-related public health requirements.

However, our Funding and Disclosures call centre has re-opened to assist with enquiries relating to lodgement of political donation and electoral expenditure disclosures. If Councillors or Mayors have an enquiry regarding the lodgement of disclosures, they can call **1300 022 011** during business hours.

For all other election-related matters, please visit the [Contact us](#) page and send us your enquiry via online form or email. We will respond as soon as we can.