

1. Important new laws for local council elections

Important new laws promoting integrity in the Local Government electoral process commenced 1 July 2016. There are three main changes effecting those participating in the upcoming Local Government Elections:

Caps on political donations.

Effective 1 July, the caps are \$5,900 for any political donation for the benefit of a registered party or a group, and \$2,600 for any political donation to an unregistered party, elected member, candidate and third-party campaigner.

Regulation of third-party campaigners.

Individuals and entities that incur more than \$2,000 in electoral communication expenditure during the local government expenditure period for a local Council election must be registered with the NSWEC and appoint an official agent.

Political parties to keep a campaign account.

Political parties that incur electoral expenditure for a Local Council election must keep a campaign account.

Don't forget – if you wish to be a candidate you must first register at **www.elections.nsw.gov.au/fd/registration**

For more information go to **www.elections.nsw.gov.au/fd**. If you would like further help or advice call **1300 022 011** or email **fdc@elections.nsw.gov.au**

2. Candidate Helpdesk

The NSWEC Candidate Helpdesk is now operational Monday to Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm. Candidate enquiries should be directed to the **Candidate Helpdesk on 1300 088 942** or email to: **nominations@elections.nsw.gov.au**

3. Candidate Information Seminars

For these elections, candidate information seminars are now 'live' on the NSWEC website **www.votensw.info** 'Planning to be a Candidate' link on the homepage for access by potential candidates. The information seminars will cover a range of topics including:

- Electoral Rolls
- Registration and Nomination Processes
- Ballot Paper Draw
- Election Campaign Finance Management
- Electoral materials
- Voting
- Vote Counting and Results
- Disclosure of Donations and Expenditure and
- Allegations and Offences.

4. Nomination Period

Nomination forms and other candidate related forms including the Candidate Handbook are available on the NSWEC website **www.votensw.info** – 'Planning to be a Candidate' link on the homepage.

It is important to note that while nomination forms can be completed now they can only be lodged during the period from **Monday 1 August to 12.00 noon on Wednesday 10 August 2016**.

5. Pre-poll voting hours of operation and Council employees working as Election Officials

NSWEC has communicated with Councils confirming the pre-poll voting hours, and the times will be displayed on the NSWEC website www.votensw.info from mid-July.

Council employees who are on the residential electoral roll are eligible to be considered for employment as Election Officials for pre-poll voting and at polling places on Election Day.

It is important to note that Council staff acting as Pre-poll Issuing Officers are not employed or paid by the NSWEC. They will be assigned to their tasks by their Council manager and all conditions of their Council employment are retained. The NSWEC is not liable for any overtime occurred whilst working as a Pre-poll Issuing Officer.

Interested staff should complete a partial 'Expression of Interest' application for pre-poll at www.votensw.info/work_at_these_elections

If Council staff wish to be considered for work on Election Day or within the Returning Office, they will need to complete the entire 'Expression of Interest' application. When working at a polling place on Election Day, Council staff will be employed and paid by the NSWEC at Election Official rates determined by the NSWEC.

6. Working at elections

If members of the public are interested in working at elections, please advise them to go to www.votensw.info/work_at_these_elections to register their interest.

7. Statutory Advertising

As we move into the election period, the Returning Officer will be in contact with Councils to discuss the placement of statutory advertisements. The first statutory advertisement for placement will be the Nominations message. This advertisement must appear at least once between Tuesday 19 July and Friday 29 July 2016. Councils should start to consider the newspapers for the advertisements to appear, the number of appearances and if Council or the Returning Officer will place the advertisements.

8. Sydney Town Hall state-wide pre-poll voting centre and election day polling place

The NSWEC will again be operating Sydney Town Hall (STH) as a state-wide pre-poll voting centre (on the dates listed below) and as a polling place on Election Day issuing ordinary votes for all Council elections being managed by the NSWEC.

STH pre-poll will operate normal pre-poll hours as follow:

Monday 29 Aug to Wednesday 31 Aug	8.00am – 6.00pm	Marconi Room
Thursday 1 Sept	8.00am – 8.00pm	Marconi Room
Friday 2 Sept	8.00am – 6.00pm	Marconi Room
Saturday 3 Sept	9.00am – 4.00pm	Marconi Room
Monday 5 Sept to Wednesday 7 Sept	8.00am – 6.00pm	Lower Town Hall
Thursday 8 Sept	8.00am – 8.00pm	Lower Town Hall
Friday 9 Sept	8.00am – 6.00pm	Lower Town Hall

The STH polling place will operate from Lower Town Hall on Election Day from 8.00am to 6.00pm.

9. Returning Officer's offices

Details of Returning Officers and their office locations will be published on the NSWEC website www.votensw.info on Monday 25 July 2016 when the RO offices are open to the public (including candidates).

I would like to thank all Councils for the assistance they have provided in enabling us to secure suitable office accommodation.

10. Polling Places

Detailed information on all polling places including venue name, venue address and accessibility, listed by Council can be found on our election event website www.votensw.info via the menu option 'Find a polling place'.

11. Referenda and Council Polls

A reminder to those Councils who have advised us that they will be conducting a constitutional referendum or Council poll on 10 September 2016, that the final wording of the question must be received by the NSWEC **by no later than Friday, 15 July 2016**. If you have not already provided the final wording of the question(s) it would assist our preparations if we could be advised as early as possible. Please contact Steve Robb on (02) 9290 5431 or steve.robb@elections.nsw.gov.au if further information is required.

12. Councillor Nominations

To clarify the requirements for Councillor nominations, candidates must be able to lodge a nomination within their own Local Government Area (LGA). For those regional groupings this means that if the Returning Office is not located within your own LGA, that Council must offer candidates the opportunity to lodge their nomination at the Council. If you are unsure about the process please contact Steve Robb on (02) 9290 5431.

13. Information to Electors

Councils are encouraged to link their website to the NSWEC website www.votensw.info to direct questions from members of the public concerning enrolment, voting options or locations of pre-poll venues and polling places. They may also call the NSWEC on **1300 135 736**.

Thank you for your continued co-operation in supporting the NSWEC.



Linda Franklin
A/ Electoral Commissioner