

2024 local government elections

The Countdown



Electoral Commission
QUEENSLAND



Message

FROM THE ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

Welcome to the first edition of ***The Countdown*** – a regular update from the Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ) that you'll be receiving in the lead up to the 2024 local government elections.

Since the 2020 elections, we have been actively looking at ways we can improve our engagement and communication with councils and much of this activity has been informed by the feedback you provided to us.

In this newsletter you'll read about some of these initiatives, including the new Local Government Election Advisory Committee and our schedule of face-to-face council visits.

We encourage you to share this information in your own community newsletters. We are always eager to hear from you about your election delivery needs and about how we can work better together. If you would like to be added to the distribution list for this newsletter, please contact communications@ecq.qld.gov.au

Planning is well underway for the quadrennial elections as we work towards delivering a smooth and efficient event for every local government area in Queensland. This task should hopefully be made much easier without the challenges imposed by a world-wide pandemic!

I hope you find the information in ***The Countdown*** informative and useful in terms of your own preparedness activities for 2024. We're looking forward to the year ahead and continuing to work closely with you.

Regards,

Pat Vidgen



In this edition of The Countdown

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New Local Government Election Advisory Committee

A new Local Government Election Advisory Committee has been established to provide a local government perspective on the planning and preparation for the 2024 local government quadrennial elections.

The Committee met for the first time on 9 March 2023 at the ECQ's head office in Brisbane.

The Committee is comprised of eight members – each with broad experience across the local government sector. The various roles, background and diverse views of members will be invaluable to the ECQ as it aims to enhance its relationship with local governments and design electoral services to meet the needs of Queensland communities.

Meet the Committee members:

- Pat Vidgen PSM, Electoral Commissioner (Chair), ECQ
- Wade Lewis, Assistant Electoral Commissioner, ECQ
- Jae Lancaster, Deputy Director-General, Local Government Division, Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
- Peta Irvine, Chief Executive Officer, Local Government Managers Australia
- Chatur Zala, Chief Executive Officer, Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council
- Glen Beckett, General Manager Assist, Acting Head of Advocacy, Local Government Association of Queensland
- Victoria Nelson, Coordinator Councillor Governance, Sunshine Coast Council
- Kevin Yearbury PSM, independent member.

Over the next year, members will discuss various topics related to ECQ's planned delivery of the 2024 local government elections including:

- election resourcing and drivers of election-related costs
- recruitment and training of Returning Officer
- election service design
- First Nations engagement

- funding, disclosure and compliance for candidates
- communication campaigns, and
- the process for counting ballots and declaring results.

The next meeting is planned for early July 2023.



First meeting of the LGEAC with (left to right): Andrew Chesterman (LGMA representative), Glen Beckett (LGAQ), ECQ Assistant Commissioner Wade Lewis (on screen), CEO Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council Chatur Zala (on screen), Matthew Thurlby (ECQ), Kim Beamish (ECQ), Kevin Yearbury (independent member), ECQ Executive Director Julie Cavanagh, and Electoral Commissioner Pat Vidgen (front).



Building stronger relationships through our Council Engagement Program

Since mid-2021, the ECQ has been proactively engaging with Queensland's 77 councils in an effort to improve communication and transparency, and strengthen our relationships. We asked you for your feedback after the unique challenges presented by the 2020 local government elections and used this information to develop a program of engagement activities.

A Statement of Intent kicked off the program, setting out the ECQ's commitment to ongoing and constructive engagement with Queensland's local governments and stakeholder organisations for the delivery of local government elections, that meet the electoral needs of local communities.

Each council was provided with a dashboard of relevant information and an invitation to meet with the Electoral Commissioner, Assistant Electoral Commissioner, Executive Director, and other senior management representatives either via Teams or in person where it was possible. In these valuable meetings, the ECQ provided an overview of key election outcomes from 2020 including visibility of the services and cost drivers for those elections, helping enhance councils' understanding of electoral processes.

Indigenous councils received a summary of findings from the Indigenous Local Government Chiefs Forum, which was held by the ECQ in partnership with Local Government Managers Australia Queensland in November 2022. Further engagement with Indigenous councils and the ECQ election delivery team will continue in 2023, in conjunction with the finalisation of the ECQ's forthcoming First Nations Engagement Strategy and action plan.

Earlier this year, the ECQ commenced proactive, operational discussions with councils about local service design for next year's elections. Councils were asked to provide feedback via an online survey, tailored to each council's planned services, with the response from councils very high. This early consultation is already proving helpful with election preparations and service design

Finally, the ECQ formed a Local Government Election Advisory Committee with representatives from the local government sector – and you can read more about the Committee and its work in this edition of *The Countdown*.

Election preparations are well underway and councils can expect ongoing communication about their local service design in the lead up to the 2024 elections.



Earlier this year ECQ staff visited Hinchinbrook Shire Council in Far North Queensland as part of the election engagement program.



Costings update for 2024

Work is currently underway to analyse the resources that will be required to deliver the 2024 local government elections and the ECQ is working hard to distribute cost estimates to councils before the end of April 2023.

A dedicated ECQ finance account manager has been assigned to councils for any queries related to the cost estimate or updates on the costs incurred during the election period. For more information, please contact the ECQ's Chief Finance Officer, Maya Marpudin at maya.marpudin@ecq.qld.gov.au.

'Election Day Heroes' campaign nets strong pool for Returning Officer roles

A recruitment process was commenced in 2022 to fill a total of 152 Returning Officer (RO) and Assistant Returning Officer (ARO) positions for the 2024 local government elections. A key message that came out of our meetings with many councils is the importance of having capable people appointed to this role, and the importance of councils having good communications with them.

Recruitment is based on a hybrid model that includes existing ROs from the 2020 local government elections and some new talent found through state-wide advertisements.

To promote the vacancies, the ECQ delivered an 'Election Day Heroes' campaign which was advertised across ECQ and stakeholder channels. Vacancies were also advertised on the Queensland Government's Smart Jobs website. A selection process is currently underway and once all vacancies are filled, a face-to-face training program tailored to assigned local government areas, will be conducted.

RO feedback and recommendations from the 2020 elections has helped shape an improved support model for ROs. The endorsed model provides centralised service delivery for operational, technical and application support, with a consistent single point of contact for all communication and information sharing between the ECQ and ROs.

Help us deliver democracy to Queenslanders!

**WE'RE
HIRING**



Returning Officer roles open now!



Compliance support for candidates

This week, the ECQ published its [approach to compliance](#) for the 2024 elections. This approach sets out the ECQ's role as the regulator of funding and disclosure requirements and provides guidance about who to contact in relation to other issues (such as signage regulations).

The [commitments and expectations](#) of candidates and other election participants is also outlined, as is the ECQ's commitment to providing help to candidates and others who genuinely want to comply with their obligations.

Obligations for candidates begin well before nominations for the election officially open.

That's why it is important that the ECQ contacts candidates as soon as they indicate an intention to become a candidate. We are already aware of many candidates having done this, and we have been receiving disclosures regarding donations received and expenditure incurred.

If you become aware of any person who has indicated that they intend to contest next year's elections, you are welcome to advise the ECQ via fad@ecq.qld.gov.au.

Electoral expenditure caps

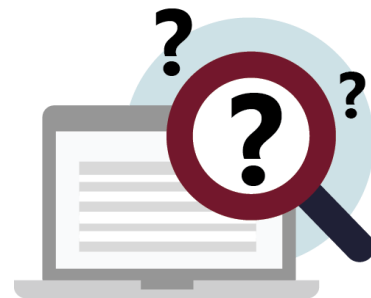
The Queensland Parliament passed laws introducing an expenditure cap framework for the 2024 local government elections. The laws are yet to formally commence operation, and the ECQ is currently working to ensure systems and educational materials are ready for commencement.

The expenditure caps for each local government area can only be calculated and published in July 2023.



Did you know?

- We expect more than 1,500 people to vie to be a councillor as part of the 2024 local government elections.
- Around 1,200 polling booths will be operated by the ECQ in communities right across Queensland.
- There will be around 150 early voting centres and RO offices across the State.



This email was sent by Electoral Commission of Queensland, Electoral Commission of Queensland, Level 20, 1 Eagle Street, BRISBANE, QLD 4000, Australia to suellen.hinde@ecq.qld.gov.au

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