

The Countdown



Electoral Commission
QUEENSLAND



Message

FROM THE ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

With only a few weeks remaining until the end of the year it's a great time to reflect on 2023 and particularly, on the impressive volume of work that's been done as we prepare for a busy election year.

In this final edition of *The Countdown* for 2023 you'll find some updates on our key pieces of work including our Service Plan, temporary election staff recruitment activities and Returning Officer training.

Last week, we also hosted the final meeting of the Local Government Election Advisory Committee prior to the elections, where a range of important topics were discussed such as our vote counting and declaration processes, our election advertising campaign and the progress being made on the 'So you want to be a councillor?' training, across the state.

When we return in the New Year, the election period will be in sharp focus for all of us as we prepare to deliver an efficient and effective electoral event for Queensland.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your engagement with the ECQ team over the past year and acknowledge the important role that our close relationship with the local government sector has played in informing our election preparations.

As a result of this collaborative approach, I am confident that we are in a strong position and more prepared than ever before to deliver the local government elections on 16 March 2024.

I hope you all have a great break and enjoy the holiday period.

Pat Vidgen
Electoral Commissioner of Queensland

In this edition of The Countdown

- **Election timetable now available**
- **2024 Service Plan coming soon**
- **Election staff recruitment on target**
- **Candidate training in full swing across Queensland**
- **Returning Officers ready for the elections**
- **Final LGEAC meeting for 2023**



Election timetable now available

The proposed timetable for the 2024 local government elections has been published and is available on the ECQ website. Please note that these dates are indicative only and that the timetable will be confirmed once the Notice of Election has been issued.

Notice of election	Monday 29 January 2024
Candidate nominations open	Monday 29 January 2024
Close of electoral roll	Monday 5 February 2024
Candidate nominations close	Tuesday 13 February 2024 at noon
Ballot paper order draw	Wednesday 14 February 2024 at 10am
Postal vote applications close	Monday 4 March 2024 at 7pm
Early voting*	Monday 4 March to 15 March 2024
Election day	Saturday 16 March 2024 from 8am to 6pm
Close of return of postal votes	Tuesday 26 March 2024

**early voting in rural and remote locations are likely to be less than a full two-week period. Details of dates, times and locations will be available on the ECQ website during the election.*



2024 Service Plan coming soon

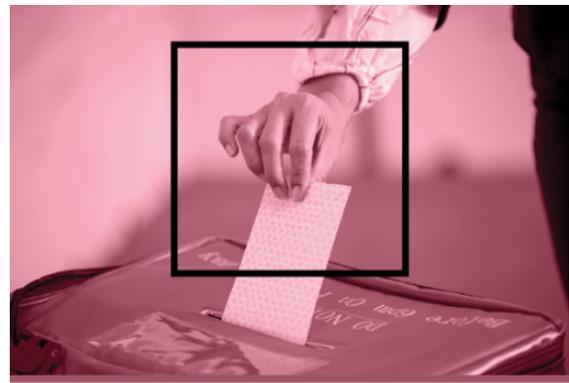
The ECQ's 2024 Local Government Elections Service Plan has been produced to provide an overview of how the elections will be delivered, promoting visibility and transparency about the process of election planning and delivery at a state-wide level.

We've been developing service plans for major elections since 2020, and the plan for

the 2024 local government elections will be published soon on the ECQ website.

What's in an Election Service Plan?

An overarching view of how the ECQ will deliver the election. This includes details of key aspects of service delivery, an overview of services, system improvements and new initiatives that have been introduced to maximise elector engagement and participation.



The 2024 local government elections plan includes:

- the election timetable and key milestones
- voter services, including early voting and electi voting
- remote polling services for Indigenous local go
- recruitment and training of Returning Officers a
- management, testing and operation of critical election systems
- candidate and political party disclosure obligations and compliance activities
- communication and engagement activities to promote and support electoral participation
- an update on local government boundaries following reviews by the Local Government Change Commission
- post-election activities including vote counting and result publication, the non-voter compliance program, evaluation and reporting.

2024 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS SERVICE PLAN



How will individual elections be delivered?

In addition to the state-wide Service Plan, the ECQ has been communicating regularly with local governments, and has provided a draft service plan to each council, with detailed information specific to their electoral landscape. These plans include the timetable, election services and key communication and contact information for the individual local government.

Draft plans were sent to council CEOs with correspondence from Julie Cavanagh, Executive Director, Election Event Management in August 2023 and were updated and redistributed in November 2023.

While these local service plans will continue to evolve, they provide valuable guidance for councils to assist them to make their own preparations for the elections.



Election staff recruitment on target

With around 10,000 Queenslanders needed to support our delivery of the local government elections in 2024, work on the recruitment of staff and promotional planning to support this project has been ongoing for many months.

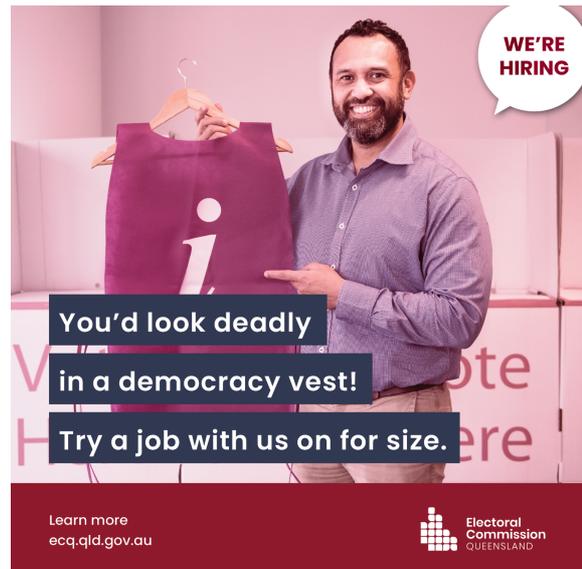
A critical project for the ECQ, this work has been meticulously planned, with recruitment now underway via a two-phased promotional schedule.

A 'soft launch' in early December included promotion to people who have previously worked for the ECQ in these types of roles and is already yielding a great response.

To date, more than 5,000 applications have been received, putting the ECQ in a strong position to meet its target in the New Year, when opportunities are promoted to the general public.

ECQ Communication has been supporting the public awareness aspect of this work, developing a communication and engagement strategy which features an advertising campaign that will be deployed on social media, and a range of other deliverables such as media releases, stakeholder kits and short videos.

Here's a quick look at a few of our campaign assets.



Candidate training in full swing across Queensland

Mandatory training for prospective local government election candidates is well underway across Queensland.

All candidates for mayor or councillor at the 2024 local government elections must complete the 'So you want to be a councillor?' course.

The updated online course launched at the end of July 2023, and the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning is delivering in-person information sessions and full training sessions between November 2023 and February 2024.

The ECQ has been providing support for the training, attending a number of sessions including in Cairns, Mount Isa, Aurukun, Napranum, Mapoon, Murweh, Paroo, Bulloo and Quilpie.

All prospective candidates are encouraged to complete their training as soon as possible, as this is a pre-requisite for the registration of nominations for the elections.

Returning Officers ready for the elections

Returning Officer training is over for the year, with more than 130 Returning Officers and Assistant Returning Officers now fully equipped to oversee the local government elections on 16 March. A further training program for staff working in Indigenous local governments in Far North Queensland will be held next month.

Returning Officers are integral to any electoral event and are chosen for their organisational and problem-solving skills. During an event they also become highly valuable sources of information.

As we look ahead to the elections in March, the ECQ has confidence that our team of Returning Officers and Assistant Returning Officers are well-trained, well-supported and ready to deliver.



Final LGEAC meeting for 2023

The final meeting of the Local Government Election Advisory Committee before the election was held in Brisbane on 13 December.

At the meeting, a host of topics were discussed, including vote counting, declarations and result publication and the processes that will be in place for the local government elections, along with updates on the ECQ's advertising campaign, candidate training and costs.

Representatives from the Crime and Corruption Commission were also present, providing information about their awareness activities during the local government election period.

The committee has provided a valuable forum for the ECQ to consult the local government sector and ensure these perspectives were reflected in election planning activities. The committee will reconvene following the elections to discuss outcomes and observations.

The ECQ thanks all members for their constructive and insightful contributions to the work of the committee and for their efforts in improving election service delivery for all Queenslanders.



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 *The Electoral Commission of Queensland acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country, and their connection to land, sea, and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.*

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