

2024 local government elections

# The Countdown



**Electoral Commission**  
QUEENSLAND



## Message

FROM THE ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

Welcome to the second edition of *The Countdown* – the ECQ's regular update that will be delivering important information to you in the lead up to the 2024 local government elections.

Our first edition has been very positively received and we have been particularly pleased with the number of new subscribers that have been coming on board over the past few weeks.

Once again, this edition brings you key updates about the work that's going on behind the scenes here at the ECQ, as we prepare for next year's elections. Since our last edition, the date has been confirmed for the elections and this certainty is helping us to manage these preparations.

We've also welcomed Quentin Barba to our team in the last month. Quentin is our new First Nations Engagement Officer and will play an important role in enhancing our engagement with First Nations communities across Queensland. You can learn more about Quentin's wealth of experience in this edition.

Other highlights that you can read about include recent work we've been doing to support enrolment and provisional enrolment, an update on the quality training materials we're developing for our election staff and information about mobile polling which is returning after the disruption of the pandemic.

In the past month I have attended some important electoral meetings, including the ECANZ (Electoral Council of Australia and New Zealand) Commissioner's meeting in Launceston and I am looking forward to the next Local Government Election Advisory Committee meeting on 5 July.

We'll continue to keep you up-to-date with the latest news and information via *The Countdown*, so please keep an eye on your inbox and share this newsletter with any interested colleagues across your teams.

Regards,

Pat Vidgen

Electoral Commissioner



## In this edition of *The Countdown*

- Election date confirmed for 2024
- Meet Quentin Barba
- Divisional Boundary Reviews
- Support for Council to improve enrolment
- ECQ supports Young Mayors program in Mackay
- Quality training materials for Temporary Election Staff
- Mobile polling is back



## Election date confirmed for 2024

Queenslanders will head to the polls on Saturday 16 March 2024 to elect their local government representatives for the next four years.

In late April, the Deputy Premier and Minister for Local Government, the Honourable Steven Miles MP, announced that Cabinet had approved that the date be brought forward on the advice of the ECQ, to avoid the Easter school holiday period. The change in date will need to be formally implemented by Regulation.

The previously scheduled election date of Saturday 30 March 2024 falls on Easter Saturday and coincides with the first weekend of the school holidays. With many Queenslanders holidaying during this period, an earlier election date will help avoid the likelihood of increased postal and telephone votes which can contribute to delays in the declaration of election results.

This isn't the first time an election date has been moved to avoid a situation like this, with the election date brought forward by a week back in 2016.

With the date now confirmed, the ECQ has published its [2024 local government elections page](#). This page is a key source of information for candidates and electors and is also the place where you'll find communiques from the Local Government Election Advisory Committee, previous editions of *The Countdown* and documents such as the Local Government Service Plan – all of which will be added progressively. It's a great idea to bookmark this page for easy future reference.



## Meet Quentin Barba



Quentin Barba has joined the ECQ team as our First Nations Engagement Officer.

Quentin is a proud Guda Maluilgal and Koinjmal man, with connections to Mamu and Yuggera Country.

Prior to joining us, Quentin was working as a Police Officer with his 25 year police career taking him across Far North Queensland and to remote communities where he gained valuable experience.

During his policing career, Quentin has been posted in roles across Queensland, including in Innisfail, Charters Towers, Mount Isa and Cairns districts. During this time, Quentin worked in areas spanning from Mornington Island in the Gulf of Carpentaria, south to Birdsville, as well as in Cape Communities, the Torres Strait Islands (as the first permanent full-time Scenes of Crime Officer on Thursday Island) as well as Babinda, Cardwell and the Tablelands. Quentin's recent experience has involved living and working in Brisbane including in the Queensland Police Service First Nations Unit and working at several PCYCs around the State.

Quentin will work alongside election subject matter experts to engage with Indigenous councils and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to deliver culturally appropriate election services across Queensland.

"I personally hope to see a greater understanding of the elections in our communities, as a result of my work," Quentin said.

"I also hope that one day we will see more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people involved in the electoral process, from enrolling to vote and voting, to working as election staff, and running as election candidates.

"I want to share my knowledge and lived experience with the staff at ECQ so they will have a greater understanding and awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols and cultural practices."



## Divisional Boundary Reviews

As required by law, divisional boundary reviews are undertaken in the year before the local government quadrennial elections.

This year, the Minister for Local Government has referred reviews to the Local Government Change Commission for the following councils:

- Bundaberg Regional Council
- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Isaac Regional Council
- Tablelands Regional Council

### Why do divisional boundaries need to be reviewed?

Each council division is required to have relatively the same number of electors so that each person's vote carries the same weight (one vote, one value). The purpose of a divisional boundary review is to examine the quota – which means a 'reasonable proportion of electors' – to make sure that divisional enrolment is within the quota specified in legislation.

Consultation is underway with the councils involved and community consultation will begin in late July. The ECQ will work closely with these councils to promote the consultation and ensure residents are aware of the review and have their chance to have a say.

Required changes to divisional boundaries will be implemented by Regulation before the local government elections in March 2024.



## Support for councils to improve enrolment

Councils can play a significant role when it comes to boosting electoral enrolment ahead of the 2024 local government elections. Councils understand their local communities best and are well placed to help raise awareness about the importance of enrolling to vote by using their local communication channels.

ECQ's Executive Director of Election Event Management Julie Cavanagh said each of Queensland's 77 councils could benefit from increased enrolment.

"High enrolment benefits councils by engaging electors in the electoral process, allowing people to have their say about how their council is governed," Julie said.

"It also provides for greater potential for a better turnout, which means more votes are received



and that the elected candidates more fully reflect the views of the community.”

The Queensland electoral roll is maintained by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and there are a number of ways that councils can help promote enrolment in their local areas.

“Councils can use their own communication channels to help us get the word out,” she said.

“For example, you could provide a link on your website to encourage residents to enrol to vote and to check their enrolment details are up-to-date or include the link in any newsletters you issue.

“Another important thing to note in your communications is that the AEC has recently changed its enrolment process to make it even easier to enrol to vote with people now able to use their Medicare cards as an acceptable form of ID.”

The ECQ has also recently developed a provisional enrolment campaign, aimed at 16 and 17-year-olds. If you’d like some resources to share about provisional enrolment, please contact the ECQ Communication Team at [communications@ecq.qld.gov.au](mailto:communications@ecq.qld.gov.au) who can send you out a stakeholder kit.

Visit the [AEC website](#) for more information about enrolling to vote.



## ECQ supports Young Mayors Program in Mackay

The ECQ was proud to partner with the Foundation for Young Australians in May to deliver Queensland’s first Young Mayors Program.

The program was supported by the Mackay Regional Council and saw almost 1,500 students turning out to vote to elect a Youth Council.

The ECQ played a key role in facilitating the election, providing on the ground support, training and election day materials such as voting screens, ballot boxes, counting vests and ballot papers.

The newly elected 12-member Youth Council will now advise the Mackay Regional Council and councillors on priorities for young people in the region.

The ECQ also took the opportunity to promote provisional enrolment to students aged 16 and 17 years old during the election week.

By provisionally enrolling, young people are ready to vote as soon as they turn 18 and it also means they can express an interest in working at an electoral event.



*Foundation for Young Australians taking votes at  
Sarina State High School to elect a youth council for Mackay*



## Training resources for Temporary Election Staff

Ensuring our temporary election staff are well trained and have the knowledge and confidence they need to deliver election services is a critical part of our preparation ahead of any major election. That's why the ECQ's Learning and Development Team has been busy developing quality tools and resources to help train our incoming temporary workforce for 2024.



### So, how do we train people to work at an election?

The answer depends on the level of responsibility of the role. For example, a Returning Officer will be required to attend an intensive week of training in Brisbane and will have a procedural manual to follow and a helpline they can call for support. For a Count Assistant, they will be required to complete an online learning program and will receive on-the-job support. A specific training program is developed in line with the level of responsibility for each of the roles needed to deliver an election.

The ECQ is also developing some new training videos. Developed in conjunction with a creative agency, these videos cover the issuing of ballot papers through the day, and the counting of ballot papers after 6pm on election night. Once completed, the videos will form part of the online learning program for temporary election staff to prepare them to work at a polling booth.

Expressions of Interest to work for us at the 2024 local government elections will open later this year. If you could see yourself in a democracy vest and helping us to deliver an election on the ground, you can get ready to apply by logging into our Self-Service Portal to update or create your account. We'll then let you know once we start hiring for the 2024 elections.



*ECQ staff develop training videos with help from content creators Welcome To The Fold*



## Mobile Polling is back

On the eve of the 2020 local government quadrennial elections, the emerging COVID-19 crisis was forcing organisations and governments to think differently about the way they delivered their services.

For the ECQ, operations needed to be pivoted quickly to ensure potential exposure of the virus was minimised, while continuing to deliver essential electoral services accessible to all Queensland electors. As part of the ECQ's risk minimisation and to comply with health directives, mobile polling was significantly reduced.

### What is mobile polling?

Mobile polling is a type of vote-taking that enables eligible infirm and remote electors who are unable to attend polling places, to participate in the election. Teams of election officials take voting to these electors through a structured mobile polling schedule.

The ECQ's usual mobile polling services will be reinstated in 2024 for declared institutions and remote communities.

Mobile polling helps the ECQ to fulfil its commitment to providing safe and accessible elections to Queenslanders – ensuring all electors are given every opportunity to have their say at an election.

You can read more about the ECQ's suite of assisted voting options on the [ECQ website](#).



## An update on expenditure caps

There will be some changes to campaign expenditure for the 2024 elections, following the passage of the *Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Act 2023*. More information about these changes will be provided once the laws commence operation.

The ECQ must follow a legislated process to determine the expenditure caps for the election for mayoral and councillor candidates for election in each local government area, and the caps will be based on enrolment figures as of 1 July 2023.

We'll bring you more information about this in future editions of *The Countdown*.



### Did You Know?

- There will be more than 5000 laptops used at issuing points in the field as part of the 2024 local government elections.
- More than 7,960 cardboard voting screens and 1,665 modified voting screens for people with a disability will be set up to assist electors to have their say.



For more information, contact the Electoral Commission of Queensland, Electoral Commission of Queensland, Level 28, 1 Eagle Street, BRISBANE, QLD 4000, Australia to [edrick.bamba@ecq.qld.gov.au](mailto:edrick.bamba@ecq.qld.gov.au)

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