

2024 local government elections

The Countdown



Electoral Commission
QUEENSLAND



Message

FROM THE ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

Welcome to the sixth edition of the Countdown and to the 2024 local government elections period.

The elections commenced on Monday 29 January, following the issue of the Notice of Election and we are already seeing steady numbers of nominations coming in from council areas across the state.

You can keep up-to-date with who has nominated as a candidate by visiting the ECQ website – these details will be added progressively as nominations are finalised.

Speaking of which, you may have noticed that we launched a new look website on Monday, aimed at making it easier for electors and candidates to find the information they need about the elections. Council communication teams also received a range of resources from us earlier this week to help promote the elections in local communities.

Already we are seeing strong engagement from Queenslanders and this is reflected by the calls we are receiving via our call centre and the conversations we are having with electors on our social media channels, particularly about things like applying for a postal vote and what to do if you'll be away during the election. Operationally, our Returning Officers are in place and being well supported, with accommodation, staff and materials all in the process of being progressed and finalised.

While the election period will be a marathon and not a sprint, there's certainly high levels of activity going on right across the ECQ as we continue our efforts to deliver effective and efficient elections in each of Queensland's 77 local government areas.

Regards,

Pat Vidgen
Electoral Commissioner of Queensland

In this edition of The Countdown

- **Election activities in full swing**
- **Strong interest in temporary election roles**
- **Candidate nominations now open**
- **Thousands of new citizens have been added to the electoral roll**
- **Postal vote applications are open**
- **\$2.7 million in electoral expenditure already disclosed**
- **Get ready to *Vote Local***



Election activities in full swing

The 2024 local government elections are underway following publication of the notice of election on Monday, 29 January 2024.

Election delivery activities have now commenced, with candidate nominations open for those eligible to stand for the offices of mayor and councillor in Queensland's 77 councils.

Electors are also being encouraged to plan how to have their say at the elections, starting with checking they are correctly enrolled to vote.

Information about the voting services available in each local government area, including early voting, election day voting and postal voting, are available on the ECQ website.

The key election milestones are:

- Notice of election - Monday 29 January
- Candidate nominations open - Monday 29 January
- Close of electoral roll - Monday 5 February
- Candidate nominations close - Tuesday at noon, 13 February
- Ballot paper order draw - Wednesday at 10am, 14 February
- Postal vote applications close - Monday at 7pm, 4 March
- Early voting* - Monday 4 March to 15 March

*(*Dates and times may differ between local governments. See the ECQ website during the election for polling place information)*

- Election day - Saturday from 8am to 6pm, 16 March
- Deadline for the return of postal votes - Tuesday 26 March



Strong interest in temporary election roles

You may have noticed our recruitment campaign to help attract the 10,000 temporary election staff we need to support the elections appearing across your social media feeds and in media reporting.

While we have had a great response so far, there is still more work to do to fill roles in some of our more remote and regional locations.

Several media outlets across the state have run stories on our search for staff, and advertising has centred on social media platforms, via community engagement and across the Queensland public sector.

This effort will continue as ECQ Communication explores opportunities to target this message to the communities and locations where the need is the greatest. Local government areas with low numbers of EOIs are currently being monitored by the election staffing project team and will inform the next phase of the recruitment campaign to help drive up the number of applications in these areas.

Traditional job advertising on platforms, such as Smartjobs and Seek.com, will also start soon.



Candidate nominations now open

Queenslanders keen to put their hands up to run for mayor or councillor in their local government area can nominate as a candidate until noon on Tuesday, 13 February.

All prospective candidates should be encouraged to visit the ECQ website to make sure they complete the necessary steps and understand their funding and disclosure requirements, following new caps on electoral expenditure introduced in August last year.

There are several things candidates need to do to nominate including:

- completing a mandatory online training course
- ensuring they are enrolled in the division or ward they plan to contest
- they have had at least six people enrolled within the same area sign their nomination form
- paying a nomination deposit of \$250 to the ECQ by cash, EFT or bank cheque before nominations close
- letting the ECQ know the details of the bank account they will be using for their campaign
- disclosing things like political memberships or if they have any existing contractual relationships or planning applications before council (this includes their close associates)
- making sure they are disclosing any money they spend on their election.



Thousands of new citizens have been added to the electoral roll

More than 5,000 new electors have been added to the electoral roll, following citizenship ceremonies on the Australia Day weekend across Queensland.

Officially, 5,728 new citizens have been added, just in time for the 2024 local government elections in March!

With all of our planning and preparation for extensive voter services well advanced across the state the ECQ is well placed to ensure these new Queenslanders' first Australian democratic experience is a positive one.



Postal vote applications are open

Postal vote applications for the 2024 local government elections are open and will close at 7pm on Monday 5 March.

Electors are urged to apply directly via the ECQ website as the best way of ensuring the ECQ receives the application immediately and that electors receive their voting materials on time. Postal voting materials will be printed and despatched after the ballot order draw is conducted on 14 February.

To help Queenslanders understand how postal voting works, the ECQ has developed a short video on postal voting. You can view this on our [website](#).

Queenslanders who are listed as special postal voters or whose council area is conducting a full postal ballot, will automatically receive a postal vote in the mail. Details of these council areas are available on the website or in the [2024 Local Government Elections Service Plan](#).



\$2.7 million in electoral expenditure already disclosed

More than \$2.7 million in electoral expenditure disclosures have already been made in the lead up to the March 16 elections.

As at January 31, disclosures had reached \$2.736 million while donations were at \$950,000.

Queensland's funding and disclosure regulations are among the most comprehensive nationally and include real-time disclosure obligations for local government election candidates.

The large volume of disclosures is a reflection of candidates' growing understanding of their obligations.

As at 15 January 2024, the highest amount of disclosures were in the following local government areas*:

- Brisbane City Council – \$1,152,010.61
- Cairns Regional Council - \$134,815.69
- Gold Coast City Council - \$97,368.25
- Townsville City Council - \$86,359.50
- Logan City Council - \$79,253.39

New caps on electoral spending also took effect from 14 August 2023 and the capped expenditure period for the local government elections will apply until 6pm on election day on 16 March 2024.

Electoral expenditure disclosures can be viewed via the ECQ's Electronic Disclosure System on the [ECQ website](#).



Get ready to *Vote Local*

Stakeholder kits were sent to council communication staff on Tuesday 30 January via the Local Government Association of Queensland. The kits were aimed at promoting ECQ's ***Vote Local*** advertising campaign, now in market, state-wide.

The campaign aims to connect Queenslanders to the services that matter to them in their local communities and to encourage them to have a say about their local representatives.

ECQ Communication has made a range of [resources](#) available on the ECQ website to support promotion of the elections. These include videos, posters, social media tiles and fact sheets.

If communication managers and teams require any further information or support, they are encouraged to reach out to ECQ Communication via the team's shared mailbox at communication@ecq.qld.gov.au.





ecq.qld.gov.au



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.

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

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