

2024 local government elections

The Countdown



Message

FROM THE ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER

This is the last edition of *The Countdown* before election day tomorrow, and as I write this, we have seen well over one million Queenslanders already cast their votes in the 2024 local government elections. While this is a big number, it also means we are expecting a big turnout tomorrow across Queensland with the potential for queues in our polling places.

Delivering a state-wide electoral event to 3.65 million electors and across a diverse range of local governments is no small task and I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of our ECQ staff, Returning Officers, Assistant Returning Officers and temporary election staff.

I also want to thank our stakeholders and councils for the role they play in promoting democracy and the importance of voting in their local communities. During the voting period, I've had the opportunity to visit many of our early voting centres around the state and have been impressed by the professionalism of our locations and our people as they welcome electors through the doors.

As I've mentioned, we've again seen strong early voting numbers at these elections, and additionally have issued over 440,000 postal votes. Already over 60 per cent of postal votes have been returned by electors and scrutinised in readiness for the commencement of the count at 6pm on election night.

Unfortunately, sometimes the best laid plans can be interrupted by weather, and this week we have been impacted by unfavourable weather conditions in parts of the Torres Strait which has made mobile polling difficult. As a result of helicopters being unable to reach a number of locations, the ECQ has made the decision to move the election day for the Torres Strait Island Regional Council, to make sure that all electors have the opportunity to vote. This decision was made in close consultation with the Council, and we will continue to keep people informed of new voting arrangements through our website and social media channels.

I'm looking forward to election day tomorrow, and to seeing Queenslanders exercising their right to vote as they select their local mayors and councillors for the next four years.

Regards,

Pat Vidgen
Electoral Commissioner of Queensland



In this edition of The Countdown

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Providing accessible voting options for all

During the election period, the ECQ has provided information about voting assistance to Queenslanders across the state. While we have a range of assisted voting options available, these services are often not widely understood by the general public.

Postal voting and early voting continue to be popular options for people who will be out of their local council area on election day, but for those who may have mobility issues, disabilities or health concerns, voting in person can pose a range of difficulties.

Post-election, the ECQ will be looking to deepen awareness and understanding of assisted voting services and how they can continue to meet the needs of the community. We'll be looking to do this through engagement with relevant sectors, co-design and best practice examples.

For the 2024 local government elections the following services have been available to help make voting accessible to all electors:

- [voting options for people with disability](#) including early voting centres and polling booths with disability access
- assistance to cast a vote at the polling booth, including the ability to vote from a car
- voting for patients and residents of registered declared institutions, some hospitals and aged care facilities
- mobile polling in remote areas
- [telephone voting](#)
- [voting information in 25 languages](#) other than English and access to telephone translation and interpreter services provided by our partner, Language Loop for people with English as a second language.



Electronic Voter Information Cards and SMS alerts

In the last edition of *The Countdown*, we gave you an update on the delivery of our Voter Information Cards for electors, along with the email version of the card for electors who have registered their email address on the electoral roll.

Tomorrow, those electors who have listed their mobile number on the electoral roll will receive an SMS alert from us as well, to provide a reminder for them to cast their vote before 6pm.

We know that life is busy and that it can be easy for some people to forget they have to vote, particularly if they are working on election day. We'd prefer to hand out ballot papers than fines to electors, so we're hopeful that the new SMS alert service will assist electors to make sure they fulfil their obligation to vote.

Data security is increasingly important to electors and the ECQ has been making efforts to assure electors that the communications they receive from us (eVIC and SMS) are legitimate. If councils receive any enquiries or complaints about these from people in your community, you can refer people to our channels where we have provided information about these, including images to confirm the source of this information. This includes:

- SMS messages will look like this image, be from "ElectionQLD" and ask for no information or have a link.
- eVICs will look like this image, be from noreply@evic.elections.qld.gov.au and ask for no information. The only links will be to early voting and election day polling booths.



Alternatively, electors can learn more about our VIC, eVIC and SMS alerts on our website [here](#).



Which voting system used in local government elections?

The way Queenslanders will vote these elections will depend on if they live in a divided or undivided council.

Electors will use Optional Preferential Voting (OPV) when voting for their mayors and councillors if they are in single-member wards or divisions, also known as single-member divided councils).

Electors will use First-Past-The-Post voting (FPTP) when voting for their councillors if they live in undivided councils or multi-member divided councils.

	OPV	FPTP
All mayors	✓	
Councillors in divided councils Councils who use OPV	✓	
Councillors in undivided councils Councils who use FPTP		✓
How to vote	Number the ballot paper to indicate your preference/s. Electors can vote for one, some, or all of the candidates.	Mark ALL the boxes on the ballot paper for the number of candidates to be elected. For example, if four candidates are to be elected to council, electors must mark four boxes on the ballot paper.



So, it's 6pm Saturday, 16 March. What happens next?

At 6pm on Saturday night, polls will close and the counting process will begin. The first stage of counting is the '**preliminary count**', and election officials will undertake the count in the presence of scrutineers, those in yellow vests that represent candidates.

Each ballot paper is unfolded and examined to make sure it is formal or filled out correctly. Votes for each candidate are tallied then checked against the number of ballot papers issued. You will be able to follow along on the [ECQ website](#), which will be updated progressively as the count continues. Results are expected to start flowing through to the results website from around 7pm.

For some elections a second count is undertaken on election night. This '**indicative count**' sees preferences allocated to the two candidates likely to receive the most first preferences. At this time, there's no further counting on election night and ballots are secured overnight.

What happens on Sunday, 17 March?

Election officials will return the next day to conduct the official count, often observed by scrutineers. Preliminary and official counts of postal votes will continue as they are received and

the number of votes for each candidate and continues to be updated on the ECQ website.

For optional preferential voting contests, a distribution of preferences may also be required to determine an outcome.

We must allow up to 10 days (or until Tuesday, 26 March 2024) for postal votes to be received for counting by law. The ECQ will declare elected candidates only once the outcome is certain, noting that by law it can declare a result if outstanding postal votes could not possibly affect the result.

For more information about the vote-counting process, view the video on the [ECQ resources website](#) or our [YouTube channel](#).



Torres Strait Island Regional Council - new election date

Residents living in the Torres Strait Island Regional Council area will have their voting extended by a week after poor weather conditions hampered mobile polling.

Mobile polling for residents of Iama, Poruma, Masig, Ugar and Mer will occur next week.

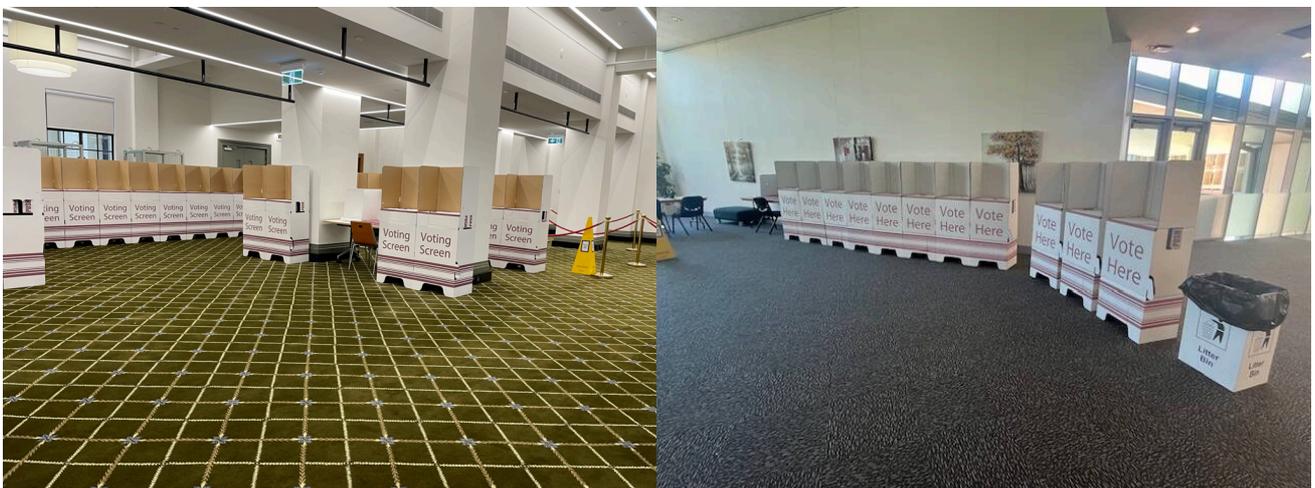
Postal votes must be completed by Saturday, 23 March and returned to the ECQ by close of business on Tuesday, 2 April 2024.

Telephone voting will only be available until this Saturday, 16 March, with registrations for this service closing at noon and voting until 6pm.

The ECQ has been working in partnership with the Torres Strait Island Regional Council to keep electors informed about additional mobile polling in their communities.



Early voting setups around the state





Like and share our content

We encourage councils to help electors keep up-to-date with everything local government elections by sharing our social media posts. We're on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X.



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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