



# Council elections

## Local Government 2014 Elections – Information for Candidates

## Info Sheet 2

### Interested in taking up a role as a Council member?

Council members play a vital role in local community leadership. If elected, you will be contributing your thoughts and ideas within a decision-making body that:

- decides on strategic and financial plans for the local area;
- ensures Council resources are used fairly for the benefit of the community;
- talks to local people about their views and ideas for the area; and
- lets others know in the community, regionally and in State and Commonwealth Government agencies, about key local issues.

Generally, anyone who is over 18 years old, an Australian citizen and on the voters roll can stand as a candidate in Local Government elections.

Once elected, your role as a Councillor will involve:

- attending and participating in Council meetings, using formal meeting rules;
- understanding reports, including financial, environmental and social issues reports;
- presenting your arguments and debating with other Councillors; and
- keeping in touch with people in your area and speaking at community events.

You will need lots of energy and courage to try new things, and be prepared to keep in touch with the local community – you will be a “community voice”. At the same time you will need to think about balancing other commitments, such as work and looking after your family. But, despite the extra work and time commitment, most councillors find the role fulfilling.

### Are you ready to take on the role of a Council Member?

The checklist overleaf is a guide to assist you in making the decision about whether or not to stand as a candidate.

Past experiences have shown that people from diverse cultural backgrounds and age groups often bring fresh outlooks and new ideas to Councils, which helps to inform a more responsive approach to decision making.

Training and support is provided to newly-elected Council Members to help them find their way around the business of Local Government and new skills will be developed over time. There are many people, including more experienced Council Members, who will assist you in becoming familiar with your new role as a Council Member.

### Allowances and fees

Council Members are entitled to receive an annual allowance, the amount varying from Council to Council, depending on the size and location of the area, the population and the revenue base. Council Member Allowances are set for all Councils by the independent Remuneration Tribunal.

Some expenses may also be reimbursed, for example, telephone and travelling costs, fees for child care or care of other relatives, so that a Council Member can attend Council meetings. You can check with your local Council to find out more information about allowances and fees.

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√	I am prepared to ...	√	I understand...
	Promote a positive image and profile of Council		The demographic profile of the Council area and relevant issues
	Inform myself about community needs and concerns and advocate at Council		The social, environmental and economic issues facing my community in the short and long term
	Represent a broad view of electors not just a sectional/ward view		There are statutory responsibilities I will have to observe
	Network with clubs, community, business and service groups to seek feedback when needed		Council Members have no individual authority to act or make decisions
	Participate effectively in strategic planning and policy development		Decisions cannot be made at informal gatherings, only at formal Council meetings
√	<b>I have the skills to.....</b>		
	Engage with all members of the community in a non-discriminatory way		There are conflict of interest provisions and codes of conduct to observe
	Read and understand agendas and reports so I can prepare for meetings		It is expected that Council Members will conduct themselves with integrity, honesty and fairness and treat people with respect at all times
	Use computers to download, print, save and edit documents, use email and access internet sites		How to read and interpret budgets and other financial statements or am prepared to seek additional information or training if required
	Communicate effectively, negotiate, explain and discuss issues		Rates are a key income source for Council and I understand the Council rating system
	Research and evaluate community issues and concerns		The role of Local Government and its relationship with State and Commonwealth Government

**If you have ticked most of the boxes you probably have what it takes to be a Council Member. If you are interested, the next step is to get "On the campaign trail" - Info Sheet 3 in this series.**

The **Local Government 2014 Elections Information Sheet Series** comprises four Info Sheets which are available for download at [www.lga.sa.gov.au](http://www.lga.sa.gov.au).

- Info Sheet 1: Local Government - Councils at Work**
- Info Sheet 2: Interested in taking up a role as a Council Member?**
- Info Sheet 3: On the campaign trail**
- Info Sheet 4: Where to go for more information**

For further information about Council elections in your area, contact your local Council.