



council elections

Local Government 2014 Elections – Information for Candidates

Info Sheet 3

On the campaign trail

So you've decided you want to be on Council. Your first step is to think about and plan your election campaign. It's useful to be prepared before nominations open on 2 September 2014. On your nomination form, don't forget to include your email address.

After nominations close (16 September 2014 at 12 noon), check with your Council who you are up against. **If there are no more candidates than vacancies, then you will automatically be elected,** so you will not need to put any energy into a campaign.

If you do need a campaign, here are a few basics you will need to get you started.

- Understand how the election is run, how votes are counted, who your opposition is and how many votes you are likely to need to be elected. Reports on previous elections might help you with this – see <http://www.lga.sa.gov.au/pastresults>, along with ECSA vote counting information - see <http://www.ecsa.sa.gov.au/voting/voting-systems/proportional-representation>;
- Get to know the local issues and the profile of those people in the area. Maps, population data, current strategic plans and annual reports are available from the Council.
- Listen to people about local concerns. Check local papers. Decide what issues you will campaign on.
- Are there any high profile people who might help or endorse you as a candidate?
- Who can you ask to manage or help you plan and run your campaign? A **Step-by Step Checklist** is included overleaf.
- Be clear about what you stand for and the message you want to convey. A catchy slogan may help to capture the attention of voters.

Your campaign should match the strength of other candidates' campaigns, the time you have and how many people you have on your team, the size of the area and the resources available.

Here are a few tips for delivering your message.

- Contact people you know can be ambassadors for you by phone, letter or email.
- Prepare a brochure and poster to promote yourself and what you stand for. Place signs in public places but check with Council for permission first and check legal requirements.
- Door knock and letterbox areas where you might gain most impact. Include new housing developments and retirement villages.
- Visit and talk to people at sporting grounds, shopping centres and meeting places. Include places where cultural groups, young people and families gather.
- Use the local press. Offer interviews, press releases and consider paid advertisements.
- Create a website. Many people communicate today via texts, facebook, blogs and twitter. If you included your email address on your nomination form, then the LGA will be offering you the chance for voters to find your website through a central Local Government elections home page.

Remember – there are some campaign offences of which you must be aware. Check out the Electoral Commission of SA *Candidates Handbook* included in the Nomination Kit for candidates in Local Government elections, available from your local Council.

Step-by-step checklist to plan your campaign

Plan your campaign around the key dates on the 2014 election timetable

Voters Roll closes	Friday 8 August 2014
Candidate Nominations Open	Tuesday 2 September 2014
Candidate Nominations Close	Tuesday 16 September 2014 at 12.00pm
Mail out of ballot packs	Monday 20 to Friday 24 October 2014
Close of Voting	Friday 7 November 2014 before 5.00pm (Please note: ballot papers must be posted so they are received before 5.00pm)

√	Steps to take and what to consider
	Check the key dates relevant to Council elections, above. You must be on the voters roll by 8 August 2014 to nominate as a candidate.
	Identify your key message to prompt people to vote for you and include in your candidate profile.
	Research the “few basics” listed overleaf to get you started.
	Recruit supporters to be part of your campaign team. You need people you can easily work with, who can plan and organise, write brochures and articles and know about networking.
	Decide if you want to have a scrutineer at the vote count.
	Identify contacts and copy deadlines for local media. Remember, Letters to the Editor are free and if published will get your policy positions and views into the public arena.
	Prepare a budget for your campaign. Canvas options for donations, and support with fundraising events. Costs can include photos, printing, postage, advertisements, telephone and fax.
	Write a campaign plan; who will do what, when and how much will it cost?
	Ask supporters to critique your promotional material, and ensure it complies with election laws.
	Decide how you will communicate with potential voters. Look for free promotion options; speak at local clubs and community groups. On timing, consider that many people vote as soon as packs arrive, others leave it to the last week.
	Get on with it! Run your campaign and GOOD LUCK.

More information about running a campaign is available to candidates - refer Info Sheet 4 in this series.

The **Local Government 2014 Elections Information Sheet Series** comprises four Info Sheets which are available at www.lga.sa.gov.au

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

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