2014 Council Elections - LGA Candidates Website - Update

SUMMARY

The Local Government Association of SA (LGA) will be launching its Candidates Website www.lga.sa.gov.au/lgcandidates by 30 September 2014. The website will provide information about each candidate, and if the candidate chooses, a link to their own internet webpage or site.

After the close of nominations on Tuesday 16 September, the LGA must wait for all nominations to be processed and verified by the Electoral Commissioner of SA. The Electoral Commissioner expects to provide each candidate's details, including a photo and mandatory 150-word 'Candidate Profile', to the LGA by 24 September, after which these records will all be uploaded to the Candidates Website.

Once this occurs, each candidate will be invited by email to add to this on-line resource by providing a link to their own external webpage, if they have one. This is called (in legislation) the 'Candidate Statement'. It is an optional extra service available to each candidate.

When the data (and candidate links) are loaded and the site is fully operational from 30 September, the Candidates Website can be used to find out who is standing for election in each Council. It will be searchable by Council name or candidate name, and will provide a link to each candidate's own internet webpage, if the candidate has taken up that option.

THE LGA’S ADVICE TO CANDIDATES

A. Requirements

The only requirements the LGA has for the "Candidate Statement" are:

- that the “statement” must be *only* a hyperlink i.e. a link to an external webpage or site about the candidate;
- that a candidate's identity can be verified by the LGA by matching the “candidate statement” via the email address given to the Electoral Commissioner when nominating;
- that the "statement" (i.e. the webpage) does not, and will not contain anything illegal or defamatory.

The benefit of this arrangement is that candidates are in control over what is published. The page or pages can be updated over time as the campaign takes place. Candidates are totally responsible for setting up their page or site, and for everything that occurs there. The LGA’s role is limited to providing the initial link through which voters will be able to find your website.

B. How to lodge a website link “statement”?

1. First, candidates need to set up a page or pages to use for campaigning, either via an existing page or a new one specifically for this purpose. This can be via Facebook, Google Plus, Bebo, Tumblr, Wordpress, Blogger, and there are others. The LGA can't provide advice on these but information is readily available on the internet.

2. Identify the webpage address (the “URL”) of the page or site. It will look something like this: www.yourpage.blogsitel.com.au this is the only thing needed to register with the LGA, and it becomes your candidate “statement”.

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3. Once the LGA receives the nomination information, likely to be around Wednesday 24 September, then candidates will be emailed (if they submitted an email as part of their nomination) and invited to follow the prompt in the email to lodge their link. **If candidates have not received such an email by 5pm on Thursday 25 September they should contact the LGA on 8224 2000.**

After following the prompt in the email, candidates will be asked to:
- agree to the LGA’s requirements; and
- type in (or paste in) their webpage address, and press “submit”.

4. After clicking the “submit” button, the LGA system will then send a follow-up email. This follow-up email will ask candidates to verify that the link provided is correct. It will also give the option to correct any error. Once confirmed, the "statement" has been lodged.

5. There will be a gap of several days whilst the LGA verifies that the links are working before the making the entire system “live”. The LGA has an obligation to ensure that the site is working within 14 days after close of nominations (i.e. by 12 noon on Tuesday 30 September) but will endeavour to meet a slightly earlier commencement date if possible.

6. If a candidate encounters difficulties during this process, there will be a dedicated help line: from 15 to 30 September, 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, including Saturday and Sunday. The help line number is: **8224 2017.**