

*- make a difference -*  
**COUNCIL  
ELECTIONS**  
*- 2018 -*

## **Model Communications Plan**



# Model Communications Plan

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## 1. Introduction

Council elections are conducted every four years, the next will occur in November 2018.

Councils, the Local Government Association and the Electoral Commission of SA (ECSA) work together to promote and conduct the elections.

Under the *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999*, Section 12, councils have the prime legal responsibility to promote the elections:

- (b) *a council is responsible for the provision of information, education and publicity designed to promote public participation in the electoral processes for its area, to inform potential voters about the candidates who are standing for election in its area, and to advise its local community about the outcome of elections and polls conducted in its area.*

Councils also have a specific responsibility under section 13A of the same Act, in relation to the voter's roll:

- (2) *Each council—*
- (a) *must, in a year in which a periodic election is to be held, during the period commencing on 1 January of that year and ending on the day fixed by the returning officer for the close of the roll, inform potential electors in its area (other than those referred to in section 14(1)(a)) of the requirement to apply to be enrolled on the voters roll; and...*

In addition to this the ECSA (as Returning Officer), has some specific formal information roles and a general power under which it may promote elections, and the LGA has a specific responsibility under Section 19A to ensure candidate profile information is published on the internet.

The LGA also undertakes work on behalf of the sector and provides a range of materials to support councils throughout the elections process, including:

- model policies and guidelines
- publications for candidates, voters and councils
- promotional materials for councils, and advertising on behalf of the sector to encourage participation in the elections
- training for council staff, candidates and newly elected members
- a website containing information about candidates
- engagement with under-represented groups (including a project in 2018 to increase the representation of women on councils in line with a resolution of the 2016 LGA AGM)
- research and analysis of the election outcomes

## 2. Timetable

2018 Local Government Elections Timetable	
Roll close	5pm Fri 10 Aug 2018
Nominations Open	Tue 4 Sep
Nominations Close	Midday Tue 18 Sep
Caretaker period	18 Sep to close of election
Mail out of voting materials	Mon 22 – Fri 26 Oct
Close of voting	5pm Fri 9 Nov

For a more detailed breakdown of the 2018 elections timetable refer to appendix 1.

## 3. Campaign objectives

The overarching objective of the 2018 council elections campaign is to support a fair and democratic process, resulting in better outcomes for communities through clear communication, including:

- Increase overall participation by the South Australian public at all stages of the election program - enrolment, nomination and voting
- Seek to ensure under-represented groups have the same access to relevant information as other members of the community (including women, aboriginal, young people and culturally and linguistically diverse groups)
- Build on the 2017 awareness campaign, supporting an increased understanding of the role of councils generally

For more information about the background and context against which these objectives are set refer to appendix 2.

## 4. Council tasks

The communication tasks that councils must undertake in relation to the 2018 council elections are:

- Contact all supplementary voters on the previous (2014) roll to advise them of the requirement to re-enrol if they wish to vote in the 2018 council elections
- Promote and encourage enrolment by those not already on the State electoral roll who are eligible to vote in council elections (see appendix 3 for eligibility criteria)
- Promote and encourage nominations from a wide range of people in the community
- Promote and encourage people to return their postal vote in the 2018 council elections

Stages	Timing
<b>General Awareness</b>	Apr - July
Budget permitting, the LGA will undertake a second burst of the 'part of your everyday' awareness campaign in the lead up to/early stages of the local government elections.	
<b>Stage 1 – Enrol</b>	May to July (Roll closes 10 Aug 2018)
Encourage prospective voters to make sure they are on the supplementary roll.	
<b>Stage 2 – Nominate</b>	August - September (Noms open 4 Sept and close 18 Sept 2018)
Encourage people to nominate for council.	
<b>Stage 3 – Vote</b>	September – November (Packs out 22 Oct, Vote closes 9 Nov)
Advise registered voters to expect their voting pack via the post and encourage them to complete and post it to reach the returning officer by 9 November.	



## 5. Target audiences

The broad audience for the council elections campaign is 'South Australian men and women aged 18 years and older'. However, at each stage of the campaign, the primary audience is slightly different:

### Primary audience for stage 1 – Enrol

Every person who is on the State electoral roll (which will have been updated in March for the State election) will automatically receive a voting pack. We are therefore targeting the exceptions:

- Non-Australian citizens
- Local businesses and bodies-corporate
- Non-resident landlords
- People who have recently moved house

(Refer to appendix 3 for full eligibility criteria to enrol to vote.)

### Primary audience for stage 2 – Nominate

While the ability to nominate is open to everyone who is eligible to vote\*, targeting our communication to underrepresented groups will not only assist to broaden representation, it will overlap with/ 'bleed' into the mainstream audience.

- Women
- Young people
- People with disability
- Aboriginal people
- People from culturally diverse backgrounds

(\*Refer to appendix 4 for eligibility criteria to nominate as a candidate.)

### Primary audience for stage 3 – Vote

All people who have received a postal voting pack (i.e. South Australian men and women, aged 18+ who are registered on the State or supplementary voters roll), including regional and metro residents.



## 6. Key messages

The overarching council elections message is about encouraging people to exercise their right to have a say about the way they want to live:

*Participating in your council election is one of the most direct ways that you can make a difference to everyday life in your community.*

However, as with the audience, the message changes slightly at each stage of the elections:



### Stage 1 – Enrol

#### Objective

- To encourage eligible people who are not on the State electoral roll to enrol to vote in council elections
  - including businesses, landlords and bodies-corporate, and
  - people who have recently moved

#### Message

*Voting in council elections is open to a broader range of people than State and Federal elections, including non-Australian citizens, non-resident landlords and businesses. Enrol now to have your say.*

### Stage 2 – Nominate

#### Objective

- To encourage people (particularly from under-represented groups) to nominate for election on council

#### Message

*Make a difference to everyday life in your community. Nominate for council.*

### Stage 3 – Vote

#### Objective

- To encourage people to complete and return their postal vote

#### Message

*Make a difference to everyday life in your community - return your postal vote before November 9, 2018.*





## 7. Campaign structure

The LGA has developed an overarching promotional campaign for the 2018 elections.

The elections campaign theme, presented at the LGA's 2017 AGM, also aligns with the sector awareness campaign undertaken in the lead up to the 2018 council elections.

The LGA, in partnership with ECSA will run a mainstream and digital media campaign across the State to promote the different stages of the elections. Potentially including:

- Television
- Radio
- Outdoor (e.g. bus shelter)
- Social media (e.g. paid Facebook and LinkedIn advertising)
- Digital media (e.g. InDaily, Adelaide Now)
- Targeted ethnic media (e.g. ethnic radio and newspapers)

Full details of the LGA and ECSA advertising campaign will be provided to councils in March 2018. (An outline media plan will be provided earlier if possible.)

Councils should run complementary promotion at a local level using the templates and materials developed by the LGA including:

- Banners
- Posters
- Bookmarks
- Flyers
- Web button and banners
- Social media posts
- Ad templates for community magazines and newsletters
- Media templates

Where appropriate, the LGA has used an overarching messaging which remains relevant through the elections cycle in order to reduce the logistical burden on councils. In addition, the LGA has developed a range of communication materials specific to the three stages of the elections – enrol, nominate, vote. Councils can adopt a combination of these materials to suit local requirements.

Artwork for most campaign components will be available to download from the LGA website ([www.lga.sa.gov.au/councilelectionsforstaff](http://www.lga.sa.gov.au/councilelectionsforstaff)) from the end of November 2017, allowing councils to customise and co-brand artwork if desired.

Councils will be provided with an allocation of materials free of charge (FOC), and can elect to order additional quantities, taking advantage of savings available through bulk ordering.

The FOC quantities will be similar to what was available in 2014. Please refer enquires to [marketing@lga.sa.gov.au](mailto:marketing@lga.sa.gov.au) if you would like to know what your council ordered and what the indicative pricing for additional quantities could be for budgeting purposes.

### Example from 2014

Item	Sml councils FOC quantity	Med councils FOC quantity	Large councils FOC quantity	Additional items cost
Banners - 3000mm X 1000mm (with eyelets & ropes)	4	6	8	\$120 ea
Corflutes' 800mmWX1200H (with eyelets)	4	6	8	\$70 ea
A3 Posters	5	15	25	\$3.00 per 100
Bookmarks	400	1000	4000	\$3.00 per 100
Brochure 2-fold DL all phases enrol, nominate & vote	500	1000	4000	\$3.00 per 100

**Important note:** It is a requirement under the Electoral Act that all materials (including online and digital information) contain an 'authorised by' statement. Any material that has been adapted by a council (eg. addition of the council's logo) needs to include the council CEO's name and council address.

Authorised by [CEO's name] [council address].

Example:

*This document is authorised by Matt Pinnegar 148 Frome Street, Adelaide SA 5000.*

## 8. Materials and tactics for council use

2018 council elections collateral will be available from the end of November 2017. Practitioners will be notified via email and directed to a website link to download and order resources.

Stages 1-3		Overarching / generic elections message
<b>Promotional period</b>	1 May to 9 Nov 2018	
<b>Objective</b>	To raise awareness of the council elections and encourage participation	
<b>Primary audience(s)</b>	All South Australians over 18	
<b>Key message(s)</b>	Participating in your council election is one of the most direct ways that you can make a difference to everyday life in your community	
<b>Audience</b>	<b>Materials available for council use</b>	<b>Suggested tactics/mediums for communication</b>
All South Australians over 18	Banners Corflutes Posters Bookmarks Brochure	Brief customer-facing staff (i.e. customer relations, library and community centre) Mount posters, corflutes and posters on existing infrastructure and/or star droppers in high traffic locations. Distribute brochure via rate notices and council buildings (i.e. libraries, community centres, recreations centres, etc.) Distribute bookmarks via library branches



Stage 1		Enrol to vote (roll closes 10 Aug 2018)	
<b>Promotional period</b>	1 May to 30 July 2018 ( <b>Note:</b> some councils will wish to contact previous and prospective enrollees immediately after the rolls are purged 1/1/18)		
<b>Objective</b>	<p>To encourage people who are not on the State electoral roll to enrol to vote in council elections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incl. businesses, landlords and bodies-corporate, and</li> <li>people who have recently moved</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> everyone who is on the State electoral roll (which will have been updated in March for the State election) will automatically receive a voting pack. We are therefore targeting the exceptions.</p>		
<b>Primary audience(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-Australian citizens</li> <li>Local businesses and bodies-corporate</li> <li>Non-resident landlords</li> <li>People who have recently moved house</li> </ul>		
<b>Key message</b>	Voting in council elections is open to broader range of people than State and Federal elections, including non-Australian citizens, non-resident landlords and businesses. Enrol now to have your say.		
<b>Audience</b>	<b>Materials available for council use</b>	<b>Suggested tactics/mediums for communication</b>	
Businesses and individuals previously on supplementary roll	Template letter Enrolment form	Write to businesses and individuals who registered on the 2014 supplementary roll	
All local businesses	Template letter Enrolment form Ad template Digital banner and buttons Social media posts Media release	<p>Write to all local businesses (removing duplicates as per above)</p> <p>Place ad in local press</p> <p>Place ad/article in council newsletter/magazine</p> <p>Include a banner on economic development/business website/web pages</p> <p>Promote via social media channels (e.g. economic development/business accounts on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.)</p> <p>Distribute media release to local media outlets</p> <p>Write to local mainstreet and traders associations</p> <p>Promote via economic development networks/forums/training</p> <p>Promote via local/community radio station</p>	
Non-resident landlords	Template letter Enrolment form	Write to non-resident landlords (where rate notice address if different to property address)	
People who have moved house	Social media posts Media release template	<p>Promote via social media</p> <p>Distribute media release to local media outlets</p>	
Non-Australian citizens	Translated flyers Translated posters Translated ads Languages available:	<p>Display translated posters in community centres, neighbourhood houses and council buildings</p> <p>Distribute flyers and posters to local religious organisations and community groups</p> <p>Distribute flyers via council's volunteer network</p> <p>Promote enrolment via social media channels (in English)</p> <p>Distribute a media release to local cultural groups for publication in newsletters etc.</p> <p>Promote via local/community radio station</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vietnamese</li> <li>Greek</li> <li>Italian</li> <li>Mandarin</li> <li>Cantonese</li> <li>Khmer</li> <li>Serbian</li> <li>Arabic</li> <li>Polish</li> </ul>		

Stage 2		Nominate for council (noms close 18 Sept 2018)	
<b>Promotional period</b>	1 Aug to 18 Sept		
<b>Objective(s)</b>	To encourage people, particularly from under-represented groups, to nominate for election on council		
<b>Primary audience(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women</li> <li>• Young people</li> <li>• People with disability</li> <li>• Aboriginal people</li> <li>• People from culturally diverse backgrounds</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> media and production/content focus under-represented groups with 'bleed' into mainstream. No translations (as good grasp of English required to function effectively on council).</p>		
<b>Key message(s)</b>	Make a difference to everyday life in your community. Nominate for council.		
<b>Audience</b>	<b>Materials available for council use</b>	<b>Suggested tactics/mediums for communication</b>	
Women Young people People with disability Aboriginal people People from culturally diverse backgrounds	The following materials will be available for stage 2, applicable to under-represented (as well as mainstream) audiences: Ad templates DL Flyer Posters Web banners and buttons Email footer Social media posts Media release templates	Display posters and flyers in council buildings Ad in local paper Ad/article in council newsletter/magazine Promote via email signature panel Place banner on council website(s) Promote via social media accounts Distribute media release to local media outlets Promote via local/community radio station Promote at council and community events (e.g. speeches, booth) Prepare information kits for potential nominees (incorporating LGA and ECSA materials as well as council specific info) Hold information sessions	
		Additional channels to consider: Local business networks and community organisations Non-elected members of council subsidiaries, ward forums, etc Volunteer network Schools and childcare centres Shopping centre display/booth Youth councils/committees Youth centres Sports clubs and recreation centres High schools/TAFE/Uni campuses Disability organisations Religious organisations, churches and cultural groups Environmental groups Emergency service organisations Community leaders	



<b>Stage 3</b>		<b>Vote (voting closes 9 Nov 2018)</b>
<b>Promotional period</b>	1 Oct to 9 Nov	
<b>Objective(s)</b>	To encourage people to complete and return their postal vote	
<b>Primary audience(s)</b>	All recipients of a voting pack	
<b>Key message(s)</b>	Make a difference to everyday life in your community - return your postal vote before November 9, 2018	
<b>Audience</b>	<b>Materials available for council use</b>	<b>Suggested tactics/mediums for communication</b>
All South Australians 18+	The following materials will be available for stage 3: Ad templates DL Flyer Posters Web banners and buttons Email footer Social media posts Media release templates	Display posters and flyers in council buildings Insert flyer in rate notices Ad in local paper Ad/article in council newsletter/magazine Promote via email signature panel Place banner on council website(s) Promote via social media accounts Distribute media release to local media outlets Promote via local/community radio station Promote at council and community events (e.g. speeches, booth) Convene 'meet your candidate' events

A template is provided in appendix 5 to assist councils in planning their own communication. Also included at appendix 6 is the quick reference timetable previously provided to councils to help guide timings.



## 9. Council websites

The LGA has developed a simple information web page for the 2018 elections ([www.lga.sa.gov.au/councilelections](http://www.lga.sa.gov.au/councilelections)).

As the elections draw nearer this page will evolve into a comprehensive mini-site providing:

- General information about the elections
- Information for nominees (including resources and information session dates)
- Information for voters (including enrolling to vote, how to vote, and a link to the candidate's website)
- Information and resources for councils (which will be password protected)

Councils can choose to duplicate and adapt this information to the local context, or provide a simple, web page with some localised content, linking to the LGA mini-site for the bulk of standard information.

Localised content may include:

- Council and ward maps
- How nominees can obtain a copy of the council supplementary roll and any associated fees
- Details of local information sessions for nominees
- Details of any 'meet the candidates' events that your council is holding
- Dates of upcoming council meetings that the public can attend
- Links to council agendas and minutes
- Links to relevant policies and procedures
- Who to contact at your council for more information

Reminder – ensure that your web page(s) includes an 'authorised by' statement as required under the Elections Act.

## 10. Social media guidelines

In 2014, the LGA obtained legal advice from Wallmans Lawyers on the use of social media by councils in the lead up to the elections. A full version of the advice is included at appendix 7, including examples of wording for statements and disclaimers that can be used to mitigate risk during the election period.

The key points to note are:

- All electoral material must contain the name and address of the person who authorised its publication.
- The person authorising material is responsible in law for any inaccurate or misleading statements.
- Councils must act promptly to remove any non-compliant third party posts from its website, Facebook page and/or other online accounts.
- Councils should ensure that Twitter profiles include an 'authorised by' statement.
- During the elections period, Twitter feeds on council websites should be limited to tweets from the council or retweets by the council.
- Councils should consider the use of disclaimers on all online presences to the effect that council does not take responsibility for the posts of others and cannot vouch for the accuracy of material posted by third parties. The disclaimer could remind third parties of their responsibility to ensure that they comply with legal requirements including those under the Elections Act.

## Appendix 1

# 2018 local government elections timetable

## 2018 Local Government Periodic Elections

The key dates and activities of significance include:

Roll Close - s15(7)(a)	Friday 10 August 2018
Last date for EC to supply HA roll data to CEOs - s15(10)	Friday 17 August 2018
Public notice inviting nominations - s18	By Thursday 30 August 2018
<b>Nominations open - s19(4)</b>	<b>Tuesday 4 September 2018</b>
Last date for voters rolls to be brought up to date - s15(13)	Friday 7 September 2018
<b>Nominations close - s23(a)</b>	<b>12 noon Tuesday 18 September 2018</b>
Draw for position of candidate names on the ballot paper - s29(3)	4pm Tuesday 18 September 2018
Last date for public notice of nominations received and notice in writing to candidates - s26(1)	No later than Thursday 4 October 2018
Mail out of voting material to electors - s39(1)	Monday 22 to Friday 26 October 2018
Last day for postal issue/reissue of voting material - s39(4)(a) & s43(4)(a)	5pm Wednesday 7 November 2018
Last day for personal issue/reissue of voting material - s39(4)(b) & s43(4)(b)	5pm Friday 9 November 2018
<b>Close of voting - s5</b>	<b>5pm Friday 9 November 2018</b>
Conclusion of uncontested periodic elections - s4(2)(a)(i) [LG Act]	Friday 9 November 2018
<b>Scrutiny and count - s47(1)(b)</b>	<b>9am Saturday 10 November 2018</b>
Provisional declaration - s48(1)(i)	Manual counts - immediately after the completion of each election count Computer counts - immediately after the count has been completed
Request for a recount - s49	Within 72 hours of the provisional declaration
Conclusion of contested elections - s4(2)(a)(ii) [LG Act]	Immediately after period for requesting a recount has expired, or if a recount is conducted, immediately after the recount
Public notice of election result - s50(3)(b)	No later than Thursday 6 December 2018
Last date for RO to make and certify a return - s51(1)	Within one month after the conclusion of an election
Retention of voting material - s56(1)	Until the RO is satisfied the election cannot be questioned





## Appendix 2

# Background and context

### Voting

Council elections are conducted every four years with voluntary secret postal voting. Historically average turnout for council elections sat below 15% before full postal voting was introduced in 1997 and became mandatory in 2000.

Unlike the State Government and Federal elections, it is not compulsory to vote in local council elections.

At the last election in 2014 voter participation in SA was 32%, this has been reasonably consistent over the past three elections, but still below the record of 40% set in 2000 when a series of changes applied following 1997 council mergers.

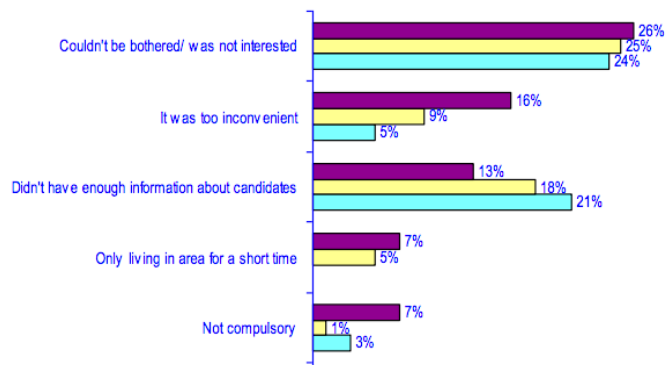
Voter participation in regional areas is consistently higher than in metro areas (2014 - 28% metro, 43% regional).

Another important difference from State and Federal elections is that all voting is done by post.

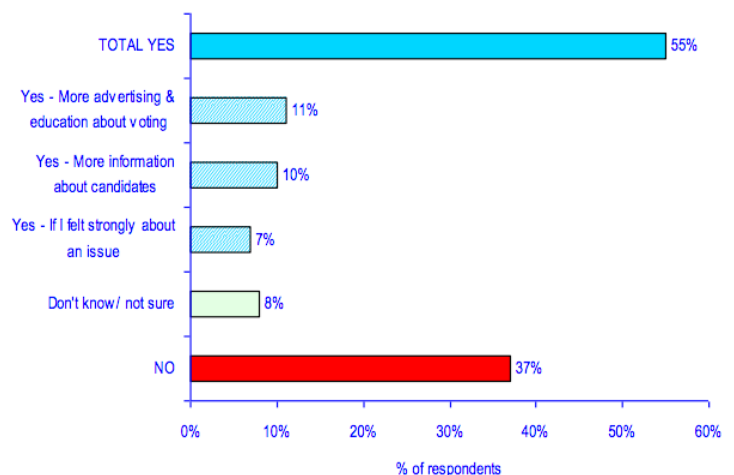
Enrolled voters receive a voting package through the mail and return their votes in a reply paid envelope.

Research following the 2010 council elections provides the following reasons for not voting.

**7. What were the main reasons that you decided not to vote in the recent Council elections? BASE: Did not vote TOP RESPONSES**



**9. Is there anything that would encourage you to vote in Council elections in the future? BASE: Did not vote (n=250) TOP RESPONSES**



Clearly, apathy/lack of understanding about local government/councils is the major reason not to vote.

The same group were also asked what might encourage them to vote.

### Nomination

The ratio of candidates to available positions has been slowly but steadily increasing over the past 20 years, however, it remains below an average of 2 candidates per position.





The representation of women candidates has also steadily increased from 16% in 1987 to approximately to 29% in 2014. However, nominations are still dominated by older white males, with 76% of candidates aged over 50 in 2014.

While retirees make up 32% of candidates, the employed cohort is dominated by people in professional/technical roles (28%) and managerial/executive positions (24%).

84% of candidates are Australian born.

From 2006 – 2014 there has been an increase in education levels achieved by candidates, particularly in younger nominees.

In 2014, 54% of candidates were first time contesters. The majority of candidates have broad interests within their communities, although the level of local involvement has diminished slightly over the last decade.

When asked what first made them interested in standing, 47% of candidates stated that ‘a specific issue’ was their impetus. The range of issues was broad, however the highest response rates were ‘to make council put the community first’, and ‘council is performing badly’. (Interestingly ‘rates too high’ was named by only 10 respondents.)

### **Electoral Roll**

People who are on the State electoral roll will automatically receive a Council voting pack.

However, eligibility to vote in council elections is broader than in State and federal elections, so in addition we must promote entitlement to people over the age of 18 who are:

- Residents (for at least one month)
- Sole owners/occupiers of a rateable property
- Not Australian citizens but are residents (for at least one month)
- Landlords of rateable properties
- Business owner (individual or group) or occupier of rateable property

While there is no research specific to the electoral roll, the challenge is also likely to be apathy.

However, it is important that every effort and opportunity is provided to community members for them to be on the roll.

### Appendix 3

## Eligibility to vote in council elections

Form 1 - Eligibility for Natural Person: Resident, Sole Owner or Sole Occupier (non-residential tenant) who is of the age of 18 or over and is a:		
<p><b>Resident</b></p> <p>A resident is a person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lives in the Council area; and</li> <li>has lived in the property for at least one month; and</li> <li>is not on the State Electoral Roll (i.e. House of Assembly Roll).</li> </ul> <p>Or</p>	<p><b>Sole Owner</b></p> <p>A sole owner is a person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>owns property in the Council area; and</li> <li>is the only owner of the relevant property.</li> </ul> <p>or</p>	<p><b>Sole Occupier</b></p> <p>A sole occupier is a person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>occupies property in the Council area as a tenant; and</li> <li>does not live in that property (a non- resident occupier/operates a business).</li> </ul>

Form 2 - Eligibility by a Business or Organisation (i.e. a body corporate) which is either:	
<p><b>A Sole Owner</b></p> <p>A body corporate sole owner is an individual business or organisation that owns any type of rateable property in the Council area.</p> <p>or</p>	<p><b>A Sole Occupier</b></p> <p>A body corporate sole occupier is an individual business or organisation that occupies any type of rateable property in the Council area as a tenant.</p>

Form 3 – Eligibility by a Group Owners or Group Occupiers	
<p><b>Group Owner</b></p> <p>When a rateable property is owned by more than one owner the right to vote belongs to the group of owners (group owner) not to each member of the group.</p> <p>The individual members who make up the group owner can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>businesses or organisations (bodies corporate); or</li> <li>individual people (natural persons); or</li> <li>a combination of businesses, organisations and people (bodies corporate and natural persons).</li> </ul> <p>Or</p>	<p><b>Group Occupier</b></p> <p>When a rateable property is occupied by more than one occupier/tenant the right to vote belongs to the group of occupiers/tenants (group occupier) and not to each member of the group.</p> <p>The individual members who make up the group occupier can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>businesses or organisations (bodies corporate); or</li> <li>individual people (natural persons); or</li> <li>a combination of businesses, organisations and people (bodies corporate and natural persons).</li> </ul>



## Appendix 4

### Eligibility to stand as a candidate in council elections

A person must be on the council voters roll to be eligible to stand as a candidate in local government elections. Anyone can stand for election as a council member, either mayor or councillor, if they are:

- a) an Australian citizen; or have been a member of a council between 5 May 1997 and 1 January 2000; and are
- b) an elector for the area; or the nominee for a body corporate or a group which has its name on the voters roll for the area.

A person will be ineligible if they:

- are a State or Commonwealth parliamentarian;
- are an undischarged bankrupt;
- are disqualified from holding office by a court order;
- are an employee of the council for which you are considering nominating;
- are a candidate for office as a council member in another council area; or
- have been sentenced to imprisonment and are, or could become, liable to serve the sentence or the remainder of the sentence.

## Appendix 5

### Communication action planning template

General awareness activities				
<b>Promotional period</b>	1 May – 9 Nov 2018			
<b>Objective</b>	To raise awareness of the council elections and encourage participation			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Status</b>
E.g. Staff briefing	Develop internal briefing document Distribute to managers & team leaders Attend staff meetings	Who?	By what date?	
Council website				
Outdoor signage in council area				
Rate notice inserts				
Promotion in council buildings				

Stage 1	Enrol to vote (roll closes 10 Aug 2018)			
<b>Promotional period</b>	1 May - 30 July 2018 ( <b>Note:</b> some councils may wish to contact previous and prospective enrollees immediately after the roll is purged 1/1/18)			
<b>Objective</b>	To encourage people who are not on the State electoral roll to enrol to vote in council elections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Incl. businesses, landlords and bodies-corporate, and</li> <li>○ people who have recently moved</li> </ul>			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Status</b>



<b>Stage 2</b>		<b>Nominate for council (noms close 18 Sept 2018)</b>		
<b>Promotional period</b>	1 Aug to 18 Sept			
<b>Objective(s)</b>	To encourage people, particularly from under-represented groups, to nominate for election on council			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Status</b>

<b>Stage 3</b>		<b>Vote (voting closes 9 Nov 2018)</b>		
<b>Promotional period</b>	18 Sept to 9 Nov			
<b>Objective(s)</b>	To encourage people to complete and return their postal vote			
<b>Task</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Status</b>

## Appendix 6

### Quick reference timetable

2018 council elections quick reference timetable				
Month	Key dates	Council actions	LGA actions	Resources available
<b>July</b>			Elections workshop	
<b>Aug</b>				
<b>Sep</b>		Publish elections web page linking/duplicating LGA page	Publish elections web page for general public Provide timetable to councils	Public elections web page and timetable
<b>Oct</b>		Form elections working group and assign roles and responsibilities		
<b>Nov</b>	LGA AGM 15&16/11		Launch promotion and training programs at AGM Set up elections resources web page for councils	Model elections communications plan Pre-election training program Promotional concepts/artwork
<b>Dec</b>		Develop council communications plan Brief senior leadership /council		PowerPoint presentation outlining LGA elections program
<b>Jan '18</b>	<i>[est. legislative changes enacted]</i>	Purge supplementary roll 1/1. Prepare mailing list of previous and prospective enrollees		Voters' roll practice manual, template letters and forms
<b>Feb</b>		Schedule candidate workshops		
<b>Mar</b>	<i>[State election]</i>	Publish additional, localised web pages	Early induction planning training (7/3)	
<b>Apr</b>				Model caretaker policy and guidelines
<b>May</b>		Promote enrolment (1/5-10/8)	Voters' roll and caretaker training for council staff (11/5)	Template letters, forms and promotional materials
<b>Jun</b>				Post-election training program
<b>Jul</b>		Promote nominations (1/8 – 18/9)	Deliver candidate workshops (28+31/7)	Promotional materials
<b>Aug</b>	Roll close 10/8	Deliver candidate workshops		Promotional materials + 'So you want to be on council' inc. training pack & ECSA noms kit
<b>Sep</b>	Noms open 4/9 Noms close 18/9	Enter caretaker mode (as per individual council's policy)	Candidate website live	
<b>Oct</b>	Mail out voting materials 22-26/10	Promote voting (18/9 – 9/11)		Promotional materials
<b>Nov</b>	Vote close 9/11	Induct new members (post-election)	Elected member standards mandatory training	Model induction policy and guide Council members guide Committee members guide Meeting procedures handbook CEO checklist for first meeting



## Appendix 7

### Legal advice – council use of social media

In 2014 the LGA sought legal advice from Wallmans Lawyers on a number of questions concerning the use of social media by Councils in the lead up to the local government elections. A summary of the advice is provided below.

The advice points out that the *Local Government Elections Act 1999*, ('Elections Act') was written before the advent of social media - making some interpretation challenging.

#### Legal Requirements

Section 27 of the Elections Act requires that a person must not publish or cause to be published electoral material unless the publication contains the name and address of the person who authorises the publication of the material. A maximum pecuniary penalty of \$2,500 is prescribed for a breach of this provision.

Section 28 indicates that a person who authorised, caused or permitted the publication of electoral material which contains a statement purporting to be a statement of fact and the statement is inaccurate and misleading to a material extent, is guilty of an offence with a maximum penalty of \$5,000.

Electoral material is defined in the Elections Act as '*an advertisement, notice, statement or representation calculated to affect the result of an election or poll*'.

Publication under sections 27 and 28 of the Elections Act can occur by posting on a website, posting to a Facebook site, tweeting or posting a Twitter feed on a website or by posting a comment/image/video on another social media site (YouTube/Pinterest etc).

#### Facebook –third party posts

A Council is likely to be a publisher of electoral material appearing on its website or its Facebook page where the material originated from a third party where the Council has knowledge of the material and has the ability to promptly remove the material from the website or Facebook page. To act promptly with respect to removal of non-compliant electoral material on a Council's website or social media page is to act without unreasonable delay. Whether or not a Council has acted promptly will be dependent on the circumstances including the resources of the particular Council.

#### Twitter – use of hashtags

There is ambiguity as to how section 27 of the Elections Act would be interpreted as applying to the publishing of electoral material by tweeting. This ambiguity arises from the functional limits of Twitter, particularly the character limit and the inability to control the use of hashtags by third parties.

In these circumstances, we consider it unlikely that the Council would be penalised for breaching sections 27 and 28 on the basis of a third party tweet using a Council originated hashtag. However, this remains an area of uncertainty. It is not likely that a breach of these sections would be involved in a third party mentioning a Council by placing the Council's twitter "handle" within a tweet (an @mention).

A Council should ensure that its twitter biography contains an "Authorised by" statement.



### **Tweeter - feed on Council website**

Even though a Council cannot remove tweets that do not comply with the Elections Act from a Twitter feed, the Council does control whether or not a Twitter feed appears on its website and what categories of tweets display. At least for the period of the elections, if not at all times, we would suggest that only tweets from the Council, or retweeted by the Council should be displayed by Council on a website.

If this is not done, and retweets carefully considered, there is some risk, therefore, that a Council could be found to have published tweets that appear on a Twitter feed incorporated on its web page.

### **Risk mitigation strategies**

There are a number of strategies that Councils can consider to reduce any risk arising from third party posts to social media utilised by a Council.

A Council could incorporate disclaimers on its website and social media pages to the effect that the Council does not take responsibility for the posts of others and cannot vouch for the accuracy of material posted by third parties. The disclaimer could also remind third parties of the responsibility of each user to ensure that they comply with the legal requirements, including those under the Elections Act.

Councils could notify users of their Facebook pages that there are obligations under the Elections Act that they must comply with when posting electoral material online, namely that they:

- (a) must include the name and address of the person who authorises the publication of the electoral material (section 27); and
- (b) must not make misleading or inaccurate statements of fact (section 28).

Given that Councils cannot control how others use hashtags on Twitter, they could use Council originated hashtags to remind the public of the requirements under the Elections Act - such as #SACouncilElections, which is already in use.

Councils should monitor third party posts on Facebook and its website where these are permitted and remove posts which the Council is aware do not comply with section 27 or section 28.

Councils should investigate whether they can disable third parties from tagging the Council's Facebook page in posts that they make their own pages. This would remove the burden from Council staff from manually and reactively removing such tags. Alternatively, Councils could investigate whether or not they can activate an approval process for each instance where their page is tagged in a post by third party before the tag can be finalised.

Councils can avoid the risk of liability under sections 27 or 28 for publishing noncompliant electoral material by not incorporating Twitter feeds into their web page or by restricting such feeds to include only Council originated tweets and retweets.

A Council can set up its Twitter biography to meet the requirements of section 27 by specifying that it is the authorised Twitter account of the particular Council accompanied by the Council's address. While not literally compliant with the requirements of section 27, the Council would be taking reasonable steps to satisfy the intent of these requirements.



## Examples of wording/statements to assist Councils

The information below contains examples of wording to assist Council with its social media responsibilities. It is not legal advice and Council should obtain independent advice for its individual circumstances.

### “Authorised by” wording

A clear authorisation statement will carry the words “Authorised by,” a person's name and an address (which can be a post office box unlike a letter to the editor).

An example for the LGA would be: “Authorised by Matt Pinnegar, 148 Frome Street, Adelaide.” If a twitter biography separately contains the street address then the biography could simply carry the words “Authorised by First name, Surname.”

The same statement should be included in any other Council social media live during the election period.

### Disclaimer/statement on third party postings - for website or social media sites

Please note that where this site, or social media linked from it, incorporates statements made by third parties, the Council has not assessed their accuracy, does not take responsibility for them and cannot attest to the accuracy of any statement.

Users publishing electoral material should consider the requirements of the Local Government (Elections) Act particularly Sections 27 & 28.

### **Warning regarding removal of non-compliant posts**

Please note that third party electoral material posted on this website may be removed as soon as it is identified and we are able to remove it.

### **Promote requirements of the Local Government (Elections) Act**

It has been suggested that Social media can be used to actively promote to the community the requirements of the Local Government (Elections) Act during the period leading to the election.

This could be in the form of questions related to Sections 27 or 28 of the Act, such as:

*Publishing #CouncilElection material online? Are you authorising under S27 of LG Elections Act? Fine ≤ \$2.5K*

or:

*Truth in elections? S28 of LG Elections Act has \$5k penalty for inaccurate & misleading presentation of a fact.*

A link to the Act could also be included:

[http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/Local%20Government%20\(Elections\)%20Act%201999.aspx](http://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/Local%20Government%20(Elections)%20Act%201999.aspx)