“TAKING UP THE CHALLENGE”

An Information Kit for women interested in standing as a candidate in Council elections in South Australia

March 2007
# CONTENTS

Welcome! ☺  
1. WHY IS SUPPORT NEEDED TO GET WOMEN ON COUNCILS? 3  
2. YOU COULD DO IT! TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE 5  
3. SO WHAT’S LOCAL GOVERNMENT ALL ABOUT? 6  
   3.1 Who makes up a Council, and how does it work? 6  
   3.2 What does a Council Member do? 7  
   3.3 Allowances and Reimbursement of expenses 7  
   3.4 Time, workload, and family commitments 8  
4. WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW – Assess your knowledge and skills 9  
5. THE FRAMEWORK FOR COUNCIL ELECTIONS 11  
   5.1 Who can nominate as a candidate? 11  
   5.2 How do I nominate and what are the rules for candidates? 11  
   5.3 What about the Candidate Profile 12  
   5.4 How are votes counted? 12  
   5.5 Other things you will need to know 13  
6. STARTING OUT ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL 14  
   6.1 Campaign Checklist 15  
   6.2 Communicating your message 16  
   6.3 But what if I am not elected? 18  
   6.4 Evaluating your campaign 19  
7. MANAGING YOUR TIME AND BALANCING COMMITMENTS 20  
8. CONGRATULATIONS! YOU’VE BEEN ELECTED 21  
   8.1 Orientation to Council 21  
   8.2 Taking your place on Council 22  
   8.3 On-going Training and Development 22  
9. MAINTAINING THE MOMENTUM 23  
   9.1 Meeting community expectations 23  
   9.2 Working relationships 24  
   9.3 Relationships in the Council Chamber 24  
   9.4 Protecting your health and well being 25  
   9.5 Maintaining your support base 26  
   9.6 Encouraging other women 27  
10. USEFUL RESOURCES AND CONTACTS 28  
11. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS 30  
    Attachment 2: Self Assessment Checklist 31  
    Attachment 3: Campaign Tasks and Timelines – Checklist 34  
    Attachment 4: Mentors on the Campaign Trail 37  
    Attachment 5: The Media and Public Speaking 38  

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Australian Local Government Women’s Association South Australian Branch Inc
Welcome!

Taking up the Challenge is designed to encourage women to consider standing for Local Government elections in South Australia. It provides information about what Councils do, what being an effective Council Member involves, some practical hints for campaigning, and information about the support available to Council Members. Exploring the web page links referred to throughout the text will provide readers with a wider range of further resources and ideas, which expand on those offered in this publication.

Before embarking on the journey through Taking up the Challenge, please note the following.

- Every Council is different in its geographic size, population base and Council membership.
- Every candidate is different, and so is every election campaign.
- What has worked for other women may or may not work for you.
- There are many ways of campaigning and many ways of being an effective Council Member.
- There are no magic wands! Suggestions and ideas are offered to build upon, and tailor to, individual circumstances.

Taking up the Challenge - A work in progress

The development of Taking up the Challenge grew out of a concern about research findings which show that not only are women under-represented in Local Government but the socio-economic and demographic profile of elected women is limited.¹

As a result, associations, such as the Women’s Participation in Local Government Coalition and the national Australian Local Government Women’s Association were established. The Australian Local Government Women’s Association South Australian Branch Inc, referred to as ALGWA SA re-formed in 2005 as a non-profit non-party political and non-sectarian organisation. ALGWA SA aims, consistent with those of the national association, are:

- assist in promoting knowledge of the role and function of Local Government;
- promote, support and encourage women to participate and be represented in Local Government;
- promote, support and encourage women to make Local Government a career of choice; and
- promote and advocate for the common interests of women who are engaged in, or interested in, Local Government.

ALGWA SA secured a grant from the South Australian Local Government Research and Development Scheme (LGR&DS) to develop and produce this Information Kit to encourage women’s participation in Local Government.

In early 2006, parallel to the development of Taking up the Challenge, ALGWA SA contributed to a complementary Information Kit titled Women in Local Government Works in South Australia. This was in partnership with the South Australian Government (through the Office for Women and the Office for State/Local Government Relations) and the Local

¹ Research included: State Electoral Office Reports, and National Framework for Women in Local Government, 2001
TAKING UP THE CHALLENGE – WOMEN CANDIDATES IN COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN SA

Government Association of South Australia (the LGA). These initiatives were timed to encourage increased awareness among women in Local Government in the lead up to the November 2006 Council elections, to encourage women to consider standing as candidates and to promote the newly established ALGWA SA as a support network.

Taking up the Challenge – Launched in April 2007

Designed to be an evolving document, Taking up the Challenge was released by ALWGA SA as a formative resource, just prior to the opening of nominations for the November 2006 Council elections on 5th September 2006. Nominations closed on the 19th September 2006. The availability of the document was widely advertised through women’s information networks, Councils, and Information Sessions for potential candidates convened by the LGA and Councils throughout South Australia.

Post the November 2006 Local Government elections, Taking up the Challenge was further developed to include testimonials, examples, and case studies of women candidates – whether successful or unsuccessful in the elections. The final document was launched on April 13th 2007 at an ALGWA SA event.

Acknowledgements

Significant contributions have been made by many people during the development of this resource, including successful and unsuccessful women candidates. In particular the following contributions have been greatly appreciated and are acknowledged.

- Kristina Barnett, President of ALGWA SA
- Jane Hyatt, until December 2006, Marketing and Communications Officer, LGA
- Faye Barrett, Senior Policy Officer, Office of State/Local Government Relations
- Julie Kerr, Executive Director, Local Government Managers Australia (SA)
- Margaret Heylen, Project Consultant to ALGWA SA

ALGWA SA hopes that Taking up the Challenge will be a valuable resource for women who are ready to take up the challenge of becoming a Council Member in South Australia.

Disclaimer

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this document is free from error and/or omissions. No responsibility can be accepted by ALGWA SA, its members, or the Project Consultant involved in the preparation of the document for any claim which may arise from a person acting on information contained therein.

2 The Information Kit was adapted from the third edition of A Gender Agenda: A kit for women who want to stand for local government and for those who want to assist others to stand published by the Victorian Local Governance Association and Municipal Association of Victoria 2005.

The adaptation was with permission of the Victorian Women’s Participation in Local Government Coalition (WPILGC) which is to be thanked for use of intellectual property created by Victorian women and the organisations making up the Coalition: Australian Local Government Women’s Association Vic (ALGWA), Local Government Professionals (LGPro), Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women’s Coalition (VIRWC), Victorian Women’s Trust (VWT), Women’s Electoral Lobby Victoria (WEL), Women’s Planning Network (WPN), YWCA Victoria. The Coalition’s 2005 project was made possible by a partnership grant from the Victorian State Government.
1. WHY IS SUPPORT NEEDED TO GET WOMEN ON COUNCILS?

It is generally understood that Council services and programs have a direct impact on the
day to day life of people who live and work in, or visit the Council area. It is therefore
important that Council decision making adequately reflects the diverse interests of
communities. Yet although women comprise half the population, they are under
represented in Local Government, as well as in the State and Federal Parliaments.

Some South Australian facts

- In 1973, women constituted less than 3 percent of the total elected membership of Councils. By
  1997 this had grown to 25%. In 2004, this growth curve had plateaued.3

- As a result of the 2006 Council elections, 26.6% (192) of all Council members were women.
  Women comprise 30.6% of Council Members (74) in the metropolitan Councils, compared with
  24.5% (118) in the country Councils.4

- In general, and as with men on Councils, women of Anglo-Celtic background who are engaged
  in paid employment and are tertiary educated are over-represented amongst the women who
  are Council Members. Young women, Indigenous women, and women from culturally and
  linguistically diverse backgrounds are under-represented in proportion to their numbers in the
  community.

  "My Council district has the oldest demographic, and the majority of the population are older
  women, mainly widows. The gender breakdown across all ages is in the vicinity of 60/40
  women/men, so I think we deserve to reflect that in our local government Council."

Despite social and legislative changes enabling women to participate more fully in the
economic and political life of communities, the gender imbalance remains.

Some are of the view that this is due to women's primary care giver role and family
responsibilities. Others say it is due to a historically evolved male dominated culture that
has not encouraged women's participation, or supported the juggling of family
responsibilities with Council commitments.

"The reasons why there are fewer women than men in Local Government are complex. Generally
in the past, Local Government attracted people, usually males, with their own businesses or farms,
who were free to make their own decisions about the time and financial resources they could
devote to Council. Women were less likely to be in a position of financial independence and were
more likely to have family responsibilities that precluded attendance at meetings and functions
often held during the day.5"

The provision of Council Member allowances and reimbursement of out of pocket
expenses, more flexible arrangements for meeting times, and childcare arrangements
have gone some way to encourage and make way for the increased involvement of
women on Councils.

However, indications are that a more concerted effort is needed for women to take up the
challenge of becoming a Council Member in numbers significant enough to make a

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3 D Jaensch, Council Members Survey, commissioned by LGA November 2004
4 State Electoral Office, Report for the SA Local Government Elections November 2006
5 Quote from Women Into Local Government, Women Tasmania, May 2002 (Wolstenholme, R) p5.
substantive difference in Local Government in South Australia, and elsewhere. As Council Members, women have a vital role to play in influencing the decisions that Councils make about strategic and financial priorities, and in ensuring Council resources are used fairly for the benefit of the whole community.

What can women bring to Councils?

Miriam is of the view that Local Government needs women with a passion for achieving positive community outcomes, who are determined to contribute within a politically motivated environment.

Women for centuries have been the strength of communities. Their multitask orientation, perceptiveness, ability to see solutions and get the job done, team spirit and ability to keep going when it gets tough is what Councils need.

Val says that increasing voter cynicism about politicians can be interpreted as a call for someone different to those with whom we have become all too familiar. This applies to Local Government elected representatives as well. Women candidates have the potential to fulfill the call for more open, fairer, and more representative government.

Women live the lives of more than half the population and this experience brings an important dimension to decision making. Women also tend to approach a problem from a different aspect than their male counterparts and in areas such as health, childcare, and social issues women’s experience and expertise are of great value.
2. YOU COULD DO IT! TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE

Women who are Council Members say the main reason they stood for election was to make a difference in their local community. They say their greatest satisfaction comes from influencing decisions that address local issues and individual problems that impact on people's quality of life. So, would you like to:

• influence local issues;
• contribute to policy and programs that impact on the local community;
• know what's going on in the local community;
• meet people from other places and walks of life;
• take on an interesting and diverse workload; and
• increase your knowledge and develop new skills?

Then consider running for Council.

Felicity gets motivated to take up the challenge

I initially stood for election because I was encouraged by another Elected Member to do so. I met the Ward Councillor when the local Neighbourhood Watch Group began to lobby for improvements in the reserve across the road from our home.

My husband and I shared the task of contacting the Ward Councillor and Aldermen on a regular basis and through this we became quite familiar and connected with Council processes – and good at organizing petitions! It took us several budget cycles but eventually the improvements in the reserve which were well overdue were underway. The process definitely built capacity within the local community, as together we had something to work towards. We all walk our dogs in the reserve and the playground is a real asset to the hall nearby. The dusty car park is now sealed and there are no more ‘donuts’ to contend with on a hot summer night.

Like most people, it was a local issue that brought me on to Council.

While you contemplate the question “to stand or not to stand” you might want to also consider the following questions.\(^6\)

• Will your family support you and manage the changes to family life?
• What effect would becoming a Councillor have on your career and finances?
• How good are your negotiation skills and how well do you manage conflict?
• Are you prepared for a steep learning curve?
• Are you prepared for a rich and rewarding experience?

And remember, if you know a woman who you think would make a good Council Member, encourage her to think about standing as a candidate too as women Council Members often speak of the importance of someone “extending the hand of invitation”.

3. SO WHAT'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT ALL ABOUT?

There are three types of Government in Australia – Local, State and Commonwealth Governments. Local Government Councils, often referred to as being at the “grass roots”, are well placed to know about the needs and priorities in the local community and to influence the local environment and quality of life.

There are 68 Councils in South Australia, each varying in geographic size and location (metropolitan or country areas), population, and community facilities. However, no matter what size or where a Council is, it must:

- represent everyone in the community, and prepare strategic and financial plans for the Council area;
- provide services for the well-being of people who live, work, and do business in the area and strike a balance between social, environmental and economic aspects; and
- represent local views, needs and priorities to other spheres of Government.

The Local Government Act 1999 and Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 (SA) set out the legislative frameworks within which Local Government operates. Councils also deal with other laws, for example, laws regulating building and development, keeping pets and animals, parking and traffic, and public health and safety.

Councils revenue is derived primarily from rates, although they also receive some funding through State and Commonwealth grant programs. Each Council decides what services it will provide and a Council’s community consultation processes helps Councillors weigh up and make these decisions. Services vary from one area to another depending upon the geographic size of the Council area, the population base, the location and physical environment, what the priority needs of the local community are, and the resources and funding available. All Councils provide essential community services and infrastructure, and advocate for local needs through various strategic planning processes.

For more information about Local Government and Councils in SA, and the services provided by Councils, visit the LGA website: www.lga.sa.gov.au or visit your local Council office or website.

3.1 Who makes up a Council, and how does it work?

Council Members are elected every four years by voluntary postal voting. Sometimes the Council area is divided into sections called Wards, in which case constituents vote for representatives for the Wards rather than the Council area as a whole. Rules for the elections are set out in the Local Government (Elections) Act 1999.

The head of the elected Council is either the Mayor, if elected “at large” by all voters in the area, or Chairperson if chosen by Councillors after the election.

Here is how a Council works.

- Council Members are responsible for deciding on the plans and policies and what services Council will provide in the local community at Council meetings.
- The Chief Executive Officer (or similar title) is responsible for all staffing issues, and ensuring that Council policies and decisions are implemented.
- Councils may form committees of their Council Members and Council staff to deal with some tasks, such as work related to development, finance, recreation and so on.
• Councils can also invite members of the community to be involved in consultation forums and share their knowledge.

Anyone interested in standing as a candidate in Council elections is encouraged to go along to Council meetings to listen to what is discussed, to observe Council meeting procedures and how debate occurs, and how decisions are made.

3.2 What does a Council Member do?

Council Members play a very important community leadership role. Here are some of the activities they get involved in.

• Developing Council strategic plans, policies for the local area, financial plans and budgets
• Ensuring Council resources are used fairly for the benefit of everyone in the community
• Representing the interests of residents and ratepayers, provide community leadership and guidance, and facilitate communication between the community and the Council
• Representing local needs and priorities at Council meetings and at other regional, State and Commonwealth Government forums.

Fliss takes the next step
I have always been interested in Local Government and kept in touch with discussions, debates, and local events. I really felt that I had something to offer; an honours degree in politics, 25 years volunteer involvement with local community organisations, have lived in the area for most of my life (apart from short times abroad and/or interstate) reared my children as a single parent, served on public school councils and committees, and managed a small business for over 12 years. I also have had political advocacy and public speaking experience and governance training. I thought I had earned my next step.

3.3 Allowances and Reimbursement of Expenses

Council Members are not paid wages but they are entitled to receive an annual allowance. The Council Member allowances are set down in the Local Government (Members’ Allowances and Benefits) Regulations 1999. The Regulations require each Council to determine its own allowances from within a single prescribed range for councillor, deputy principal and principal member.

Regulations were gazetted on 31 August 2006 following a review of Council Member allowances which set prescribed ranges (other than City of Adelaide) as follows.

• Councillors within the range of $1,820 - $15,000 maximum.
• For a principal member of Council the prescribed allowance is 4-times that of a Councillor, within the range of $7280 - $60,000 maximum
• For a deputy mayor, deputy chairperson or a presiding member the prescribed allowance is 1.25 times that of a Councillor, within the range of $2275 - $18,750.

A Council Member may however, choose not to receive an allowance or to receive an amount that is less than the total entitlement. Other information provided by the LGA as at August 2006 follows.
• **Re Taxation Implications.** Intending candidates for the Council elections should be aware that this is a complex area of the law which is best handled between them and their personal taxation adviser. The Council Member allowance is considered assessable income which must be declared to the Australian Taxation Office in the income tax return. Whilst Council Members may decline to accept payment of an allowance in whole or in part, they cannot direct the Council to make payment of their allowance (in whole or in part) to any third party.

• **Re Implications for Centrelink or other benefits.** Intending candidates who are receiving Centrelink payments or other benefits may wish to discuss this matter with Centrelink to determine what effect, if any, receiving an allowance may have on their entitlements. In general, the LGA understands the allowance is regarded as income which is to be notified to Centrelink and this may result in a reduction of other benefits.

In addition to an allowance, Council Members are entitled to receive reimbursement for some expenses incurred in the course of their duties as a Council Member, including travel and child or dependent care required to enable attendance at Council or committee meetings. Some Councils may also endorse reimbursement of other expenses such as telephone and facsimile costs incurred in the course of Council duties.

### 3.4 Time, workload, and family commitments

Taking on a community leadership role also means taking on extra work. There is more to it than attending a regular fortnightly or monthly Council meeting. There are agendas and reports to read, other meetings to attend, and community events to go to. The work of a Council Member also involves getting out and about in the community and talking to people about their views and how they want to be represented. Time spent on Council business will vary from Council Member to Council Member – possibly from 20 hours a month to 70 hours a month – and each individual will choose their level of commitment and should be realistic about what they can do.

You will need your family’s support and assistance if you decide to take up the challenge. For other family members this may mean sharing household duties such as doing the shopping and preparing meals, keeping the house running, answering the telephone, and acting as a sounding board on matters not deemed confidential (See 7. MANAGING YOUR TIME AND BALANCING COMMITMENTS). Talk to one of the Council Members in your area to find out more about what is required.

**Faye’s approach to balancing work and family life**

*I was in paid full time work when I was elected. I arranged to reduce my time at paid work to four days a week. I spent each Tuesday at Council catching up on issues and meeting with Council officers, community groups, residents and ratepayers. I start at 8.00 am and arrived home late, but also fitted in seeing my parents and catching up with my husband and sons for a bite to eat in between scheduled meetings. Of course there was other Council business Faye was involved in outside of this, but the arrangement helped keep her on top of the work.*

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For more information about what is involved being a Councillor, check out *So you want to be on Council* via the LGA website: [www.lga.sa.gov.au/goto/elections](http://www.lga.sa.gov.au/goto/elections). A hard copy of this publication will be included in the State Electoral Office Nomination Kit (see 10. USEFUL RESOURCES AND CONTACTS).
4. WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

If you are thinking about taking on the role of Council Member, it is suggested that you assess the skills you already have and the ones that you might need to develop in order to be an effective Council Member. Learning about being a candidate and then, once elected, a Council Member is a step-by-step process. Some of the skills and knowledge you will need are as follows.

There are a number of other criteria that you can use to assist in judging your suitability as a Council member. These include:

- being interested in your community;
- being willing and able to represent the total community when debating issues in Council, and not being blinkered by your personal sectarian interests;
- being responsive to residents of your area including those whose cultural background is different from your own;
- having a broad range of community connections; and
- a willingness to learn about issues which are new to you and with you are unfamiliar.

The following is a list of other personal skills you will need as a candidate and as a Council Member.

- **Public speaking**
  During your campaign, and as a Council Member, you will need to feel confident about speaking in public, and be able to succinctly express your views. Council meetings are held in public.

- **Confidence**
  You need to be confident in expressing yourself in a straightforward and clear way, be able to respond when someone questions your point of view and present your case.

- **Listening and Talking – Good communication skills**
  Talking to people on a one to-one-basis and, most importantly of all, knowing when to stop and listen, will be required when dealing with your community, other Council Members and the many other people you will meet along the way. Being bi-lingual and/or bi-cultural will enhance your ability to connect with culturally and linguistically diverse groups in the community.

- **Writing**
  You will need to know how to write documents, prepare press releases, and other publicity material.

- **Meeting procedures**
  You may know a little of this from observing Council meetings or from your own involvement in community groups. It is likely that as a Council Member you will need to learn more about Council meeting procedures.

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7 Extract from *So you want to be on Council* (LGA)
• **Time management**

Effective time management skills will be essential if you are to successfully balance the role of Council Member with family responsibilities, and at the same time take care of your health (see 7. MANAGING YOUR TIME AND BALANCING COMMITMENTS).

• **Dealing with the media**

Getting to know your local media contacts and understanding how their stories are developed will be useful in both your campaign and as a Council Member.

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- being responsive to residents of your area including those whose cultural background is different from your own;
- having a broad range of community connections; and
- a willingness to learn about issues which are new to you and with you are unfamiliar.⁸

Women often underestimate their skills, particularly those gained outside of paid employment. So, ask your friends and family what they think are your strengths. There are many ways to build on your existing skills and Councils have a budget for Council Member training and development (See 8.3 On-going training and development).

A self assessment checklist of skills and knowledge is included as Attachment 1. Check it out to assess what you already know and understand and what you will be keen to learn about.

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⁸ Extract from *So you want to be on Council* (LGA)
5. THE FRAMEWORK FOR COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 sets out the legislative framework for Council elections in South Australia, and the rules for nomination and standing as a candidate. The State Electoral Commissioner runs the elections, which are conducted by voluntary postal voting every four years in November. General directions follow:

5.1 Who can nominate as a candidate in Council elections?

Generally, anyone who is entitled to vote can stand as a candidate. Candidates must be

- over 18 years of age, and
- a resident or ratepayer in the Council area, and
- an Australian citizen, and
- on the Electoral Roll.

Other eligibility criteria include the following.

- a person who is not an Australian citizen, but who was a Council Member at any time between 5 May 1997 and 1 January 2000,\(^9\)
- the nominee of a group or body corporate which has its name on the Council’s voters roll, and
- a person whose name has been omitted in error from the Council’s voters roll and would otherwise be eligible for nomination.

Those not entitled to nominate as a candidate include a member of an Australian Parliament, an undischarged bankrupt, Council employees, or candidates for election in other Council areas.

5.2 How do I nominate and what are the rules for candidates?

A State Electoral Office publication, intended to assist prospective candidates in Council elections, explains those aspects of electoral law that relate directly to candidates and should be studied closely. The Local Government Elections, Candidates Handbook for Postal Elections (Candidates Handbook) is available from your local Council and forms part of a Nomination Kit for candidates.

An eligible person may nominate by completing and lodging the appropriate nomination form (included in the State Electoral Office Nomination Kit, referred to above) and a candidate profile that complies with the Regulations. In brief, some of the rules are as follows.

- Nomination forms are available from the Council office or State Electoral Office or Deputy Returning Officer for the Council (appointed by the State Electoral Commissioner).
- Nomination involves completing and lodging nomination forms with an Electoral Officer appointed for the Council, including an accurate candidate profile of no more than 150 words and an optional photograph (see example below).

\(^9\) Note: Prior to the amendments that came into effect with the Local Government Elections Act 1999, it was not a requirement to be an Australian citizen to nominate as a candidate in Council elections. This provision was included at that time to allow existing non-Australian citizen Councillors to continue in their role after 1 January 2000.
The nomination form and candidate’s profile must be lodged together during business hours at any time from the day nominations open until 12 noon on the day nominations close. A nomination form cannot be accepted outside the nomination period.

- A copy of the voters roll is available to candidates at the Council Office.
- All campaign material must be accurate, and include the name and address of the person authorising the publication and the name of the printer.
- Candidates must keep records of campaign donations and after the election, submit a return, which lists any donations or gifts received for their campaign.
- Each candidate may appoint one or more scrutineers to oversee the conduct of the election and counting of votes.

It is illegal for candidates to do certain things. For example, there are rules about being honest, not interfering with voters or the secret ballot, and not assisting people to vote. Some practices can result in a fine or imprisonment.

### 5.3 What about the Candidate Profile?

All candidates are required to prepare a candidate profile of no more than 150 words, which can be accompanied by (an optional) photograph. The candidate profile is distributed to electors with the ballot papers. The profile can include declarations of public policy and promises of action, but must comply with regulations set out in the Local Government (Elections) Act 1999. There are three examples of candidate profiles in the Candidates Handbook. A further example follows.

**Dianne Peters**

Having lived in the area for most of my life, I understand the key issues facing our local community. Utopia residents need a representative who will voice local concerns and who understands our needs and aspirations. I will work to ensure better access to services for youth and women with young families, and take up quality of life issues. My priorities will be ensuring a balance between development and the environment, and planned approach to enhancing sporting and community facilities for all local residents. Utopia also needs strong fiscal management. With tertiary training in finance and accounting, I can help ensure that Utopia’s finances are used appropriately to benefit the majority of residents, not just a select few. As a woman in my mid 30s, I will bring enthusiasm, innovative ideas and a strong sense of community to the Utopia Council.

### 5.4 How are votes counted?

The “Proportional Representation” system is used for counting the votes in Council elections. It is based on each candidate gaining a “quota” of votes to get elected. The “quota” is worked out on the basis of dividing the number of votes by the number of vacancies plus 1, and adding 1 to the result as follows:

\[
\text{Quota} = \frac{\text{Number of formal votes}}{\text{Number of vacancies} + 1} + 1
\]

It sounds quite complicated, but it is a fair way of counting votes especially where there are several vacancies to be filled.

For more information about how votes are counted, see the Candidates Handbook.
5.5 Other things you will need to know

Refer to the Local Government Elections, Candidates Handbook for Postal Elections (Candidate’s Handbook) to find out more about the rules for Council elections referred to above, and about other rules and as follows.

- Publication of Electoral Material
- Illegal Practices
- Campaign Donations
- Failure of an election
- Scrutineers
- Conveying results to candidates
- Recounts
- Concluding the election process.
6. STARTING OUT ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

Your Council election campaign will take time, a budget, and effort so before you commit yourself you will need to do some research and find out some local information.

Firstly, check out who you are up against. If there is the same number of positions as candidates nominated, you will automatically be appointed as a Council Member. It is wise to find this out before you put too much energy and effort into your campaign.

Here are the basics to get you started on the campaign trail!

• You will need to understand how the election is run before commencing your campaign as you will need to give your electors accurate replies to their questions. For example, “When do I receive my voting papers and what do I do to vote?”.

• Get to know the local issues and area really well so you are clear about what and whom you will be representing. The Council can let you know where you can access maps of the Council area and ward boundaries, population profile information, and current strategic plans and annual reports.

• Familiarise yourself with existing Council structures and activities as you are sure to be asked questions along your campaign trail. Read the local paper and keep your eyes and ears open in the local community.

• Work out what issues you will campaign on and whom you are up against. For example, your abiding passion in recreational facilities may not be important to those who want to know about waste management.

• Work out who can help promote you as a candidate. Are there high profile people who will speak up for you and encourage people to vote for you? Who can you ask to help you with your campaign tasks? Are there any opportunities for you to talk to the local media? Is there anyone you can approach for a donation for your campaign out of pocket expenses? Disclose any such interests.

• Plan your campaign in advance from beginning to end, as you will find there is very little spare time once the campaign is underway.

The choice of approaches to your campaign will depend on the likely strength of your opposition, the time that you have available, the number of helpers you can organise, the size of the area to be covered, and the resources you can commit.

A schedule of campaign tasks and timelines, and tips on choosing your campaign team and mentors is also included as Attachment 3.

A check list of other considerations in planning your Council election campaign follows.
## 6.1 Campaign Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step by Step</th>
<th>What to consider</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Check the key dates</strong> relevant to Council elections</td>
<td>Make sure you are on the voters roll by the closing date, and that you know when nominations open and close.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Identify your key messages to motivate people to vote for you.  
  • What do you want to achieve and why? | Capture key messages in your Candidate Profile about your policy platform on a local issue/s. Before nominating take the opportunity to attend Council meetings to familiarize yourself with current issues. |
| Do your research. Find out about  
  • the strength of your opposition  
  • voting patterns and how many votes you are likely to need to be elected  
  • patterns of development and demographic profile of the area | Remember, if there is the same number of positions as candidates nominated, you will automatically be appointed as a Councillor. Find this out as soon as nominations close. |
| Identify and invite supporters to be part of your campaign team and decide if you want a scrutineer at the vote count | See Attachment 3: Campaign Tasks and Timelines  
  Explore opportunities for campaign donations and, seek out endorsements from local organisations |
| Consider whether you would benefit from the experience of a mentor and who might be the appropriate person | Sharing and learning from an experienced Council Member can be very valuable. “It can take six months or more to find your feet.”  
  See Attachment 4: Mentors on the Campaign Trail |
| Identify contacts and copy deadlines for press releases and advertisements in local media. | Letters to the Editor are free, and if published get your policy positions and views into the public arena. See Attachment 5 – The Media and Public Speaking. |
| Prepare a budget for your campaign – helping you to “spend smart”.  
  • Canvas options for donations and fundraising events such as lunches and raffles | Costs include photographs, printing leaflets, cards, posters, envelopes, paper, garden stakes, local media advertisements, postage, phone and fax, child care expenses, home help during your campaign. Some candidates spend less than $500, some much more. |
| Consider possible strategies for your campaign, within the scope of your campaign budget. | Write a Campaign Plan.  
  Who will do what when and how much will it cost?  
  See tasks listed in Attachment 3 |
| Draft campaign promotional material and ask your supporters to critique it. | Ensure compliance with the election laws for campaign and promotional materials (refer the Candidates Handbook), including display material.  
  Allow lead time for production and printing. |
| Decide how you will communicate with potential voters (see “Communicating your message” below) | Look for free promotion through media interviews, public events, and as a speaker at local clubs and community groups.  
  Time media releases for when ballot papers are posted to voters. |
| **Do it! Implement your campaign** | Remember to look after yourself and plan a celebration to thank your team - win, lose or draw. |

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10 The Campaign Checklist, Step by Step, is a compilation of ideas sourced from the following publications: *So you want to be on Council* (LGA of SA), *A Gender Agenda* (Victorian Women’s Participation in Local Government Coalition)
On the campaign trail

Trusting your instincts is important when campaigning, especially if this is the first time you have put yourself “out there” publicly. I think most women relate to people well and are able to make others feel comfortable no matter what their life circumstances are.

I found the campaigning process quite daunting, particularly the loss of privacy and the need to move outside the normal comfort zone of friends and supporters. However, I really enjoyed meeting people and listening to their issues. I found that lots of people were interested in quite different issues that I have been.

The first time I stood on my own I didn’t have any organisational support. By the third campaign I knew what I was doing and I had a really strong campaign team. The campaign team is really important, but it is particularly important that it is a balanced team with a range of skills.

6.2 Communicating your message

Preparing your 150 word candidate profile is probably the most important part of your campaign and will assist you in crafting your message for your broader campaign. It is really important that you introduce yourself, your message and what you hope to achieve, clearly and simply. You might also want to design a central message or slogan to go with your photo for public display material.

Check the requirements for campaign material with the Returning Officer at the Council, or the State Electoral Office (see 10. USEFUL RESOURCES AND CONTACTS).

You will need to work out how to most effectively communicate your messages to potential voters, and where your campaign will have the most impact. The publication A Gender Agenda rates door knocking, morning teas, created events, telephoning and direct mail as having the highest impact on voters.

A range of options are listed below.

- **Telephone** people you know, and/or a random selection from the roll.

- Prepare and distribute a **pamphlet**. Make sure written material complies with the laws for electoral and campaign material (see Candidates Handbook).
  
  - The style and format will depend on your budget, but it could be a simple black and white production on A4 paper which could be easily photocopied.
  
  - A poster could also be prepared for display in public places, and on stakes in supporters’ front gardens.
  
  - Other campaign materials might include business cards to use as “calling cards”, banners, car signs, and bumper stickers.
A Prospect resident for 33 years, I enjoy Prospect life with Anthony and two adult sons, as well as community involvement with many groups. Recently I started Prospect Local History Group. With over 19 years’ Prospect Councillor experience (Mayor since 2000), I’m well qualified for Mayor with business, human resource, volunteer and community development tertiary qualifications.

Under my Mayoral leadership, Council’s achievements include:

- Improved community consultation, focus groups, rates information sessions
- Launch of Council’s website and Creative Community magazine
- Modest rate rises to ‘grow’ our City
- Long-term accountability through planning (Asset, Strategic, Financial)
- Maintaining and improving existing services
- Shopping centres’ renewal
- Footpath redevelopment
- A commitment to environmental sustainability, weekly recycling services and the development of a Bicycle Plan.

My priorities for the next four-year mayoral term are:

- Listening to community needs and ensuring timely response
- Balanced Council budgets
- Regional council collaborative initiative to achieve cost-saving benefits
- Community participation in developing a City Traffic Management Plan
- Churchill Road upgrade
- Strengthening residential planning to enhance Prospect’s predominant housing style and character
- Planning for changing community needs to support healthy ageing and young families.

My ‘can-do’ attitude encourages innovation.

I am committed to achieving a financially and ecologically sustainable future for Prospect, creative community development, and inclusive community participation.

I need your number 1 vote to continue to achieve positive outcomes for Prospect.

- **Letter boxing** households is time consuming so it would be better for someone else to do this for you, while you spend your time talking to people. Pay special attention to new housing estates or commercial areas.

- **Write to those you know well** and ask them to give your pamphlet to other people and encourage them to vote for you.

- **Door knocking** is very effective, but also time consuming and sometimes frustrating. Some houses will be unattended, some people will be well informed about the local Council and have lots to talk to you about, yet others may show not interest at all and possibly be abusive.
Door knocking works
The time commitment required pre-election was about twice as demanding as I planned. I intended to knock on every door, but the weather, the locked gates, and guard dogs dispirited me. With some family assistance I letter boxed every home twice leading up to the election, and received about 6-8 telephone calls in response. But it is the face-to-face strategy that works; I’m convinced. I tried to knock on doors for at least an hour each day, but soon discovered that weekends were best to catch people at home but I had left it too late to cover the ward just on weekends.

- **Target the areas most likely to produce results.** The area around your own home or business is a must. Also check to see if there is a concentration of families with young children who might share some of your views about Council priorities.

- Get out and about in the community and ‘meet the people’. Talk to people in shopping centres, libraries, at bus stops and train stations, and other public meeting or gathering places. You are more likely to capture women’s attention by visiting child care centres and schools at drop off or pick up times.

- Write local press articles and respond to relevant articles about local issues.

- The local media sometimes profiles candidates in the lead up to Council elections, and many Councils take a similar approach in their regular newsletter.

- Place paid press, radio and TV advertisements. Consider translation costs to cater for those from culturally and linguistically diverse people. These can be costly options and might depend on the resources available to you, the demographic makeup of your area and your campaign donation base.

- Attend meetings in the local area convened by community groups and promote yourself as a candidate. For example, Neighbourhood Watch, Landcare groups, industry groups, and resident’s associations.

- Establish a website and advertise it on all your promotional material.

- Place election signs around the local area and in supporters front gardens, but check with the Council for permission before affixing any signs in the public domain.

Anna casts the campaign net
During the campaign I handed out pamphlets outside local schools. I also approached different groups and arranged to speak at their meetings. Networking with Council Members who were not standing for re-election was also valuable. I had around twenty colour posters in different shop windows across the area. I followed this with one or two advertisement sin the local papers and also arranged for A5 flyers to be put in post boxes in new housing areas. I customised these flyers for the different suburbs across the area. I had already tapped into the local ethnic groups through community work I did with many of them in the past, and contacted community leaders of other groups. I found that many of them had heard I was running for Council by word of mouth.

6.3 But what if I am not elected?
Although you may not get elected, the most important thing is that you feel you have undertaken a successful campaign on your own terms.
Many first time women candidates have said that whilst they were disappointed initially, they later realised that simply putting their hands up had expanded their sphere of influence immensely. They had developed many more skills as a result of the campaign and learned more about their local community.

Other opportunities may also open up to you because you stood as a candidate, and you may be in a better position to have influence with your Council.

Perhaps there will be opportunities for you to join Council committees or Advisory Groups as a training ground for the next election, and you will certainly be a more skilled advocate for the issues you care about.

Joanne loses by a small margin.

After I lost I stayed at home and licked my wounds for a while. However, I decided to stand for some local community group committees and that helped to build up some networks. When the next election comes up, I will be ready and raring to give it a go again – this time with a lot more skills and experience and campaigning savvy.

Whatever the outcome, remember to remove any electoral material you have placed on public display.

6.4 Evaluating your Campaign

When the elections are over and whether you were successful or not, it will be important to take a step back and discuss your campaign with your campaign team.

What worked, what did not seem to work and what could be done better next time?

Take notes and collect together all your records. Finalise your elections accounts and returns and store all materials in a safe place for next time around.

What I learnt

In retrospect, I realize that I’ll have to grow a thicker skin! How petty and nasty some people can be – I couldn’t believe it. I was hurt by whisper campaigns and personal remarks and should have just ignored them all, kept smiling and carried on. I stayed away from public places because I didn’t want to meet these people again if I could avoid it. My flyers were removed or de-faced, and I was also told my flyers were removed from letterboxes.

If I find the courage to do it again, I’ll begin door-knocking at least 6 months before the election, start a campaign of letter-writing to the local press to get my name into the public domain, and be brave enough to ask for assistance from women who have been through it all. I think it is the support team that would be the most assistance, but I am also aware that having money to spend on a campaign also makes a difference.
7. MANAGING YOUR TIME AND BALANCING COMMITMENTS

Being involved in a campaign to get elected on Council can be very exciting, but it requires a lot of time, energy, effort and emotion. The road to election may sometimes be rough and you will need to remain focused and thick-skinned. Your opponents and antagonists may seek to maximise their chances and at times seem to play the woman and not the ball!

You will need to work out how to balance all of your other commitments during the campaign and longer term as a Council Member. Although being a Council Member is not a full-time paid position, it will take substantial amounts of your time and will probably impact on any paid work commitments, your leisure time, and your time with your family and friends. While you are the one who will make the ultimate decision about whether you will run for Council and the amount of time and energy you can commit, there are others around you who will no doubt have strong opinions about this decision.

You need to aim to achieve the right balance between your work, family and friendships, both during your campaign and as a Council Member. List the five things that are most important to you in your life and the time you currently allot to them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time commitment per week</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Next, ask yourself these questions.
• How will the campaign impact on the above commitments and the time I have to spend on them?
• Are there any alternative arrangements I can make during the campaign for one or more of these commitments?

Remember, the campaign (and later being a Council Member if you are elected) is not forever – but hopefully your family and friendships are!

Jane’s time management techniques

Jane came to realize that most people see the role as attending a weekly meeting and opening the odd fete or two. This is a long way from reality. I need to juggle the time with family and my part time paid employment. At the end of the day it’s like how long is the piece of string? I could spend five hours every day if I had the time as there is so much to learn and understand. But that is not the real world so I allocate set times each week for meetings and reading and find that I can manage the tasks within that framework. I love the role – it’s a privilege to be a Council Member.
8. CONGRATULATIONS – YOU’VE BEEN ELECTED!¹¹

Once the outcome of the election is known the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Council will advise when the next Council meeting will occur. You will be given at least three days notice of this meeting. The time between the end of the election and the first Council meeting will vary. It may be almost straight away or could be as long as three weeks after.

Use your time before the meeting to prepare yourself by enhancing your knowledge of the procedure for taking your place on the Council, meeting procedures set down in Regulations under the Local Government Act 1999, and Council procedures, services and functions. Ask the CEO to help you source this information if necessary.

8.1 Orientation to Council

The Chief Executive Officer of the council is likely to arrange an orientation and briefing process for you and any other newly elected Councillors. This may include:

- information on your role and responsibilities
- general information on Local Government and specific information on how your particular Council and Committees operate
- a tour of the area
- information on the organisational and operational structure including an overview of each of the functions or departments
- introduction to at least the senior staff members.

In the meantime, you will find it valuable to acquaint yourself with the following:

- the Local Government Act 1999 and Regulations. The Act is the principal piece of legislation for Local Government and is essential reference material
- the Council organisational structure
- the Council Strategic Management Plan and other associated plans
- the Policies and Procedures Manual
- the current year’s budget and details of budget proposals for the following year
- the Development Plan
- the Annual Report.

Some of the above information will be of importance prior to your first meeting, while some will be reference material that you will need throughout your term of office. Most of the information listed above can be found on Council websites or at the library.

¹¹ Extract from So you want to be on Council (LGA)
The Local Government Association of South Australia is a body providing a leadership role for the State's 68 local councils, representing the interests of councils for the purposes of consultation and advocacy. The LGA’s website provides easy access to LGA documents, key Local Government legislation and other relevant information, including training and development programs - visit [www.lga.sa.gov.au](http://www.lga.sa.gov.au).

In particular, the *Council Members Guide* is a useful resource, as it is a practical guide to current Local Government legislation, practices and procedures. It is available through your Council or from the LGA (See 10. USEFUL RESOURCES AND CONTACTS).

If your Council does not have a formal orientation program, you could make a time to meet with your Council CEO and obtain the same sort of information suggested earlier.

### 8.2 Taking your place on Council

Once you have been elected, you will be required to make a **Declaration of Office** before you are ‘officially’ on the Council. This is a simple declaration that you undertake to carry out your duties conscientiously and to the best of your ability, signed in the presence of a Justice of the Peace normally at the first Council meeting after the election.

Each Council has a different procedure for this ceremony. You may be asked to wear robes (if the Council does so), read the declaration aloud or to give a short speech. If a speech is required, it is usually most appropriate to make a simple statement thanking your supporters and expressing your desire to contribute to the work of the Council.

You also need to complete a **primary return** within six weeks after the conclusion of the election and an **ordinary return** in July or August each year. The CEO will be able to brief your on the expected procedure for your Council.

Other legal issues, general duties, code of conduct requirements, and statutory obligations which will apply to you in your role as a Council Member are explained in the LGA publication *So you want to be on Council*, a copy of which is included in the State Electoral Office Local Government Elections Nomination Kit. The publication is also available on the LGA website, see above.

Remember you have no authority as an individual Council Member in relation to the staff — they are responsible to the CEO. Speak to the CEO about whether you are able to contact staff directly or whether inquiries should be directed through the CEO.

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**All I had to do was ask!**

The diversity of Council activities means there are always new and different challenges. For me the road was made easier with encouragement and support from many of my colleagues and this created opportunities to develop new skills and grow with each new challenge. I quickly learnt that I only had to ask if I did not understand something or wanted more information to help me make a fair decision.

### 8.3 On-going Training and Development

Councils are required to have Training and Development Policy to support Council Members to carry out their duties effectively. The LGA offers activities specifically designed to assist Council Members. Ask the CEO for more information, or contact the LGA (See 10. USEFUL RESOURCES AND CONTACTS).
9. MAINTAINING THE MOMENTUM

9.1 Meeting Community Expectations

If you have been elected according to your stand on a specific policy issue, and your supporters have joined your campaign because of this issue, they will expect you to implement your policies and deliver on your promises when you are elected.

However, you are now one of a number of democratically elected members of the Council who will be striving to work as an effective team. Other Council Members may have different policy priorities and different promises to implement. Resources may be constrained and there may be other more pressing and pragmatic priorities. So how do you meet the expectations placed upon you?

Firstly you'll need to be very clear about what you can and cannot do as a Council Member. Here are some suggestions for how you might go about responding to constituents concerns.

- Set up a system to record and handle enquiries and concerns raised with you by your constituents
- Involve the Council staff
- Refer matters to the appropriate person for a response
- Always get back to the person who raised the concern and keep them informed of progress where relevant.

Your Council team will comprise co-Council Members, the Chief Executive Officer, and other council staff. You will be reliant on each of these team members to support you at different times, and likewise they will be reliant upon you.

A typical week for Anne

Unlike many Council Members I don’t have a “day job” so I can be more flexible in organising my time. A typical week might run something like this.

Monday
I attend a monthly meeting of a community advisory committee (I am on two committees, so this is a fortnightly commitment). This group comprises volunteers from the community, government, and non-government organisations with an interest in economic development and tourism. When the meeting is over, I prepare for Council meeting the next day – reading agendas and papers, and understanding what is coming up for debate.

Tuesday
Council meetings are held monthly on Tuesday evenings. I usually spend the morning in final preparations. Sometimes a workshop is held before Council meeting if there is a specific topic where a detailed briefing is required before Council meeting. This can be a long day with meetings starting any time from 5.00 and finishing around 10 or 11.00 pm.

Thursday
There is usually a regular meeting scheduled, often in the evening. For example, Council’s Development Assessment Panel, or the Heritage or Environment Advisory Committee. I arrange any other non-regular meetings on Thursday afternoon too.

I aim to keep Council business to these three days. However, there is always work to be fitted in at other times especially telephone calls, letters and meetings with residents. Often the only opportunity for people who are working full time to contact me is some time during the weekend.
9.2 Working Relationships

During your term on Council you will spend a lot of time with your Council colleagues, in both formal and informal meetings, as well as in the community. It will therefore be important to build mutual respect, goodwill, trust, reliability, flexibility and cooperation, even though you may not always be advancing common goals. Your skills in discretion and tact are likely to be called up, particularly if there is a confidential matter before the Council.

It will also be useful to establish relationships with Council members from other Councils. For example, by attending forums and meetings arranged by the LGA and/or the ALGWA SA, you can extend your networks, take advantage of peer network systems, and share ideas. There may also be regional meetings of Councils in your area you could attend.

The Council Chief Executive Officer is generally responsible for
• implementing Council decisions
• managing the day-to-day operations of the Council in accordance with Council’s Strategic/Corporate Plan, including human and financial resource management
• Providing timely advice to the Council.

A good working relationship and high level of trust will need to be developed between the Council Members and the Chief Executive Officer to ensure a sound and effective working relationship.

9.3 Relationships in the Council Chamber

The national literature review undertaken for the development of this Information Kit suggested that some women Council Members had reported difficulties in their relationships with male Council members and for some of those women, this was their greatest challenge. Women’s stories related experiences of not being accepted by some of their male Council Member colleagues. Some experiences relayed were
• “being shouted down”
• “being treated rudely”
• being isolated by tactics like holding meetings at times when she need to pick up her children from school, and
• prevailing attitudes of “if you can’t stand the heat……”

Other women related having good relationships with male Council Members with whom they worked, including supportive mentoring relationships. These women said it was important that “if you believe strongly in what you are doing - stand your ground”.

Maintaining direction in the Council Chamber
I was the first woman elected as Mayor to the Council in 2003, and was elected as Mayor again in 2006. While this experience certainly broadened my horizons, the points that have helped me maintain direction over the past years are:
• understand that you don’t have to know everything and ask for advice or information;
• build alliances and networks;
• don’t make assumptions about anything;
• be clear in yourself about your intentions and remain resolute about them;
• be clear about your values; and
• remember you are in a political environment which is not a place for the faint hearted!
The Local Government Act 1999 requires each Council to adopt a Code of Conduct for Council Members. It is a public statement of the standard of behaviours (in addition to the requirements of the Act) that the Council has formally agreed it expects of its members. There is also a requirement for a Code of Conduct for Employees.

Council Members are part of the system of government in Australia and leaders in local communities. In this role they have a duty to conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate to the office.

The community will often judge a Council according to their perception of the behaviours and image of individual members, including in the Council Chamber. It is essential therefore for all Council Members to conduct themselves in a manner that will promote a high standing of the Council within the community.

It is therefore wise to discuss any concerns about what you perceive as inappropriate behaviours with the Mayor/Chairperson, or the Chief Executive Officer, as they arise and to agree on strategies to resolve the issues quickly and fairly.

It is clear that being a Council Member is a serious and time consuming business. However it can also be fun, so celebrate with your Council and community around your joint successes.

But remember, you can’t be all things to all people, you can’t solve all problems and you will never keep everyone happy all of the time.

What do I find difficult?
The most daunting time for me is the Council meetings. The formal meeting procedures are taking quite some time to for me to get my head around, but when something happens that confuses me I reach for the “Meeting Procedures Handbook”. I rarely get it wrong twice! But I am still very proud of the small achievements when I speak up for, and listen to, my community.

9.4 Protecting your health and well being

The demands on your time as a Council Member will be many and varied and at the foremost in your mind must be the importance of protecting your health and well being, and your family and personal relationships. The following tips were highlighted at an ALGWA Conference in 1998, but still apply today.

- It is unrealistic to be available at all times. For example, it is legitimate to use your answering machine to manage community contact.
- Develop a close confidant who you can test your views against and who can support you in the difficult times and challenge your views and actions when you get a bit too comfortable.
- Take care of yourself. Learn to recognise the signs of stress; make sure that you get enough time with your family; and make sure you have uninterrupted time at home.
- Your role is to make decisions in the best interest of the whole community, not sectional groups, even though they will pressure you to do so.
- Be honest and sincere in your public duties but also be frank. Do not make promises that you can’t keep.
• Be part of community committees, but don’t spread yourself too thinly because no one will benefit, least of all you.
• Always return phone calls as quickly as possible
• Don’t be afraid to ask questions
• Get the facts right before you make that all important decision
• Take advantage of the many learning opportunities open to you as a Council Member
• Be a role model to other women in your community, and take every opportunity to involve your community in decision making processes.

9.5 Maintaining your support base

Be aware that you do not have a job for life as a Council Member and when the next Local Government election comes around, you may be out on the campaign trail again. Keep in touch with, and value, your support base. Here are some of the ways that successful women Council Members have kept in contact with their supporters and built a wider network.

• Through a regular newsletter, distributed via email where possible.
• Convening community interest/support team meetings regularly, every two or three months. You will benefit from the “keeping in touch” experience, participants will become your ambassadors, and they will learn more about the complexities of being a candidate and becoming a Council Member.
• Getting out and about in the community. Ask your supporters if they can host morning/afternoon teas, or barbeques in their homes.
• Using the local media effectively. Letters to the Editor or regular interviews will ensure that your constituents know what you’re doing and why you are doing it.
• If you are a member of a community organisation, make sure you attend the meetings and report on actions you have undertaken.

Women as mentors and supporters

The support that I gained from women friends both during the campaign process and after election cannot be understated. Quite often this has been unsolicited and has made me feel much more comfortable about bouncing ideas off friends when I need it, and to help me keep my focus. Having a shoulder to cry on is good too!

Mentor Checklist

Choose a mentor who:
- is a good role model;
- you feel comfortable with and respect;
- is familiar with the workings of Council, and the constrictions and realities of public life and elections;
- will listen, encourage, support and provide constructive feedback;
- is prepared to respect the confidentiality of any discussions; and
- ideally is outside your campaign and/or local government area or a former female councillor.

Some reasons why a mentor is valuable

A mentor is someone who will:
- act as a sounding board on the campaign trail or in your on Council;
- provide a word of encouragement when you need it;
- be a source of motivation and reassurance; and
- help with practical strategies to keep you on the right track.
My first experience as a mentor

I had been on Council for 19 years (6 as Mayor) and had run a campaign for most elections during that time. The 2007 election was my first experience as a mentor. It started off as a network of women - three were first time candidates, another three (including myself) were current elected members, and one woman had previously been on Council and was running again.

We were all united by a desire to get more women elected and to change the dominant male culture. Some of the women had experienced varying degrees of “put down” comments from some of the male Councillors, and one had lodged a complaint with the CEO and Mayor about bullying tactics.

We met regularly in a local coffee shop and I shared the new resources available for women candidates. We agreed to support each other and share information until the election campaigning started in earnest, as four of the women were campaigning against each other in two of the wards. We negotiated to get a good price for shared printing costs, and one woman helped to support other candidates as she was elected unopposed and had no election to run.

I accompanied one of the women on her first door-knocking experience, which provided moral support and some security – we were out some nights up until 8 pm.

After the election, only two of the seven women were elected, although a third candidate was very close. There were factors other than gender that played a part; for instance, only one-third of eligible voters actually voted. We resolved to work on that next time around in 2010!

9.6 Encouraging other women to take up the challenge

Whether you are interested in this Information Kit because you are thinking of standing for Council yourself, or supporting another woman, it is likely you have an interest in increasing women’s participation in Local Government. Consider how you can help to ensure women are represented equitably on your Council by encouraging them to take up the challenge. Some suggestions follow.

- Invite a woman you know and whom you think would make a good Council Member to take the step of standing as a candidate in the next Council elections.
- Set up a community support group or network which encourages women to explore opportunities for community leadership.
- Help women candidates design their campaigns.
- Act as a mentor to a woman wanting to run or to a new woman Council Member.
- Joining existing organisations is a great way to work with other community leaders and decision makers (women and men) towards the goal of gender equity in local government.

ALGWA SA is a network of Council Members, Local Government employees and others who have an interest in women in Local Government.

Join ALGWA SA, and encourage others to join too.

For more information contact:
The President ALGWA SA Branch
c/- GPO Box 2693, ADELAIDE SA 5001
or via www.algwa.net.au - click on South Australia
10. USEFUL RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES


Local Government Association of SA
• So you want to be on Council – A Guide for anyone considering nominating for election to their local Council, 2006 Edition (see www.lga.sa.gov.au)
• Council Members Guide


Victorian Local Government Association and Municipal Association of Victoria, A Gender Agenda: a kit for women who want to stand for local government and for those who want to assist others to stand, 2005

Women Tasmania, Women into Local Government “You can make a difference” An Information Guide for Women Interested in Standing for Election to Local Government, May 2002 (Robyn Wolstenholme)


CONTACTS

ALGWA SA Branch (Inc)
The President ALGWA SA Branch
c/- GPO Box 2693, ADELAIDE SA 5001
W: www.algwa.net.au and click on “South Australia”

Local Government Association SA
First Floor, 16 Hutt Street, Adelaide SA 5000
Postal: GPO Box 2693, Adelaide SA 5001
T: (08) 8224 2000
W: www.lga.sa.gov.au
Email: lgasa@lga.sa.gov.au
  • For general information, resource materials and training programs about Local
    Government in South Australia.

State Electoral Office
134 Fullarton Road (cnr Kensington Road) Rose Park SA 5067
GPO Box 646 Adelaide SA 5001
T: (08) 8401 4300

Office of State/Local Government Relations (South Australian Government)
Level 7, Roma Mitchell House, 136 North Tce Adelaide SA 5000
T: (08) 8204 8700
W: www.localgovt.sa.gov.au
Email: localgov@saugov.sa.gov.au

Office of the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity (SA)
Level 2, 45 Pirie Street, Adelaide SA 5000
T: (08) 8207 1977
W: www.eoc.sa.gov.au
Email: eoc@agd.sa.gov.au
  • Administration of equal opportunity legislation in South Australian

Australian Local Government Women's Association
W: http://www.algwa.net.au
  • A network for women Council Members and others interested in women and local
    government.

Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition (WPILGC)
c/- VLGA
Green Building
60 Leicester St Carlton Vic 3054
T (03) 347 2233
  • A broad coalition of local government, community and women’s organisations and
    individuals seeking to achieve equal and diverse representation of women in local
    government
# LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attachment 1:</th>
<th>Self Assessment Checklist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are you ready to be a Council Member?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment 2:</td>
<td>Campaign Tasks and Timelines – Checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment 3:</td>
<td>Mentors on the Campaign Trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment 4:</td>
<td>The Media and Public Speaking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ATTACHMENT 1: SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Are you ready to be a Council Member?

This checklist is based on a Council Members’ Self Assessment Tool that was developed in response to requests from Council Members seeking to identify areas where they could update and/or improve their skills. It has been remodeled to assist you to assess what you have to offer. The aggregate of the results were used to develop training programs that matched real needs. The following is an overview of some of the areas that were covered in the self assessment tool.

With a number of these areas, these skills will be developed in time, and can not necessarily be learnt overnight. But looking though these statements may assist you make the decision about whether to stand as a candidate and assist you to identify the many new things you can learn about.

And remember if you do make it onto your Council, the CEO of the Council will assist you to understand your obligations. Your Council is also required to have a Training and Development Policy that will outline how you can access training to develop your skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill/ Knowledge Area</th>
<th>Already Know &amp; understand</th>
<th>Keen to learn about</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Representation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the need to develop and sustain a positive image and profile of the Council while acting as an advocate for the Council or Community.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand I will need to attend civic activities to keep me informed about community needs and concerns.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand that I need to ensure that I present a broad view of electors, not just a sectional/ward view at Council meetings.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand I need to advocate for the community and bring issues of concern to the Council’s attention.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand I need to inform the community about Council decisions, even if these decisions were not supported by me.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have good community networks and relationships with clubs, churches, business and service groups so I can seek feedback from these groups when needed.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge of the Council Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the need to participate effectively in strategic planning and policy development.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the demographic profile of my Council area and relevant issues (eg aged, youth, multi-cultural etc).</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a good appreciation of the social issues facing my community in the immediate and long-term.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a good appreciation of the environmental issues facing my community in the immediate and long-term.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I have a good appreciation of the economic issues facing my community in the immediate and long-term.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council Members’ Statutory Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understand that there are statutory responsibilities that I will have to observe as a Council Member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand that Council Members have no individual authority to act or make decisions for or on behalf of the Council (ie decisions are made at a Council meeting or via delegations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the conflict of interest provisions relevant to Council Members under the Local Government Act including civil actions that can be taken against individual Council Members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware that I will have to submit an annual Register of Interest declarations and I understand the importance of these reports.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand that there are Codes of Conduct for Council Members and staff and that these codes ensure appropriate behaviour by these people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand that there are Local Government Meeting Regulations that apply to Council and Committee Meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand that Councils may have “informal gatherings” and that no decisions can be made at these gatherings but that they may be useful to workshop ideas and participate in training activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ethical Behaviour**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understand the concept of &quot;ethics&quot; in public office and what this means for a Council Member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand how to engage with all members of the community in a non-discriminatory manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand how to adopt an independent position and avoid situations where it could be perceived that my views are influenced by individuals or &quot;pressure&quot; groups.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Federal, State, Local Government Relationships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Federal, State, Local Government Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understand the role of Local Government and its relationship with the Federal Government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the role of Local Government and its relationship with the State Government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the roles of the Local Government Association of SA (LGA) and the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand why a Council may decide to take up a community cause or concern and act as an advocate to other spheres of government rather than take direct action itself.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Financial Management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understand that Council Members need to adopt strategic plans, long-term financial plans, annual budgets and will need to have some understanding of how these all link together and work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Other Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can read and interpret budgets, quarterly review statements and other financial statements.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand how the Council rating system works and that rates are a key income source for Council.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand how to interpret agenda and reports so I can prepare for and participate in Council Meetings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have adequate computer skills to enable me to download, print, save and edit documents (eg word, simple spreadsheets).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use email (eg receive, send and forward messages).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use the internet to access the Council website or other relevant websites.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have good communications skills eg listening; discussing; consulting; negotiating; explaining; questioning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have research and evaluation skills – to consider community issues and concerns.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did you select that you already knew either all of the above, or that you were keen to learn about these skills and knowledge areas? Then you are ready to be a Council Member – and should consider running as a candidate in your local Council.
## ATTACHMENT 2: CAMPAIGN TASKS AND TIMELINES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>TIME FRAME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once you have decided to stand, define what you will see as a successful campaign. Take into account what you have control over and what you do not. Plan how you will celebrate this success, regardless of the election outcome.</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>At the beginning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and contact key people, such as past or present Council Members who have run effective campaigns. Look for a mentor (see “Mentors and other supporters” below).</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>As early as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell people that you are going to run - your friends, any group or club you’re a member of as well as other organisations you think will be important for you.</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>As early as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find a campaign partner or manager - someone you trust to run things for you.</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>Between 6 and 2 months before the election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form the campaign team - people prepared to help (see “Your Campaign Team” below).</td>
<td>You/Campaign Partner</td>
<td>Between 6 and 2 months before the election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify relevant community groups and organisations to target using the Municipal Directory.</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>Between 6 and 2 months before the election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to council information session before the elections. Attend information and/or training sessions run by the LGA. If you are interested in representing a political party, contact them to organise assistance and training.</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>Check your local dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set meeting dates for campaign team.</td>
<td>You/ Campaign Manager</td>
<td>Between 6 and 2 months before the election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan your campaign strategy - what will your message be? Why should people elect you?</td>
<td>You/Campaign Partner</td>
<td>As early as possible before the election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work out your campaign budget – how much will it cost and where will the money come from?</td>
<td>You/Campaign Partner/Treasurer</td>
<td>As early as possible before the election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up your campaign team meeting place or office - where will it be and what will you need?</td>
<td>You/Campaign Partner/Campaign Team</td>
<td>As early as possible before the election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check all the relevant dates - remember you need to be on the voters roll and nominate by prescribed dates.</td>
<td>Campaign Partner/You</td>
<td>At least 3-2 months before the election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be aware of the timing of ballot pack mail out and deadlines for postal votes.</td>
<td>Campaign Partner/You</td>
<td>At least 3-2 months before the election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrange photographs for candidate profile, leaflets and publicity material. Some publicity material could be translated in other relevant languages.</td>
<td>You/Campaign Partner</td>
<td>Between 6 and 3 months before the election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check deadlines for local papers, submit media releases, advise journalists you are available for interviews. Do not forget letters to the editor.</td>
<td>You/Campaign Partner</td>
<td>As early as possible before the election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan and produce campaign materials and advertising. These could include leaflets, billboards and garden signs</td>
<td>You/Campaign Partner/Campaign Team</td>
<td>2 months before the election</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

12 Extract adapted from *A Gender Agenda: A kit for women who want to stand for local government and for those who want to assist others to stand* (Victorian Women’s Participation in Local Government Coalition)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet local people, be seen in public places, ask to address local groups.</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>Ongoing until election day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door knock and letterbox.</td>
<td>You/Campaign Partner</td>
<td>Ongoing until election day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for election time. Remember that most people vote within 3 days of receiving the voting material in the post. Plan your campaign timelines accordingly.</td>
<td>Campaign Partner/Campaign Team</td>
<td>According to your local conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appoint scrutineers for vote counting The State Electoral Office provides information for scrutineers. Keep in regular touch with them as counting goes on.</td>
<td>You/Campaign partner</td>
<td>From 4 weeks before the election.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare speech for Declaration of the Poll.</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>Two days before the election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the poll, celebrate your success. Publicly and privately thank all your friends and supporters whether elected or not. Next day collect your public display material.</td>
<td>You/Everyone</td>
<td>On the night of election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate the election result. What worked? How could it be done better next time?</td>
<td>You/Campaign partner/Campaign</td>
<td>A week after the poll</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE CAMPAIGN TEAM**

“The first time I stood on my own I didn’t have a team. By the third campaign I knew what I was doing and I had a really strong campaign team”

The message here is: “Learn from the experience of others”. Aim to set up your campaign team from supporters as soon as you decide to run as a candidate. This is the first step in a successful campaign.

Establishing an effective campaign team is very important, as although you might be tempted, you won’t be able to run the campaign entirely by yourself. A good campaign is likely to be more work than one person can handle. You need to be out there meeting the voters, rather than stamping envelopes. You will need people around you for moral support as well as the campaign progresses.

As well as being people who are loyal to you and committed to your success, campaign team members may need to quickly pick up new skills, such as publicity and fundraising.

**The campaign manager or team leader**

Your campaign manager/team leader will be the most important member of the campaign team, as this person will have overall responsibility for the entire campaign.

You will be out and about raising your profile in the community, and promoting yourself and the particular issues you are running on. It will be your campaign manager who attends to the day-to-day running of the campaign. Choose someone

- you can easily work with
you trust to get things done without continuous supervision
who can give you constructive advice and critique if you need it,
respects your confidences, and
someone to help keep you motivated when you are feeling tired and under pressure.

It would also help if your campaign manager had some previous experience of running a campaign. Other relevant personal qualities include:

- Able to lead the team
- Not afraid to delegate
- Knows about networking
- Able to meet timelines
- Focused and positive

Some of the tasks your campaign manager will undertake are as follows:

- makes sure that your nomination form is filled out and lodged on time
- plans the campaign, including fund raising
- arranges for the design, authorisation and printing of your publicity material
- ensures that any publicity material such as posters or garden signs are placed to give maximum exposure
- recruits and trains supportive volunteers to letter box, doorknock, answer phones
- organises press coverage
- prepares material to attract postal votes
- appoints scrutineers and makes sure they know what they are supposed to do on the day
- ensures that campaign materials are distributed as widely as possible.

Campaign supporters will be crucial to the success of your campaign, but remember:
- they are not paid staff so if they do not like or have the skills for a particular task they may leave and not come back; and
- volunteers may burn out, so you will need to let them know how their task fits into the overall campaign plan and why their effort is so much appreciated by you.

So, recognise and acknowledge the work of your campaign team and thank them personally and often.
ATTACHMENT 3: MENTORS ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

“Often you need other women to encourage you to stand and then to keep encouraging you as you take the next step. It’s important to have people to talk with to help you to focus and be clear.”

Women Councillors say that it is often the encouragement of friends and supporters that motivate them to run for council, and the support they provide through the campaign and as they take up the role on Council is very important.

You will draw your campaign supporters from your family and friends and maybe from a community group. You could meet other supporters along the way. They will be the people who encourage you to run, assist you with your campaigning, hang in with you when it is raining and you still have 100 doors to knock, and celebrate with you at the Declaration of the Poll. They will be the ones to commiserate with and support you when you are feeling low.

Approaching someone to be your mentor can be a more structured way of obtaining support. Your mentor could be someone who is currently a Councillor, been a Council Member in the past, or it could be someone who is a past or present member of State or Federal Parliament.

The relationships you have with your mentors may be formal, with set meetings, agreed short and long-term goals and a set time-frame for the relationship. Or it could just be someone you occasionally ring or have coffee with when you have a question or feel you need support. Unless you are lucky enough to participate in a formal mentoring program, in which you will be matched with a mentor and have training provided, you will usually be the one to identify who your mentors may be and initiate the relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor checklist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choose your mentor as someone who:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is a good role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you feel comfortable with and respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is familiar with the workings of Council, and the constrictions and realities of public life and elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will listen, encourage, support and provide constructive feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is prepared to respect the confidentiality of any discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ideally, is outside your campaign and Council area or is a former Councillor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The key thing is to identify what you need from the mentoring relationship and then approach someone who can meet these needs. Whilst you may feel apprehensive about making an approach to a prospective mentor, you are likely to find that the person you approach will be flattered that you consider you can learn from them. Remember, it’s a two-way process - the mentor will gain from the relationship too.

Some successful women candidates talk of having multiple mentors. “Do –it-yourself” mentoring can also work well. See the Women’s Participation in Local Government Coalition (WPILGC) webpage for more information about these options: [www.vlga.org.au/test/women_gov.html](http://www.vlga.org.au/test/women_gov.html)
ATTACHMENT 4: THE MEDIA and PUBLIC SPEAKING

Raising your profile and what you stand for can be achieved through your local media. Unpaid media coverage includes news stories in the local paper, general stories, feature articles or Letters to the Editor.

Become familiar with your local newspaper by following how it covers the issues of concern to you. If you know a reporter is interested in the issue, contact them directly. You can then send them a press release or press kit.

Be aware that, if elected, Council may have a policy about who from the Council is to speak to the media.

Press Releases
Press releases should be addressed to a reporter by name. Provide specific information about yourself and the issues you see as important. A press release is preferably one page long and never more than two pages. Its purpose is to announce an issue of importance for which you want media attention. Aim to answer the following five questions in the first paragraph:

- Who? Who is the subject of the story?
- What? What is happening that the media and the local community should know about? The goal is to get the media’s attention so that your release will be read and the issue reported.
- Why? Why is this important? The reason for your press release should be clear, compelling and specific.
- Where? For example, if it is a meeting or press conference, where is it going to take place? Be specific about the address and include a map with directions.
- When? When will it take place? The date, day of the week, and hour should be included.

Use direct quotes in your release and keep sentences and paragraphs short. Make sure you include a contact name and contact details at the conclusion of the release.

Feature Stories
This is an opportunity to be more personal in approach and explain how an issue you are concerned about affects a particular individual or group. You could write the story yourself and submit it for publication. Include good photographs with your copy.

Letters to the Editor
The Letters to the Editor Page is one of the most widely read sections of the local newspaper. It represents a free opportunity for you to express yourself about an issue of concern to you. Most importantly, even if your letter is not printed, it gives you great

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13 Extract adapted from A Gender Agenda: A kit for women who want to stand for local government and for those who want to assist others to stand (Victorian Women’s Participation in Local Government Coalition)
practice at composing your thoughts in a clear and concise manner. You will have the best chance of getting your letter printed if you comment directly on an article.

Letters to the editor need to be written immediately after the article or event on which you are commenting appears but it should be written carefully and thoughtfully. You don’t want a rash comment to come back and haunt you and your campaign. Be as brief as possible. Refer to the article by title, date of publication and reporter. Sign your letter with your complete name and include your address and phone number. Ideally, a letter to the editor is about 200 words long.

Some rules to remember when talking to the media:

- Always return phone calls promptly.
- Have a clear purpose for talking to a reporter. Prepare this before the conversation.
- Try to anticipate the ‘angles’ the reporter may take.
- Know what the newspaper’s deadlines are.
- Assume that there is no such thing as ‘not for publication’ or ‘off the record’.
- Be careful of joking with the reporter - a joke in print is not always as funny as it seemed when you said it.
- Be clear about the major points you wish to make; stick to these and do not get distracted.
- Be concise.
- Do not lie or bend the truth.
- Do not make factual errors.
- Do not be ashamed to say “I don’t know. I can get back to you on that”
- Do not promise what you cannot deliver.
- Do not assume the reporter is your best friend.
- Do not pass on rumours about your opponents to reporters.
- Do not be afraid to disagree with a reporter. Explain why you do not agree.

Public Speaking - Speeches and Presentations

Another way to convey your message to prospective voters will be through public speaking, such as speeches and presentations.

The following ten steps can be used for preparing a speech or presentation.

- Define the purpose of your speech or presentation. You are likely to want to inspire them or convince them about voting for you in Council elections.
- Know your audience. What local groups do they come from? Will you need interpreters or translated materials? Do they know you and what you will be speaking about?
- Know the location and how the meeting space will be set up.
• Determine what you want your audience to know or to remember. In approximately 25 words or less, write out the objective of your speech or presentation.

• List the three main points you want to make. Illustrate each point with at least one example (a story or anecdote) that will create a picture in the minds of your listeners.

• Outline the substance of your presentation using quotes, statistics, examples and other interesting information.

• Write the opening and attention-getting statement of your speech.

• Write the closing part of your speech. Aim for a strong finish.

• Know the program for the event at which you will speak. Are you the only speaker? What is the order of appearance? Will you be first or last if there are several speakers?

• Be aware of the time allowed afterwards for questions and answers.

• Make sure your audio/visual aids and any presentation materials and handouts are clear, concise, and easily understood.