



Local Government News

A Message from the Electoral Commissioner

Since the last newsletter the Local Government team in the Commission has been working hard to finalise extraordinary election activity and to prepare for the May 2005 ordinary elections.

As a result of the provision in the *Local Government Act 1995* which will defer the filling of councillor vacancies after the first Saturday in August, all attention has moved to May 2005.

At this stage 49 local governments, comprising some 943,000 electors have committed to postal voting for the 2005 Local Government elections. The Commission has been examining all aspects of the postal voting process to identify where improvements in service can be achieved, along with reducing costs.

To this end, there have been informal discussions with some local government representatives to identify ideas and opportunities that may be useful to pursue in the future to improve postal elections and to streamline our operations.

The Commission has also undertaken more tangible projects for the 2005 Local Government Elections. These have included development of non-statutory advertising concepts, investigation of potential counting centre sites and calling of tenders for the printing, bar-coding and loading of election packages.

I thank you for your support and welcome any suggestions you may have on how to improve the conduct of your postal election. Please feel free to contact Aaron Bowman, Manager of Local Government Elections.

Warwick Gately
Acting Electoral Commissioner

Deadline to use Postal Voting

Wednesday 16 February 2005 is the last day for your local government to decide to conduct your May 2005 elections as a postal election.

Any Local Government still contemplating the postal option is encouraged to contact the Commission directly for further assistance.

Legislation Review

There are several likely legislative changes which will affect some operational aspects of the 2005 Local Government Elections.

However, these changes are currently awaiting proclamation by the Governor. Future editions of the newsletter will carry more information.

Close of Rolls for Ordinary Elections

The rolls will close on Friday 18 March 2005. If an enrolment drive has been contemplated for Owners and Occupiers, now is a good time to bring the forthcoming elections to their attention.

Election Information Sessions

Some local governments have found candidate information sessions beneficial in the past, giving prospective candidates the opportunity to find out what is involved in becoming a councillor.

The Commission is willing to send a representative to such sessions, subject to staff availability. For more information contact Aaron Bowman.

New Call Centre

In 2005 the Commission will be operating a call centre during the local government election period. Electors will be able to contact us with their enquiries about postal elections.

Electors can also access local government FAQ's on our website www.waec.wa.gov.au

The call centre will be operational between the hours of 8:00am and 6:00pm from the time of lodgement of electoral packages until after the elections.

New Electronic Newsletter Distribution

You have the option of receiving your newsletter electronically, instead of by post. If you want to take up this option, contact Christalla Yakinthou on 9214 0461, or at cyakinthou@waec.wa.gov.au

Owners' and Occupiers' Roll

Minor revised data standards have been developed by the Commission for the Owners and Occupiers roll. A field has been added to account for silent electors and some other fields have changed from mandatory to non-mandatory.

More than half of the local governments involved in postal elections have successfully had their Owners and Occupiers roll test merged with the residents' roll. This testing will facilitate the merging of the rolls after the close of rolls for ordinary elections on 18 March 2005.

We will continue to be in contact with your IT service providers over the coming period, and all local governments involved in postal elections are requested to forward an Owners and Occupiers roll to us for a test merge.

Advertising

In keeping with our commitment to providing our clients with the most cost-effective service, the Commission is considering changes to the way some advertising is handled.

The Commission has conducted research to investigate the factors that influence voter turnout and participation, with some interesting results. We are also pleased to announce that we will be continuing our alliance with our partner organisations.

This information will assist us in focusing our advertising attention to support our twin goals of increasing public awareness of postal elections and promoting the return of electoral packages.

May 2005 Postal Elections

As at 1 December 2004, the following 49 local governments, representing some 943,000 electors, have confirmed that the Electoral Commissioner is to be responsible for the conduct of the May 2005 ordinary election as a postal election:

- ◆ City of Albany
- ◆ City of Armadale
- ◆ Shire of Ashburton
- ◆ Shire of Augusta-Margaret River
- ◆ Town of Bassendean
- ◆ City of Belmont
- ◆ City of Bunbury
- ◆ Shire of Busselton
- ◆ Town of Cambridge
- ◆ City of Canning
- ◆ Shire of Capel
- ◆ Shire of Carnarvon
- ◆ Shire of Chittering
- ◆ Town of Claremont
- ◆ City of Cockburn
- ◆ Shire of Collie
- ◆ Town of Cottesloe
- ◆ Shire of Dardanup
- ◆ Shire of Denmark
- ◆ Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup
- ◆ Shire of Exmouth
- ◆ City of Fremantle
- ◆ Shire of Geraldton
- ◆ Shire of Gingin
- ◆ City of Gosnells
- ◆ Shire of Greenough
- ◆ Shire of Kalamunda
- ◆ City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder
- ◆ Town of Kwinana
- ◆ Shire of Lake Grace
- ◆ City of Mandurah
- ◆ City of Melville
- ◆ Shire of Merredin
- ◆ Shire of Mt Marshall
- ◆ Shire of Mundaring
- ◆ Shire of Murray
- ◆ City of Nedlands
- ◆ City of Perth
- ◆ Shire of Plantagenet
- ◆ City of Rockingham
- ◆ Shire of Serpentine-Jarrahdale
- ◆ City of South Perth
- ◆ City of Stirling
- ◆ City of Subiaco
- ◆ City of Swan
- ◆ Town of Victoria Park
- ◆ Town of Vincent
- ◆ City of Wanneroo
- ◆ Shire of Waroona

This puts us on track for one million electors!

Meetings with your CEO

The Manager of Local Government Elections will be organising appointments to discuss individual details for each local government using postal voting early in the New Year.

We will soon be in contact with your Council to make an appointment with your CEO or a designated senior staff member.

Useful Contacts at the WAEC

- ◆ **Aaron Bowman** -
Manager Local Government Elections
abowman@waec.wa.gov.au (08)9214 0422
- ◆ **Jacqueline Hodgkinson** -
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- ◆ **Phillip Richards**
Local Government Operations
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- ◆ **Garry Hawkes**
Owners and Occupiers Roll Information
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Local Government team from left to right:
Christalla, Garry, Gareth, Aaron, Phil and Sanna

*Wishing you all a wonderful festive season and a prosperous and plentiful New Year
...from the WAEC Local Government team*