

**Submission  
No 32**

## **2012 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

**Organisation:** Waverley Council  
**Name:** Mr Tony Reed  
**Position:** General Manager  
**Date Received:** 7/02/2013

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7 February 2013

Mr Jai Rowell  
Chairperson  
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

**Email: [electoralmatters.committee@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:electoralmatters.committee@parliament.nsw.gov.au)**

### **Inquiry into 2012 Local Government Elections**

Dear Mr Rowell

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on behalf of Waverley Council on the conduct of the 2012 Local Government Elections. I hope that the comments may be of use to the Committee in its deliberations and any suggestions for improvement for the operation or funding of future local government elections.

Waverley Council engaged the services of the Electoral Commission of New South Wales to conduct the election on our behalf. Overall, Council was pleased with the services provided by the Commission, the Returning Officer for Waverley and her staff throughout the engagement.

Council did, however, have concerns about the location of some of the polling places. Council staff are of the view that the Electoral Commission based much of its planning for the local government election on previous state and federal elections and did not take into account the local circumstances applying to the Local Government Area (LGA). As a consequence we had more polling places than we believe were required and in locations outside the Local Government Area (LGA) which were not convenient to our residents. This was particularly so in one of our four wards, Hunter Ward. This was a view shared by our Councillors and incurred additional cost.

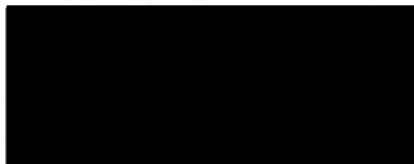
In a letter dated 25 June 2012 to the Electoral Commission, Council expressed its disappointment with the Commission's approach to the location of polling places. In our Hunter Ward, for example, the Commission's proposal was to have three of the six polling places located outside the LGA, two of which were more than a kilometre away from the Ward. Our request for the reconsideration of polling place locations in that Ward resulted in one of those proposed by the Commission being deleted and one proposed by us being reinstated. The Commission rejected all other requests for reconsideration.

In future we would like the opportunity to work with the Electoral Commission on a more equal basis so that we, as the client, are satisfied that the services provided meets the needs of our residents.

Looking at the bigger picture there is an argument that as one of the three tiers of government in Australia the costs of council elections should be met by the taxpayer as is the cost of federal and state elections. While this matter has not been canvassed with Councillors at Waverley it may be an issue that falls within the terms of reference of the Committee.

In conclusion, we would like to think that the 2012 Local Government Elections can be used as the basis to develop a more locally focused partnership approach for future elections. If there is any additional information that I can provide please contact me by phone on 9369 8056 or by email at [tonyr@waverley.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tonyr@waverley.nsw.gov.au)

Yours sincerely



Tony Reed  
**General Manager**