

**Submission
No 11**

INQUIRY INTO 2008 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Organisation: Hurstville City Council
Name: Mr Warren J Park
Position: Senior Manager Administration
Date Received: 28/04/2009



Hurstville City Council

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The Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Dear Ms Burton

2008 Local Government Elections

I refer to an email received on 27 March 2009 concerning the above, and advise that Council at its meeting on 24 September 2008 resolved to send a letter of complaint to the Electoral Commission concerning issues from Councillors' own experiences, or from being contacted by electors with respect to the conduct of the Election. These were:

Pre-poll period - Hurstville Entertainment Centre

There was no lift for the elderly to reach the pre-poll area that was located on the first floor, which resulted in the elderly having to wait for the Returning Officer to come down and assist the elderly to vote at a bench in the street, which was an invasion of privacy, (even though the website listed disabled access available).

The lack of toilet facilities for Candidate Assistants.

Candidate Handbook

The book provided to candidates turned out to be incorrect, as legislation had changed, and there was no effort to contact candidates and advise them of legislative changes. Candidates were faced with changing How to Vote material at the last moment, even though it was prepared in accordance with the handbook provided to them, and therefore became a disgraceful incident.

Dual Voting Booths in Oatley

Peakhurst Ward electors were not provided for at Oatley Public School, although Penshurst Ward electors were. Electors had to travel great distances to vote.

Peakhurst Public School

The School had very narrow access, including steps that the elderly, disabled and people with prams had to use, as well as running the gauntlet of people handing out How to Vote cards. The School also did not provide toilet facilities on Election Day. It was a disgrace that the toilets were locked, and when complaints were lodged with the Returning Officer nothing was done about it. This would have been the case at a number of Schools.

General

Councillors felt the conduct of the election was at a very low level compared to when Councils organised the elections. Given that Councils are charged full recovery costs, it is expected that the conduct of the election be held in a professional manner, provide the basic necessities, and have adequate disabled access for electors at Polling Booths where queues are long and time-consuming to vote.

Council also requested a full and detailed breakdown of costs for the election.

It would be appreciated if you could submit the above issues to the Joint Standing Committee.

Yours faithfully



W J Park
Senior Manager Administration