

**Submission
No 76**

2012 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Organisation: Randwick City Council
Name: Cr Scott Nash
Position: Mayor
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MAYOR
CITY OF RANDWICK

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2 October 2013

Gareth Ward, MP
Chairman
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Gareth

Dear Mr ~~Ward~~

Calling for amendments to the current 'non residential' roll process for Local Government elections

I refer to Randwick City Council's submission to Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters dated 15 January 2013. Randwick City Council supports the City of Sydney Council's call for the law to be changed in a bid to improve the process for business voters to participate in Local Government elections. The current restrictions, which include onerous red tape every election year, have resulted in the business vote in the Randwick LGA being almost non-existent. The process of enrolling every election is time-consuming, complex and onerous for business owners who live outside the area, because there was no postal voting.

In the 2012 election, just 9 of 2,088 non-residential ratepayers enrolled to vote in the Randwick City Council elections. These ratepayers pay \$12.97 million per annum in rates to Randwick City Council.

I believe the system could be improved with the introduction of a permanent roll of owners.

The following is an extract from Randwick City Council's January 2013 submission to the Joint Standing Committee in relation to the current non residential roll process:

'during the application process for people to register for inclusion on the Non Residential Roll for the election, Randwick had the vast majority of people incorrectly complete the form or unable to be verified as being on the electoral roll elsewhere, meaning they were excluded as we did not have the time to contact them prior to the deadline for submissions.

Below are comments on the form itself and suggestions for amendments which will ease confusion and make the process easier for applicants and Council officials.

Section 1 – Applicants claim for enrolment

- 1. Amend residential line to include an area for a Postcode.*
- 2. Delete the section to state which ward they wish to be enrolled in – this causes confusion amongst people just wanting to be on the roll as opposed to those that want to run as a candidate in a Ward different to the address of the subject property. This form is for getting on the NRR not for electing which Ward a Candidate may wish to stand for.*

Section 2 Nomination of Elector – 2nd box

- 3. If the owner/s is a corporation make a note on page 2 that they must submit a company search indicating who the Directors, Secretary, Officers are. (See also 13 below).*
- 4. On the residential line make provision to include Post Code.*
- 5. After the area for nominating the Ward and identifying the Council underneath, have a requirement for the Nominator to include their email address and contact numbers.*
- 6. Put a note under * Please provide copy of lease to substantiate claim for continuous occupation or requirement to pay land rates*
- 7. Under signed/sealed section provide space for signatories to print their name – if 2 or more people own the property how can you distinguish the signatures against the names of the owners.*
- 8. Under Signed/seal line make provision to include Email address and phone number – if there is an error on the form and the person has a silent phone number or is not in the phone book how do you contact them in a timely manner? – This could also be repeated in Section 1 under the residential address of the applicant however a second entry is probably superfluous.*

Section 3 – Statement of witness

- 9. After witness name include the words (Please print)*

Footer

- 10. Before the word "Processed" make a provision for the words "Received and Name – Received and processed may occur on different days and by different people.*
- 11. After the word "Processed" change initials to "Name."*

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12. For Councils with Wards - Make a note that the person must be on the NRR for the Ward in which the property is located.

13. Under "Who is an Owner" section make it clearer for Corporations. If the owner is a corporation there should be a note that the corporation must nominate the applicant and the name and the position of the person within the corporation signing and as to whether they have authority to do so, i.e. can the Secretary, Director or CEO nominate? Also the form provides for the seal, is this necessary? If so it must be stated. - (Also see comments in 3 above) Refer S 127 (1) & 129 (5) of the Corporations Act 2001 (CTH).

General

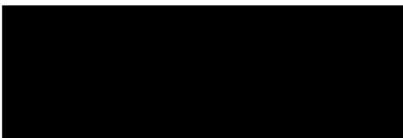
14. When registering people for enrolment and they are not recorded as living at the address they stated on the form are we supposed to follow-up and ask for proof that they are enrolled at the address indicated and therefore eligible to be on the NRR or is this the domain of the Electoral Commission once Council's finish the on-line registration? Should people attach documentation as proof of their residence? In other words do we register by skip roll check or reject the application?

15. In the 2nd section there should be a provision for the owner to state (and print) their name rather than just the address?

It would be appreciated if the Committee could take on board the above suggestions to overcome confusion not only for persons seeking to be on the NRR just to vote but also for those persons wishing to be on the NRR with a view to standing as a candidate for election. The amendments would also give better direction to Council Officers in charge of receipting and processing NRR applications.'

The current enrolment process is inefficient and ad-hoc and severely restricting the participation of local businesses in the democratic process. I hope the Committee will take these comments (and recent media articles) into account when deliberating on this issue.

Yours sincerely



**Cr Scott Nash
Mayor**