

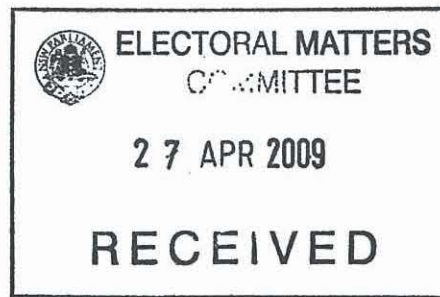
**Submission  
No 10**

## **INQUIRY INTO 2008 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

**Organisation:** Kogarah Council  
**Name:** Mr Paul Woods  
**Position:** General Manager  
**Date Received:** 27/04/2009

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Our Contact: Evan Hutchings  
Direct Phone: 9330 9408  
Our Reference: 631081



23 April 2009

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

Dear Cherie

**RE: Submission to Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters**

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission to the Joint Standing Committee in relation to the administration and conduct of the 2008 Local Government Elections.

The September 2008 election for the four wards of the Kogarah Local Government Area, including a poll, was run effectively with few complaints or concerns received from candidates or electors. The issues that were reported to Council that had the potential to escalate were appropriately resolved by the Returning Officer. Further, the relationship between the Returning Officer and the relevant Council Officers was excellent with a spirit of cooperation displayed by all parties. There are however two issues that warrant comment with a view to developing an improved outcome for the next election, as follows:

**Issue No 1**

During the period leading up to Election Day potential candidates who are not residents or property owners of the Local Government Area must make application for inclusion on non-resident rolls. Applicants must satisfy certain criteria for inclusion on such rolls with these provisions contained within the Local Government Act 1993. The consequent problem that arose was that when potential candidates, Council staff or Returning Officer contacted the Electoral Commission of NSW on issues that were covered by the Local Government Act they were advised to contact the Department of Local Government or seek independent legal advice. Similarly, approaches to the Department of Local Government resulted in advice to contact the Electoral Commission (as it has responsibility for the election) or to seek independent legal advice. Clearly, despite responsibility for this process resting with the General Manager, this demarcation is unsatisfactory and diminishes confidence in the process. Consistent and definitive answers to such questions that would be faced by most Councils, by one of the key authorities would seem to be appropriate and beneficial to all parties.



**KOGARAH  
COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL AND  
COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Civic Centre,  
2 Belgrave Street  
Kogarah NSW 2217

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## Issue No 2

It has been widely discussed that the cost of the 2008 Local Government Elections incurred by Councils was significantly greater than previous elections. Whilst it can be argued that Councils may not have previously accounted for all costs it is difficult to be confident that the Electoral Commission of NSW has accurately and/or reasonably charged Councils, particularly in view of the minimal documentation provided with the invoice(s). As an example, Kogarah Council sought explanation of the \$28,400 being charged for the printing of Ballot Papers. Noting that Kogarah Council also conducted a poll in conjunction with the elections which naturally doubled printing costs, explanation from the Electoral Commission indicates that a significant redundancy approaching 50% is built into the provision of ballot papers. This unnecessarily adds to the cost of the election and could be reduced with some simple and cost effective solutions. A further example is the \$19,620 administration fee. This is a significant item of expenditure that comes with no background or supporting documentation. Kogarah Council has strict purchasing procedures in operation to ensure that *internal control is paramount and that all purchase transactions are fully documented and transparent and the details of goods/services being purchased are clear and open to scrutiny.* In the case of the services provided by the Electoral Commission of NSW such detail is not provided. To the contrary, Councils are issued with a high level list of expenses and a significant charge that is expected to be paid in the absence of any additional supporting information. This does not seem to be consistent with the accepted procedures and standards of Local Government and the expectations of the Community.

Should you require any additional information or clarification on any aspect of this submission please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



Paul Woods  
**General Manager**



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