

INQUIRY INTO 2008 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Organisation: Parkes Shire Council
Name: Mr Alan McCormack
Position: General Manager
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PARKES SHIRE COUNCIL

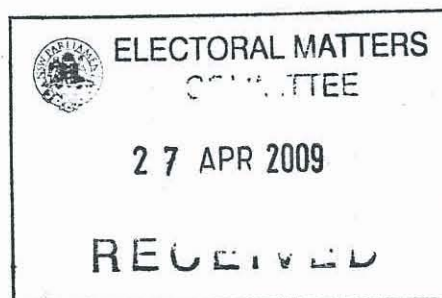
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AMc:SH

Contact Person: Alan McCormack

24 April 2009

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



Dear Ms Cherie Burton MP,

2008 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Parkes Shire Council appreciates the opportunity to make a submission regarding the 2008 Local Government Elections.

The points this Council wishes to raise are:-

Costs

There was a cost increase of 50% from 2004 to 2008. The issue of costs is probably the biggest concern for Local Government.

Parkes Councils' original estimate was \$76,000. The final bill came to \$65,000, a 14% reduction. Council suspects that "savings" may have been found due to the outcry from Local Government.

Local Government was concerned that the NSW Electoral office was attempting to over compensate for the cost - another example of cost shifting to Local Government.

Conduct

Council agree to share a Returning Officer, ostensibly to save costs. This proved inconvenient. Intending Candidates simply did not have access to Electoral Officials (the Returning Officer was based 100km away). The Returning Officer was not able to conduct seminars for candidates.

Count

Because of its involvement with the Joint Returning Officer Parkes had to join a queue in the count. This was frustrating for candidates. In Parkes the count has traditionally been completed within one day from the closing of the poll. In 2008 it took 5 days.

In addition, no progress counts were released. Apart from 1st preference votes no other information was released until the final count. Candidates then had little idea how they were progressing.

The fact the count was conducted 100km away, and not at a specific time, meant that it was impossible for candidates to arrange scrutineers.

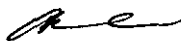
Reversion to Local Government Staff Conducting Elections

Parkes Council has persistently advocated that Council's staff should conduct the election. This would overcome the issues mentioned above. Costs would be reduced and good communication and information access would return.

It is realised this would not be a universal Local Government view but perhaps Councils could be given the choice of whether to be involved or not.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Yours faithfully



Alan McCormack
GENERAL MANAGER