

**Submission  
No 21**

## **2012 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

**Organisation:** Blue Mountains City Council  
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**Position:** General Manager  
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Office of the General Manager

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The Chair  
Committee on Electoral Matters  
Parliament of New South Wales  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

**SUBJECT                      Submission: Committee on Electoral Matters Inquiry into  
2012 - Local Government Elections**

Overall the Blue Mountains City Council Local Government Elections were executed without any undue impact on either the Council or residents.

However the Council would like to raise the following matters:

1. Returning Officer - RO appointed to Blue Mountains City Council performed exceptionally and was a high quality recruit. This had been a previous issue at BMCC in prior elections.
2. Decision re Service Provider – decision needed to be made prior to the NSW Electoral Commission providing detailed cost estimates to conduct the Election. The decision on who the service provider would be was undertaken in November 2011 but no preliminary costing information was provided until June 2012. No other procurement would be undertaken by the Council in this manner. Questions have been raised by the community, and answered, on why this service is procured in the way that it is and the questions have been answered.
3. Accommodation requirements - have incrementally increased over the last few years with no apparent reduction in physical space requirements even though a greater degree of operational work is undertaken electronically.
4. Pre-poll: The trend of increasing numbers of pre-poll votes in the Local Government Elections needs to be addressed as the Council at the last two elections has had to add an additional location for pre-poll. If this trend continues to increase the cost of staffing pre-polls will also continue to increase and Point 5 can assist in addressing this trend.
5. Electronic voting – the Blue Mountains Local Government Area is ready to undertake electronic voting and it is hoped that this could be achieved by 2016. This in turn would reduce the space requirements and therefore a large component cost as well as addressing the growth in pre-poll requirements as voting could be open for a period of at least five days.

6. Advertising requirements - there are instances where the NSW Electoral Commission and the Council are required to advertise the same information e.g non-residential role.
7. Use of the Internet for advertising – this needs to be improved and could be undertaken with any advertisements referencing websites. Council libraries could be advertising points as well with an Election PC set up to assist people with use of electronic information.
8. Provision of information – many residents of the local government area are appalled when the Council has to provide the response that they 'cannot provide information on the Election and that they need to contact the NSW Electoral Commission.' Whilst it is appreciated that there are reasons for this an electronic information pack for Councils would be appreciated so that when a voter contacts the Council this can be sent out.
9. Non-Residential Roll issues – whilst the Council provided the non-residential roll as per the NSW Electoral Commission requirements when a dispute arose over a particular application which had been followed up with the NSW Electoral Commission prior to roll close off there was very limited support for the Council with the applicant from the NSW Electoral Commission. The NSW Electoral Commission needs to stand by their process and support Councils when the Council has followed due process.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate.

Yours faithfully

ROBERT GREENWOOD  
General Manager