

**Submission
No 57**

2012 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Organisation: Wollondilly Shire Council
Name: Mr Luke Johnson
Position: Acting General Manager
Date Received: 12/02/2013



Our Reference: TRIM 3745-2 LJ:ts

7 February 2013

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE TO ELECTORAL MATTERS INQUIRY

I am writing in my capacity as the Acting General Manager on behalf of Wollondilly Shire Council.

Council has been invited to make a submission addressing the specific terms of reference as requested in a letter from the Committee on Electoral Matters Inquiry into the 2012 Local Government Elections.

The terms of reference to be used in the submission are:

- a) the costs of the elections
- b) the experience of councils that conducted their own elections
- c) possible legislative changes to improve the efficiency of and participation in Local Government elections
- d) non-residential voting in Local Government elections
- e) the impact of requirements under the Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981 on participation by candidates in Local Government elections and possible legislative changes to remove any barriers to participation, and
- f) any other related matter.

A survey was conducted with Councillors who stood as candidates for the 2012 elections and the results of this survey are attached.

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Wollondilly Shire Council engaged the NSW Electoral Commission to carry out the business of its election. Initially there was some concern regarding the costs of the election as we had experienced a significant increase in costs at the 2008 Local Government Election of some \$50,000. As such Council was keen to keep costs to a minimum.

To this end the NSW Electoral Commission met with council staff and discussed the possibility of keeping costs down by sharing a Returning Officer with a neighbouring council and a central counting centre. It was decided that the NSW Electoral Commission should run the Wollondilly Shire Council election with Camden Council.

Legislation changes for improvements in the efficiency of and participation in Local Government elections have not been identified specifically; however it would be timely to investigate these issues following the outcomes of the *Local Government Act 1993* review and any subsequent changes following the review of Local Government in NSW. The same applies to the *Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981*.

Wollondilly Shire Council had only 3 persons registered as non-residential voters for the 2012 Local Government Elections. One person was ineligible to vote as the form was lodged after the closing date for lodgement.

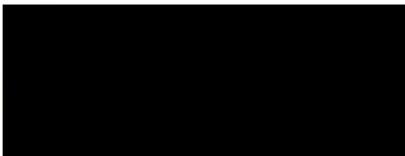
Overall the running of the elections seemed smooth enough. There were some concerns raised over ward boundaries in relation to information released by the NSW Electoral Commission. Some voters were placed into the wrong Wards; however steps were quickly taken by the Commission to rectify this.

The sharing of a Returning Officer between Wollondilly Shire Council and Camden Council was tested during this election and everything seemed to run smoothly with candidates and the public using both of the facilities provided in each LGA for information and lodgement of forms.

The use of electronic mediums for some voters and candidates seemed to be successful, although the demographic for Wollondilly and the lack of good broadband services may have been challenging for those living on the outskirts of the Wollondilly Shire.

All in all from a staff perspective, the 2012 local government elections were well managed by the NSW Electoral Commission.

Yours faithfully



Luke Johnson
Acting General Manager

1. Was this your first experience as a Local Government election candidate?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	0.0%	0
No	100.0%	2
answered question		2
skipped question		0

2. How would you compare this election with your previous experience as a Local Government candidate?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Better than past experience	50.0%	1
Similar to past experience	50.0%	1
Worse than past experience	0.0%	0
comments:		0
answered question		2
skipped question		0

3. As an experienced candidate in the 2012 elections, how would you rate your overall experience?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Positive experience		50.0%	1
Neither positive or negative		50.0%	1
Negative experience		0.0%	0
Other (please specify)			0
answered question			2
skipped question			0

4. As a new candidate in the 2012 elections, how would you rate your overall experience?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Positive experience		0.0%	0
Neither positive or negative		0.0%	0
Negative experience		0.0%	0
Comments:			0
answered question			0
skipped question			2

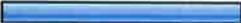
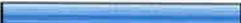
5. On a scale of 1 to 5 please rank the following (1=lowest and 5=highest)

	1	2	3	4	5	Rating Count
Location and accessibility of the Returning Officer	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	50.0% (1)	50.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	2
Support of the Returning Officer	50.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	50.0% (1)	2
Polling Venues	0.0% (0)	50.0% (1)	50.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	2
Availability and access of Pre-polling stations	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	100.0% (2)	0.0% (0)	2
Location of Pre-polling stations	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	50.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	50.0% (1)	2
answered question						2
skipped question						0

6. Did you attend either of the Candidate Information Sessions?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	50.0%	1
No 	50.0%	1
Comments		0
answered question		2
skipped question		0

7. Did you find the information presented during the session useful?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	50.0%	1
No 	50.0%	1
Comments:		0
answered question		2
skipped question		0

8. Can you suggest other information that could/should be included for future information sessions?

	Response Count
	0
answered question	0
skipped question	2

9. This year 'Information for Candidates' was made available online and candidates were asked to access the website to obtain information. How would you rate this process?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Poor - would prefer hard copy documents	0.0%	0
Good - accessing the information online worked well, but other options should still be available	100.0%	2
Excellent - this is the best way to access information and no other way is needed	0.0%	0
Comments:		0
answered question		2
skipped question		0

10. How could the NSW Electoral Commission make it easier for you to run as a candidate in future elections?

	Response Count
	1
answered question	1
skipped question	1

11. Was the information provided regarding legislative requirements, easy to understand?

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	100.0%	2
No	0.0%	0
Comments		0
answered question		2
skipped question		0

12. Do you have any other comments or feedback of the Election process?

	Response Count
	1
answered question	1
skipped question	1

13. Did you receive feedback from residents/voters on the election process? If so what was the feedback?

	Response Count
	1
answered question	1
skipped question	1

Page 7, Q10. How could the NSW Electoral Commission make it easier for you to run as a candidate in future elections?

1 Found it quite easy

Jan 30, 2013 11:30 AM

Page 8, Q12. Do you have any other comments or feedback of the Election process?

1 1 week pre-poll would be enough.

Jan 30, 2013 11:32 AM

Page 8, Q13. Did you receive feedback from residents/voters on the election process? If so what was the feedback?

1 No

Jan 30, 2013 11:32 AM