

**Submission  
No 3**

## **2012 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

**Organisation:** The Hills Shire Council  
**Name:** Mr Dave Walker  
**Date Received:** 4/01/2013

03 January 2013

Mr Jason Arditi  
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

***[electoralmatters.committee@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:electoralmatters.committee@parliament.nsw.gov.au)***

Dear Sir

### **Inquiry into the 2012 Local Government Elections**

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I refer to the Committee's request for submissions in regard to the conduct of the 2012 Local Government Election.

Following the 2008 Local Government Elections there was also a Committee of Inquiry. I appeared before that inquiry on the basis of fully supporting the role, activity and professionalism of the NSW Electoral Commission and the NSW Electoral Commissioner. At that time a number of Councils complained in regard to costs. This Council accepted the initial quote from the Electoral Commission and subsequently received a rebate. Those Councils who criticised the cost of the conduct at the 2008 Elections obviously either previously had not fully costed the Elections in regard to the involvement of their own staff nor accepted that in previous years the Commission had undercharged Councils.

For the 2012 Local Government Elections Councils were given a choice of either outsourcing their elections, conducting them themselves or using the services of the Commission.

This Council was one of the first Councils to accept the proposal from the Electoral Commission. Apart from some very minor issues which can be addressed in 2016, as General Manager I was extremely happy with the professionalism and approach of the Commission who had taken on board my concerns from the previous Election in regard to skills of staff at the Commission who receive phone calls.

The conduct of the Election at arms length ensures independence, ensures the General Manager is not put under pressure by either existing or potential Councillors and when tough decisions need to be made in regard to eligibility etc, these decisions are being made at arms length.

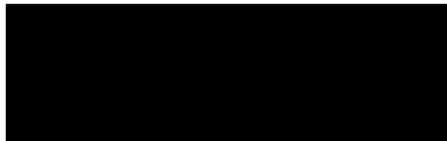
A number of Councils will complain that the Electoral Commission charges were too high and that they were able to run the Elections at a lower cost. I challenge these Councils to justify that they have fully costed all activities. Further, if these Councils have the facilities, staff and resources to conduct the Elections then I would also question whether or not in some situations that these Councils are over resourced in the first place.

As General Manager I value the professionalism of the Commission but more importantly the independence and arms length operation of the Election.

In terms of costs and funding, at a time when Local Government as an industry is seeking constitutional recognition it needs also to accept that it must pay its way and cannot expect State Governments to subsidise the cost of running Elections.

I would be more than happy to appear before the Committee to reinforce the points raised above. I can be contacted on 9843 0478 if further information is required.

Yours faithfully

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Dave Walker.

**Dave Walker**  
**GENERAL MANAGER**