

**Submission  
No 8**

**INQUIRY INTO CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS IN NEW  
SOUTH WALES**

**Name:** Mrs Candy Bingham

**Date Received:** 13 July 2022

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I have served as a Councillor for three terms and have been involved in a large number of Council & State election campaign committees.

As a candidate for the NSW Council Elections in 2021, the only thing that was consistent in the rules and regulations was that they changed consistently, from hour to hour, booth to booth.

For example:

1. The ruling that no handouts could be made within 100 metres of the booth made no sense, particularly for Council elections. Most people don't know who they are voting for and often seek out the candidates or their representatives to get their flyers so they can review policies and experience. To get around this ruling at some booths you were told you could use a lanyard to show information. Once these were printed you were told you couldn't. For many booths, 100 metres was across the road in a carpark, in the ocean, in bushland, or across a busy street. This ruling simply did not make sense and had an impact on the issuing of preferences.

2. The ruling that corflutes had to be erected before 7am and not removed until after 7pm just made no sense. The booths closed at 6pm and yet our volunteers were expected to hang around until after 7pm before corflutes could be removed. This was particularly difficult during pre-poll where the weather was often wet and windy and corflutes kept falling over, often causing a hazard, and yet under the rules they were not to be touched until 7pm.

3. The Pre-Polling period was too long and a total waste of the Electoral Commission's resources, and the time of volunteers. 4. Training & briefing of staff was inconsistent. The most alarming and concerning issue was that at many of the booths in our area, staff were telling people "you only need to vote 1 above the line". This was completely incorrect and with no how-to-vote flyers to guide them, had an impact on the distribution of preferences, which were much lower than in previous elections. As a preferential voting system, this was simply not acceptable.

In closing, I would add that while I appreciated the Electoral Commission's concerns about COVID, at the time of the election (which had already been delayed twice) the majority of people were double vaccinated. The no handouts within 100 metres of the polling booth and incorrect information provided by staff had a major impact on the result of the election.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Candy Bingham  
Deputy Mayor  
Northern Beaches Council