

## **INQUIRY INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (ELECTIONS) BILL 2025**

**Organisation:** Inverell Shire Council

**Date Received:** 8 July 2025

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Council would strongly object to the removal of the current provisions in the Local Government Act to provide for countback elections to fill casual vacancies created by ungrouped candidates.

Often in rural and regional areas grouping of candidates at local government elections is not prevalent. Hence, if the option to replace ungrouped candidates by countback is removed this would place a significant financial impost upon Councils by forcing them to hold costly by-elections. There have already been 18 countback elections since the September 2024 elections so this is a very real issue. By-elections are not something a Council will budget for and if forced into this situation this will impact service delivery in other areas which can have significant impacts in rural and regional Councils.

Thought also needs to be given to future cost control once the electoral commission is given the monopoly on conducting elections. This could result in a similar situation as the Audit Office who inflict exorbitant fees upon Councils with little justification.