

**Submission
No 27**

INQUIRY INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (ELECTIONS) BILL 2025

Name: Ms Karress Rhodes

Date Received: 3 July 2025

I submit the following from my experience as a Councilor on possible reforms that could address many failings in the Local Government Process, for your consideration.

1. All candidates wishing to stand for election, must have completed the Local Government Directors Course as a necessary qualification to stand for election.

This would ensure that:

a) all Councilors know the NSW Local Government ACT, the rights and responsibilities of Councilors, the difference between Councilor and Operational jurisdiction and have got a full command of the English, written and spoken language.

Rationale:

With ever increasing cultural diversities in Australia, it is possible for candidates who represent one particular Culture to be elected purely on the basis of their non Australian Cultural identity and the Candidates are not necessarily aware of the rules and regulations that govern Councilors, or not interested in representing all constituents equally.

It would educate Councilors about Codes of Conduct which would assist in better behavior by Councilors and more professional due diligence in their duty as an elected member of Council.

It would save Council funds not having to possibly address frivolous or vexatious Code of Conduct claims.

It would help to stop Councilors from moving motions that are interfering in the "Operational" jurisdiction of Council.

2. ban corflute and election promotional material for Candidates and replace it with an official electoral office run "meet the Candidates event/s" in each electorate, where each candidate's required knowledge in accordance with the Local Government Directors Course is tested, as well as their ambitions for their Councilor representation is made known.

A video recording of each Candidate is continuously played at each of the polling places in the Ward that each Candidate is standing, avoiding the possible harassment of voters by candidates when handing out how to vote information, but still ensuring all constituents are well informed about who they may vote for.

Each event is funded by all Candidates contributing the maximum permissible legal Candidate contribution.

Stop Party registration and only provide for individual Candidate registration.

Rationale;

This would result in better representation for the Community and better performance by each Council.

It would result in greater education about all candidates, resulting in a more informed electorate for better decision making and a better Council performance.

3. Cancel the opportunity for private or party donations to Local Government election campaigns, restricting it to just a one-off candidate donation set by the AEC.

The elected Candidate could be refunded their donation either by the AEC or by the respective Council if elected.

Rationale:

It would avoid or simplify all the unnecessary work by the AEC in donation declarations and ensure greater legality compliance.

It would make for a more democratic election process removing the relevance from any particular Party and ensuring Candidates are elected on what they personally can bring to the table if elected.

4. Cancel preferential voting.

5. All candidates must be listed by their name only on ballot papers and not under a Party, as Political Parties should not be allowed to be registered for Local Government Elections.

Rationale:

Party Politics creates a two-party division in the interest of State and Federal party loyalties that interfere in decisions being made by Councilors.

By not permitting Parties to stand at Local Government Elections you are reinforcing the clear distinction between State, Federal, and Local levels of Government that will better enable constituents to understand the difference when voting.

It will stop Councils from being hijacked by Councillor motions that are nothing more than blatant attempts to support or promote their particular brand of politics and is not necessarily in the best interest of Liverpool nor serving all constituents equally.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my suggestions for change to the Local Government Election processes.