

- make a difference -

**NOMINATE**

**FOR COUNCIL**



Local Government Association  
of South Australia

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# - make a difference - COUNCIL ELECTIONS

## Shape your neighbourhood

Councils are part of your everyday, they provide roads and footpaths, parks and playgrounds, libraries, sporting facilities, and much more.

The decisions about these services and facilities are made by an elected group of councillors.

Becoming a councillor gives you the chance to shape your local community as part of the council team. It is a rewarding challenge - one that requires passion and leadership. It involves a commitment and a responsibility in upholding the law and giving your community confidence in local government.

Local government performs best when members of council are representative of their community. That means having different backgrounds, experiences, culture, age and gender.

There are many people in our local community who can provide strong leadership for councils.

If you care about the future of your community, you can nominate for council.

**This guide is to help you understand the role of a council member, the election process, and how you can nominate to be on council.**



# COUNCILLORS

## Who can become a council member?

You can nominate for council no matter your qualifications, religion, race, gender, work or life experience, or profession.

In South Australia there are almost 700 council members. If you are eligible to run as a council member, you are also eligible to run for mayor.

Being a councillor or mayor is a big commitment, but also one that is very rewarding.

## Am I eligible to run?

It is very likely you are eligible. In fact, the majority of people who can vote in local elections are also eligible to run as a candidate.

### To nominate you must be:



#### an Australian citizen

- this includes dual citizens



#### eligible to vote in your area

- or are an officer of a body corporate nominated to vote
- or are a member and nominee of a group that is on the council voters roll for the area.

You cannot run for council if you are:

- a state or federal member of parliament
- bankrupt or receiving relief of insolvent debt
- disqualified from holding office by a court order
- a council employee of that area
- a candidate for election in another council
- a person in prison or sentenced to prison.

If you are not sure if you can nominate, contact the Electoral Commission of South Australia on 1300 655 232.

## Why diversity is important

Communities are made up of people from different backgrounds with different needs.

This includes people that have historically had less input in council decisions. For example:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people from different cultural backgrounds
- people with disability
- women
- young people.

These groups are underrepresented on councils in South Australia and in governments across Australia.

Having diverse councils is important. It allows councils to better represent their community. It also allows them to speak with diverse ideas and beliefs and bring new perspectives to the table.

## Do you have what it takes to be a councillor?

To be on council, you should be passionate about your local community, be keen to learn, and willing to contribute to strategic decisions for your local area.

On a council, leadership skills are fundamental. You must be impartial, listen to other perspectives, and be well informed of the facts when advocating for the community.

Councillors do not make decisions on their own. Councils make decisions as a whole. This means you must work well with other councillors as part of a team.

As a councillor, you don't have to agree on everything. Just be prepared to build effective working relationships, influence others constructively, and engage in respectful debate on council.

You also don't need to know everything from the start to be a councillor. You will complete a council induction and training program, and attend workshops to build your skills and your understanding of council.

## The role of a councillor

Councillors serve the community by listening to diverse local voices and representing what is in the best interest of the whole community.

As a council member, you work with other councillors to make decisions about how your council will address the needs of your community. This includes:

- setting strategic objectives
- establishing priorities between competing demands
- deciding how to raise and allocate resources.

### Typical tasks of a councillor include:

- making decisions at council meetings
- reading council agendas
- reviewing plans, policies and budgets
- talking with your community
- representing your council area at events like citizenship ceremonies.

Councillors are not involved in the day-to-day running of the council. This is the responsibility of the council's Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

The specific role of council members is defined by the Local Government Act, 1999 (the Local Government Act) and is covered in Section 3 – How Councils Work?

**One of the most important roles you will have as a council member is making policy decisions**

## Do I get paid as a councillor?

As a councillor, you get an annual allowance.

This is not a salary.

Your allowance is set by the Remuneration Tribunal of South Australia every four years before council elections.

The amount you get is based on factors such as the size and revenue of your council and the ratio of council members to ratepayers.

This allowance is to help you perform your duties. Your council may also reimburse you for other expenses like phone costs, internet costs, and travel or childcare to attend meetings. These will be outlined in your council's allowances and benefits policy.

It is important to consider how your allowance affects your tax and any other payments you may currently receive. Please seek professional financial assistance for tax advice.

If you have other questions about your allowance, you can contact your council.

## Ethical and legal issues

As a councillor, you are a public officer. This means you must act on behalf of your community, and not your own personal interests.

You must uphold the law. These laws are to protect the public and preserve trust in local government.

### Behavioural standards

If elected, you must meet the standards of conduct:

- follow the law
- act honestly and with integrity
- only use your position for proper purposes
- bring an impartial and informed view to council decisions
- declare your relevant private interests. This includes the interests of your family, friends, or associates
- avoid making decisions where you are not impartial
- submit to public and official scrutiny
- report wrongdoing by others.

The community judges a council by its council members. That's why council members must behave in a way that is appropriate. You must be respectful to fellow council members - despite personal, policy, or political differences.

New state-wide standards of expected behaviour and values, known as Behavioural Standards, are anticipated in the new council term.

Upholding these standards of behaviour builds trust and community confidence in elected representatives.

Being a team player on council helps deliver greater outcomes that benefit the community.

## Laws that affect council members

As a councillor, you are a public officer (for the purposes of offences relating to public office) under the Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935.

The Act covers ways that council members can commit an offence. This includes bribery, corruption of office, abuse of public office, and demanding (or requiring) benefits based on public office.

Under the Independent Commission for Corruption Act 2012 you must report corruption (or any matter that you reasonably expect corruption) in public administration to the Office for Public Integrity.

As a council member, you must declare any conflict between your private interests and your public role.

The Local Government Act 1999 sets out what is a conflict of interest and the actions you must take. You will complete training on how to identify a conflict of interest. It will also cover what to do to reduce the risk of, or avoid, a conflict of interest.

### Penalties for not following the laws

Not following the law is serious. It will be dealt with by the authorities. These include the District Court of South Australia, the Office for Public Integrity, SA Police, or the Ombudsman SA.

Punishments may include a reprimand, training, suspension, fines, or disqualification from office.

More serious offences, such as corruption, can result in imprisonment.

You are not personally liable for the actions of a council (where it is acting in good faith and properly exercising its powers and functions). You cannot personally be sued by someone disputing a council action.

However, you can be sued for defamation. For example, if you make comments to damage a person's reputation. You should not say or write things about a person that you know are false (or are unsure if they are true or false).

It is also possible to lose your position on council. As set out in the Local Government Act 1999, the ways this can happen include:

- if you are declared bankrupt
- are sentenced to imprisonment
- become a member of a State, Territory, or Federal Parliament
- become an employee of the council.

**You need to be impartial, aware of your role and not take things personally**



## Do you have what it takes?

While there are no specific qualifications or experience required to be on council, you should be passionate about your local community, willing to work as part of a team and keen to learn.

Leadership skills are fundamental to working effectively on council and influencing the future direction of the local community. However, it is important to understand that councillors do not make decisions on their own.

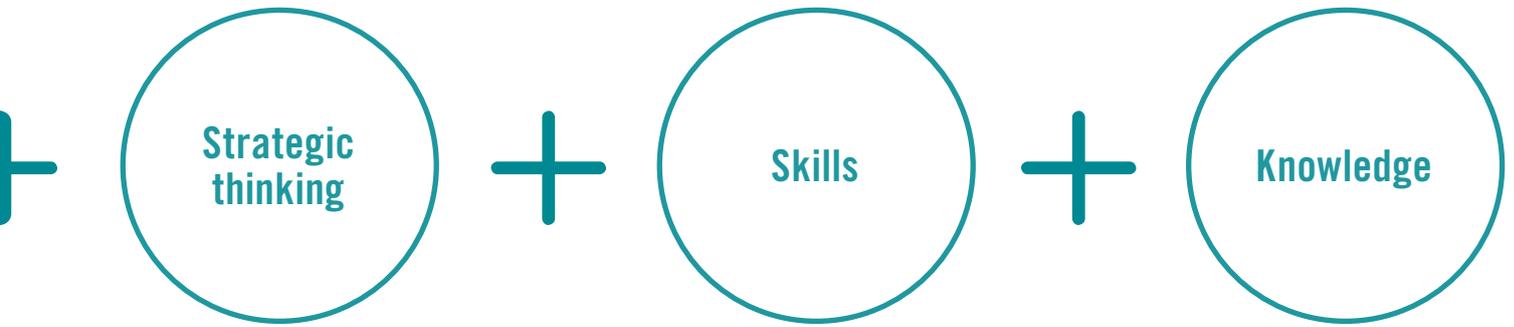
Decisions are only made by the council as a whole, which means you will be expected to work well with councillors.

This doesn't mean you have to agree on everything, rather be prepared to engage in respectful debate on issues and build effective, professional working relationships.

The following tables list some of the leadership qualities that may help you to be an effective council member. Consider whether these are attributes you already possess or are willing to develop to serve your community.

### PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Do you...	Already possess ✓	Willing to develop ✓
Remain calm and respectful in all situations, even when you feel challenged or under pressure?		
Consider other people's culture, values and feelings and show compassion and empathy when making difficult decisions?		
Want to achieve great things for your community and make a positive difference?		
Communicate clearly and succinctly, employing respectful language and tone?		
Listen deeply, seeking to understand others?		



READING PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS		
Do you...	Already possess ✓	Willing to develop ✓
Have an awareness of the needs, motivations and values of other people?		
Have the ability to notice and understand other people's perspectives (regardless of whether or not you agree with them)?		
Make professional, well informed and ethical decisions in difficult circumstances?		
Have the ability to make informed decisions when presented with complex situations and multiple stakeholders from varying interest groups?		
Have the ability to make fact-based decisions rather than be influenced by emotions?		

WORKING WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS		
Do you...	Already possess ✓	Willing to develop ✓
Manage relationships and work well with others to achieve desired outcomes?		
Engage respectfully in debates with others?		
Enjoy connecting with and learning from others?		
Ask questions, bring an open mind to decision making and admit when you don't know an answer or make a mistake?		
Carefully consider the evidence and different points of view presented by multiple stakeholders to make a decision in the best interests of the community?		

Some of the skills and knowledge that are useful for council members to have include:

STRATEGIC THINKING		
Are you...	Already possess ✓	Willing to develop ✓
Interested in the world around you and keep track of long-term and current trends and how they may have an impact upon local plans and objectives?		
Able to articulate your clear vision or intent for serving your community and contributing to the greater good?		
Curious to understand, learn and consider all relevant facts and options when making a decision?		

SKILLS		
Skilled in...	Already possess ✓	Willing to develop ✓
Listening and communication		
Time management		
Strategic thinking		
Use of computers, mobile devices and other technology generally		
Community engagement		
Managing difficult conversations		
Public speaking		
Resilience		

KNOWLEDGE		
Understanding of...	Already possess ✓	Willing to develop ✓
The needs and aspirations of your local council area and community		
Local government roles and responsibilities		
Budgeting and financial information		
Behavioural requirements		
Meeting procedures and principles of good governance		
Relevant legislation and policies		
Australia's political system		

Having a high level of self-awareness helped me to manage some of the challenges I faced as well as more effectively working with others on council.

If you are successful in becoming a councillor, a mandatory training program, council induction and ongoing professional development opportunities will help you to develop the skills and knowledge needed to operate effectively on council. You won't need to know everything from the start, however, it is important that you have a strong interest in your community and a commitment to learning in order to grow into the role of a council member.



## The three tiers of government

There are three tiers of government in Australia:

- local
- state
- federal

Although each tier of government operates differently, and has different powers, each has an important role. They work together to govern and provide services to the community.

Councils have important knowledge about the needs of their local area.

Council funds are used to deliver services to their local communities. These funds mostly come from council rates and other paid council services. They are sometimes supported by funding from state and federal governments.

## The important history of local government

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the first peoples of Australia. First Nations people were custodians of the land for tens of thousands of years, prior to colonisation.

Australia was a land of many nations, each with its laws, traditions, art, culture, and spirituality. First Nations people have continuing relationships and contributions to local communities.

Local government, as we know it today, has been an important part of our community since the colonisation of South Australia.

The Adelaide Corporation, formed in 1840, was the first elected council in Australia.

In 1887, the Parliament of South Australia introduced the District Councils Act. This set up local governments across the state.

The South Australian Constitution Act 1856 provides for a system of elected local government bodies.

The Local Government Act 1999 sets up the constitution, system, and operational framework for local government in South Australia.

The Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 contains the requirements for council elections. It sets out how the elections are to be conducted, who can nominate, who can vote, and how the votes are counted.

## Councils in South Australia

There are 68 councils in South Australia. Each council covers a geographic area that varies in size, population, and environment. All councils have the same general powers and responsibilities. Where they differ is in the services they choose to provide.

## Council responsibilities

### Legislated responsibilities

The Local Government Act 1999 provides the framework that guides how councils are established, their role and function.

Section 6 and 7 in the Local Government Act 1999 sets out the role council. This includes:

- being a representative, informed, and responsible decision-maker in the interests of the community
- providing and coordinating services and facilities to develop its community and its resources in a socially just and ecologically sustainable manner
- representing the interests of its community to the wider community and to other tiers of government
- planning at the local and regional level for the development and future needs of its area
- providing for the welfare, wellbeing, and interests of individuals and groups within its community
- managing, developing, protecting and conserving the environment.

By law, councils must provide regulatory services defined by the Local Government Act 1999 and other legislation.

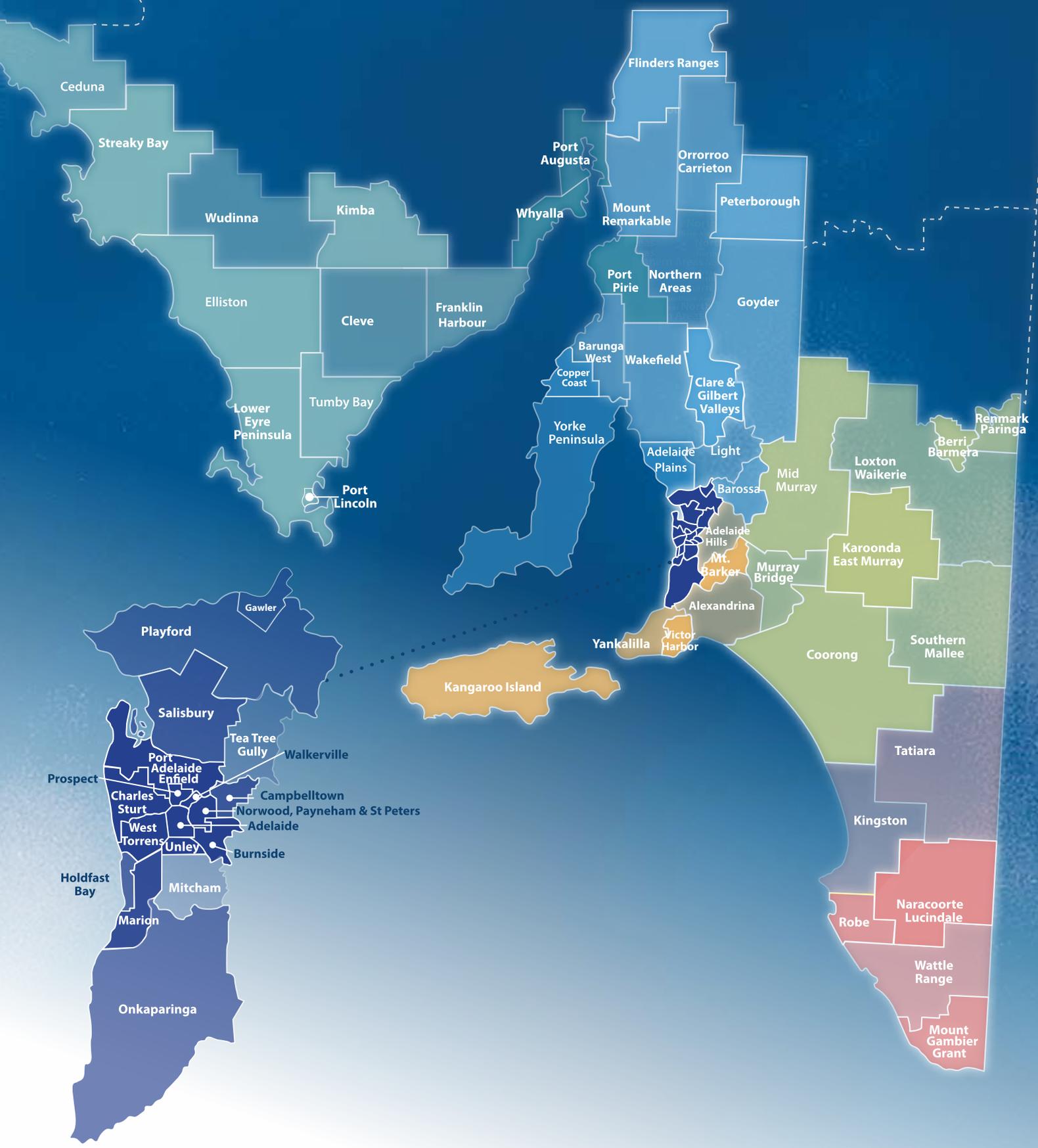
Examples include:

- waste collection
- zoning, planning, and building safety
- fire prevention and hazard management
- dog and cat management and control
- parking control
- public health and food inspection.

**Local government is an elected system of government. It is directly accountable to the local community.**

Cooper Pedy

Roxby Downs



### Other services offered by councils

These are the services that your council chooses to provide. Examples include:

- street lighting
- library and information services
- parks, ovals and sporting facilities
- swimming pools and leisure centres
- community facilities and halls
- coastal care
- support services for elderly people and people with a disability
- tourism initiatives
- wetlands and water resource management
- promoting economic development.

These vary from council to council, and depend on the:

- size and geographic location of the council area
- number of people living in the area
- physical environment
- needs of the local community
- resources and funding available.

Councils today are complex businesses, with diverse roles and responsibilities.

Council members are making decisions not just for today, but for the future. Councils set strategies to make a long-term difference, balance competing demands, and consider the best use of public funds.

Understanding council's role, as defined by the Local Government Act 1999 and learning how it works in practice, does take time.

As a councillor, having a strategic mindset, broad interests, and being able to see the bigger picture are all qualities that can help you.



**Provide and  
maintain community  
infrastructure**



**Provide  
community  
services**



**Plan for and  
administer sustainable  
development**



**Nominate for council to make a difference for your entire community, rather than a single issue.**



**Encourage and support economic development**



**Safeguard public health and safety**



**Protect the environment**

## Structure

Your council is made of two sets of people. These are:

- **The principal member:** This is the mayor in SA elections. They are elected by the community.
- **A group of councillors:** These councillors are elected by the community. They may be elected to the council as a whole or to a specific ward (a sub-area of a council region).

In some 2022 elections, the principal member will be chosen by the council from among the elected councillors. From 2026, all principal members (mayors) must be elected directly by the community.

If a council has wards it may choose to have both area councillors and ward councillors.

If a council does not have wards, only area councillors are elected. Both ward and area councillors must consider the interests of the council area as a whole.

All council members are elected for a four-year term (or less if elected at a supplementary election during the council term). Supplementary elections may occur when a current councillor can no longer perform their duties. For example, they have chosen to step down from council.

Council members are part of an incorporated body. This body is responsible for carrying out the duties and exercising the powers given to council by the Local Government Act 1999 and other laws.

## The role of the principal member (mayor)

Section 58 of the Local Government Act 1999 sets out the role of the principal member. This includes:

- provide leadership and guidance to the council
- lead and promote positive and constructive working relationships among council members
- provide guidance to council members on the performance of their roles, including on the exercise and performance of their official functions and duties
- support council members understanding of the separation of responsibilities between elected representatives and council employees
- preside at meetings of council
- liaise with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) between council meetings on the implementation of council decisions
- act as the principal spokesperson of the councils.
- exercise other functions of the council as the council determines
- perform civic and ceremonial duties, as the office of principal member.

As a principal member, you have important working relationships with both council members and the CEO. The ability to support an effective team culture on council, and build a respectful working relationship with the CEO, is invaluable in this role.

“  
**My experience says that the best team to achieve community desires is where the mayor and chief executive officer understand their respective roles.**

**This ensures that both support each other’s roles and the council team and community benefit from a whole team approach.**”

**Council CEO**



## The role of the council members

Section 59 of the Local Government Act 1999 sets out the role of council members:

- act with integrity
- ensure positive and constructive working relationships within council
- recognise and support the role of the principal member under the Act
- develop skills relevant to the role of the council member and the functions of the council
- participate in the deliberations and activities of the council
- keep the council's objectives and policies under review to ensure they are appropriate and effective
- keep the council's resource allocation, expenditure, activities, and the efficiency and effectiveness of its service delivery under review
- ensure, as far as practicable, that the principles set out in Section 8 (Local Government Act 1999) are observed
- participate in the oversight of the CEO's performance (under the council's contract with the CEO)
- serve the overall public interest.

Serving the interests of the broader community is a privilege. As a councillor, engaging in your local community and at council meetings with respect is critical.

The ability to listen, seek to understand others points of view, and speak to the facts are important in the role.



**As a councillor you will be required to represent the views of residents and ratepayers to your council and in turn, explain council policy and decisions to community members. You will serve as a bridge between the community and council. However, you will have no direct involvement in administration or managing council staff, and no independent authority to act or make decisions on behalf of the council.**

## Attending meetings

### Council meetings

One of your most important roles as a councillor is to participate in the decision making process at council meetings. Council meetings are held at least once a month.

You are required to prepare for meetings. Meeting papers and reports are often detailed, so you need to set aside time to read and understand the content before each meeting. Many councils provide electronic devices for councillors to read the council meeting agendas and reports.

Decisions at a council meeting are made by a majority vote. You must vote on every motion and amendment up for decision (unless you have a conflict of interest).

The mayor may only vote under limited circumstance. For example: to cast a deciding vote when votes are equal.

If you are absent from three meetings in a row without approval, you may be removed from office.

Council meetings are conducted using structured procedures. These are set out in the Local Government (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations 2013. You will complete training to ensure you can participate effectively and lawfully in council meetings.

### Committee meetings

As a councillor, you may be asked to sit on a committee. Councils set up committees to assist with their activities and functions. These committees may also include members of the public.

Reasons to set up a committee include to:

- look into matters and make recommendations to the council
- carry out projects or tasks on behalf of the council
- run facilities or activities on behalf of the council
- oversee works on behalf of the council
- exercise delegated powers, functions, or duties.

**You owe it to  
your community  
to make  
well-informed  
decisions.**

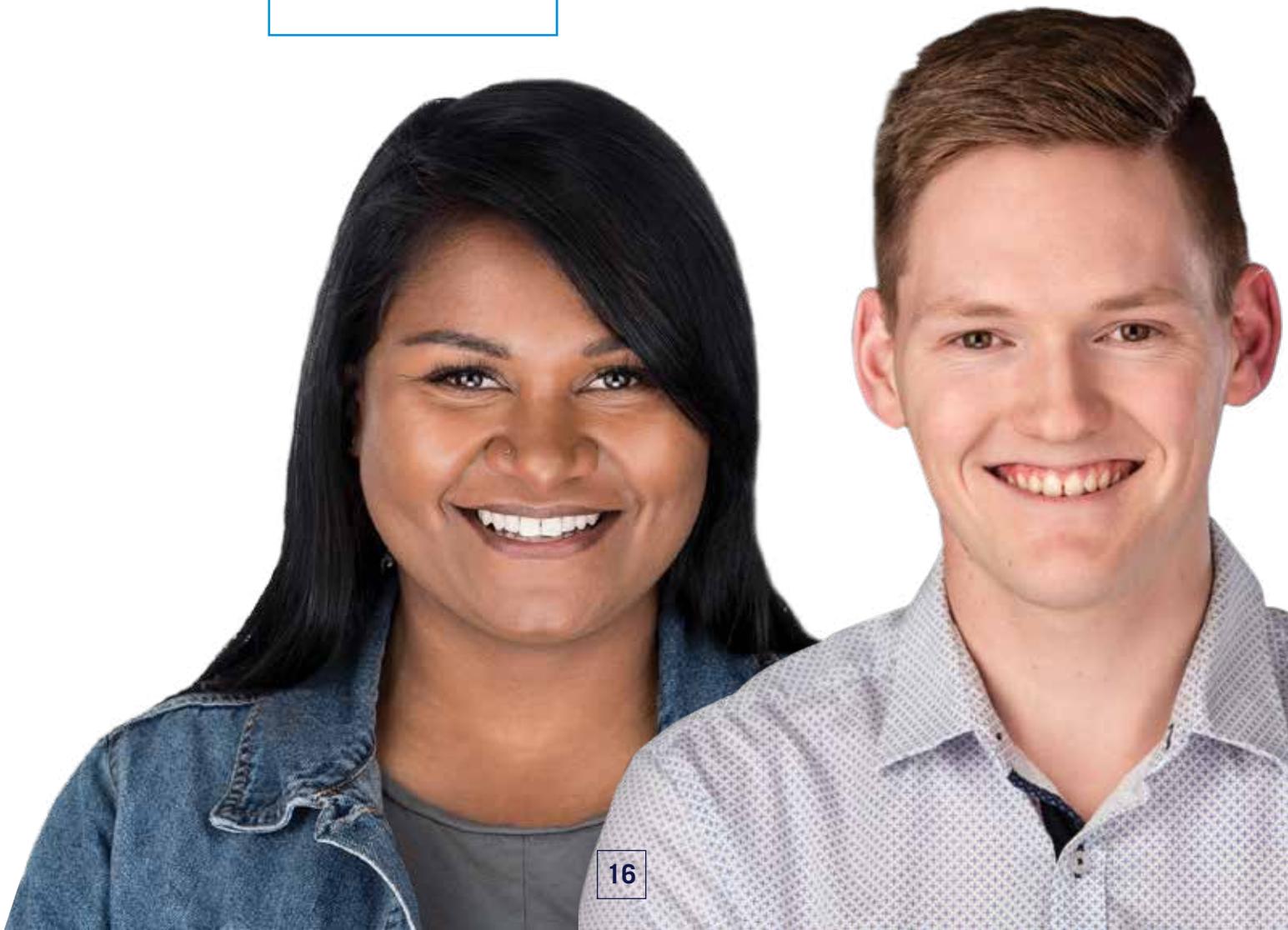
### Information and briefing meetings

These sessions give you the chance to better understand proposals up for decision. They can also be used for planning, training, workshops, and improving discussion between councillors and the CEO and council staff.

The Local Government Act 1999 prescribes the requirements for information and briefing sessions. These sessions are not a formal meeting of the council. No decisions can be made at them. Topics cannot be discussed in a way that effectively reaches a decision.

If these meetings are about a matter that will be included in the formal council agenda, they must be open to the public (unless confidentiality criteria apply).

As a councillor, you must be prepared to attend these sessions and work collaboratively with staff and other council members. This is to ensure you are well-informed for any formal decision making at a council meeting.



## External meetings

You may be required to represent council on other bodies. For example: local organisations or school councils. This may also include representing local government at the state and national level with the Local Government Association of South Australia (LGA).

The Returning Officer is responsible for running South Australian council elections. The South Australian Electoral Commission is the Returning Officer in SA. They are an organisation that operates independent of council.

**While there are many rewards associated with community leadership, you will need to set aside sufficient preparation time before each meetings.**

**It is important that you consider your commitments carefully before deciding to run for election.**



## The two types of council elections

There are two forms of elections held in local government:

- Periodic elections: which are held on a regular four-year cycle.
- Supplementary elections: which may be held when a position becomes vacant.

In 2022, council elections are held in November.

## The Returning Officer

The Returning Officer is independent of councils, and is responsible for running the elections and ensuring they are conducted in accordance with the law.

The South Australian Electoral Commissioner is the Returning Officer for all council elections.

The Commissioner is supported by the Electoral Commission of South Australia (ECSA).

### Did you know

**As a candidate, you can appoint up to two scrutineers to watch the counting of the votes. They need to fill in a Scrutineer Authority Form (LG15) available from ECSA. You, as the candidate appointing them, need to fill in your candidate information. You will receive a form when nominations close.**

## How to run for council

Nominations for council open 23 August 2022.

Nomination information and material will become available approximately two weeks before nominations open.

You will be able to find these on the ECSA website: [www.ecsa.sa.gov.au](http://www.ecsa.sa.gov.au)

The online candidate portal on the ECSA website will be available to enter your nomination, profile, and upload a photograph. Your nomination cannot be submitted until the day nominations open.

You can get a nomination kit from the ECSA website to print, complete, and email if you are unable to use the candidate portal.

You can find more information on how to run for council at: [www.councilelections.sa.gov.au](http://www.councilelections.sa.gov.au)

## How voting works

You vote in council elections by post. Before the election, ECSA will send out ballot papers to all voters.

To vote, you simply fill out your ballot and mail it to ECSA in the provided reply-paid envelope.

ECSA will count the votes, and final results will be displayed for each council on the ECSA website (following provisional results).

### Important note:

**An authorised by statement must be included on any website or social media account you create for your campaign**



Once nominations close on 6 September 2022, you can check the details of other candidates standing for election in the same area as you on the ECSA website.

If no other competing candidates nominate (i.e. there are an equal number of candidates to positions available), you will be declared elected unopposed. An election campaign will not be necessary.

If there are more than the required number of candidates, it's time to start campaigning to get votes.

## Starting your campaign

Before you start, make sure you understand the rules for campaigning which are set out in the Local Government (Elections) Act 1999. You can find information about this from the:

- Council election website [www.councilelections.sa.gov.au](http://www.councilelections.sa.gov.au)
- Electoral Commission South Australia website [www.ecsa.sa.gov.au](http://www.ecsa.sa.gov.au)
- your council's website
- candidate handbook (provided in your nomination kit available from ECSA and your local council).

To help you campaign, you may want a copy of the voters roll for your area. The roll lists everyone eligible to vote in your election. You can get a copy free of charge from your local council. You will be charged for additional copies.

## Planning your campaign

The goal of your campaign is to get people to vote for you. As voting is voluntary, people need to know about you and what you stand for.

Ballots are sent 4 weeks before the vote closing date. Many people will post their vote immediately, so it's important to have your campaign running early.

While elections are competitive, you should focus on your own positive messages rather than negative comments about opponents.

**Be curious,  
be willing to learn and  
understand. You don't  
need to know all  
the answers.**

### Key things to consider in planning your campaign:

- what qualities you have to be an effective community leader
- what community issues are important to you
- what you stand for
- how you can best represent the whole community
- what your messaging will be
- how much time and money you can spend
- whether you will do fundraising or seek donations
- if you have people who can help you
- if you have people who can endorse you
- if you want to have a scrutineer (someone who watches the votes get counted)

### You may also wish to consider:

- deadlines and details for local media
- advertising costs
- designers or printers who can help with promotional material
- website support for your online activity
- costs for advertising in local media and/or digital advertising
- setting up social media (which must be clearly identified as your candidate social media account - including an 'authorised by' statement.)
- advertising a 'meet the candidate' event in your community.

### Ways to promote yourself to voters include:

- calling voters on the phone
- putting a pamphlet in letterboxes
- writing letters to voters
- door knocking
- speaking to local clubs and community groups
- talking to people in your community
- interviews with local newspapers, radio, or TV
- paid advertisements in local media or online
- placing posters in local shop windows or on noticeboards (with permission)
- speaking at public meetings
- holding events where you can promote your communities priorities
- creating a website
- building a social media presence
- sending emails (with permission).

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- advertising a 'meet the candidate' event in your community.

Once you've considered your strategies, you should prepare a campaign plan.

This sets out who will do what, when, and how much it will cost. An example is available on the following pages.

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- advertising costs
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## Preparing election materials

### Your candidate profile

Your nomination for election must include a candidate profile of no more than 1000 characters.

It must be a true reflection of your campaign and avoid reference to past council decisions and other candidates. Please refer to the ECSA Candidate Handbook for more information.

ECSA will publish your profile on their website within two weeks of nominations closing. Your candidate profile, along with your photo, will also be sent to all voters with their ballot pack.



### Print marketing for your campaign

One of the best ways to promote your campaign is with a brochure or leaflet that you can display and send to voters.

This should be easy to read, simple, and clearly state your goals. Consider including information such as:

- personal details – the type of work you do, your interests and background
- why you are standing for election – areas of concern, what you hope to achieve
- election details – the name of your council and ward, and key election dates
- voting details – how people can mark and return their ballot papers
- contact information – your address, phone number, email address, campaign website and social media accounts
- a photograph of yourself.

Once you have prepared your campaign material, ask others to check it before it's printed.

If distributing printed materials to letterboxes you should respect signs indicating that advertising materials are not welcome.

The information in your leaflet can provide the basis for other promotional materials including website information, media releases, or newspaper advertisements.

You must get permission from business owners and venue operators before displaying posters in windows or on noticeboards.

The authorising person's name and address (your 'authorised by' statement) must be included on any print items.

### **Promoting yourself online**

Putting information online can be a low-cost option to promote your yourself and connect with voters.

Social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter can be used to engage with residents, share information and respond to questions or concerns.

A website can be used to share campaign messages and to expand on ideas in more detail. It can also serve as a hub to connect your other online accounts.

If you are using the internet for promotion, be aware that any material published during the election campaign is electoral material.

You also must note your authorised statement on any social media account profiles you are using for your candidacy (for instance in the about section). Your authorised by statement doesn't need to be included in your posts within your feed, however must be included in any comments you make on other social media accounts.

When using social media for your campaign:

- be respectful of others' opinions, including detractors
- respond to comments, posts, and messages (include your authorised by statement)
- be accurate, helpful, and informative
- correct errors as soon as possible
- be mindful of your language and tone
- be sensitive to the privacy of others. Get permission from anyone who appears in any photos or video before sharing. If asked to remove, do so
- be clear about your identity as a candidate in the election
- don't make defamatory statements.

Remember, social media takes time and effort to maintain and is not for everyone. If you are not confident with social media, engaging with people face to face is still an effective way to campaign.



### **Did you know**

**You can organise a 'meet the candidate' event in a popular meeting place in your community. At these events you can greet members of your community and let them know what you will advocate for if you are elected to council.**

## Door knocking

People are more likely to vote in a council election if they have engaged directly with you as a candidate.

One of the best ways to do this is door knocking. Some things to consider before door knocking:

- Your personal presentation is important
- Prepare a brief introduction
- Be clear about your messages and questions
- Choose weekends or weekday evenings when more people are at home
- Target areas most likely to produce results (especially those close to home)
- Expect to cover an average of 10-15 houses per hour
- Respect any signs indicating that you are unwelcome
- Expect a wide range of interest levels and responses.
- Be prepared for complaints and suggest ways to address them with council
- Consider your own personal safety.

When someone answers the door:

- Introduce yourself and briefly explain the purpose of your visit
- If the person is busy, suggest another time or way of contacting you
- Be friendly and attentive and listen to the issues people want to talk about
- Explain your views politely
- Finish your conversation by seeking the person's support
- Leave a card or leaflet behind.

For security reasons, if the door is unanswered, do not leave a note that would make it obvious that the house is unattended.

**Be confident,  
not arrogant.  
Be open minded  
and curious of  
other perspectives,  
not single minded.**

## Electoral material

Electoral material is any material intended to affect the result of an election.

This includes posters and brochures, advertisements, promotional items such as shirts, badges and bags, events and social media posts.

Section 27 of the Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 states that electoral material must contain:

- the name and address of the person who authorises publication of the material
- for printed material
- the address of the printer (if they have a physical address)
- the email address or website address of the printer (if they have no physical address)

You are responsible for everything you publish, both printed and online. The Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 sets out strict requirements for electoral material. You may be punished for not following these rules.

### Misleading material

Do not publish or authorise election material that is false, inaccurate, or misleading. The Electoral Commissioner may ask you to withdraw the material from further publication or publish a retraction.

### Use of council resources

You are not allowed to use council resources for your campaign. This includes offices, support staff, equipment, and stationery.

### Violence, intimidation, and bribery

Do not use violence or intimidation, or offer (or give) a bribe to:

- influence a vote
- induce a person to submit or withdraw their candidacy
- interfere with an election.

It is also an offence to receive a bribe. A bribe is money - or a good or service that provides a material advantage, including food, drink, and entertainment - of \$20 or more.

## Dishonesty

Do not act dishonestly to influence (or attempt to influence) an election. This would make you guilty of an offence.

Declaring public policy or promising public action does not amount to bribery or dishonesty.

The public declaration of an intent (if elected) to donate the council member allowance to a particular body (or person) would likely be seen as a form of bribery in the election process.

## Interference

If you hinder or interfere with the free exercise or performance of a right under the Local Government (Elections) Act 1999, you are committing an offence against the Act.

## Campaign donations

If you get a donation during your campaign, you must submit a 'campaign donation return' to ECSA.

The campaign donation return must set out:

- the total and individual value of all gifts received
- how many people gave those gifts
- the date each gift was made
- the name and address of the person who made the gift

You must also lodge 'large gift return' if you get a gift that is over \$2,500. The large gift return must be sent to ECSA within five days of receipt of the gift and must set out:

- the amount or value of each gift
- the date on which the gift was made
- the name and address of the person who made the gift.

It is an offence not to lodge a campaign donation return or large gift return. You can find more information on the ECSA website.

## Standing for re-election

If you are standing for re-election, there are extra requirements under the Local Government (Elections) Act 1999.

Councils enter a caretaker policy which sets out the conduct of the council and its staff during the election period.

Current council members have a general duty not to use council services or facilities for election campaigns. This is to support a level playing field for all candidates.

Council members considering renominating for re-election should read the councils caretaker policy and minimise risk of legal liability or suggestion of unfair advantage.

## Complaints

Any individual or organisation can make a complaint about an electoral offence under the Local Government (Elections) Act 1999.

The complaint must be made in writing and submitted, with supporting evidence, to the Electoral Commissioner who will consider each complaint.

The Court of Disputed Returns can consider a petition that disputes an election. The court has powers as set out in the Local Government (Elections) Act 1999.

The Electoral Commissioner may lodge a petition disputing the validity of an election if there is an error in the recording, scrutiny and count, or recounting of votes.

If there is any other petition lodged to the court the petitioner must set out the facts on why this would invalidate the election and the Electoral Commissioner must sign the petition.

## Penalties

The Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 specifies a range of illegal practices. Penalties may apply including fines of up to \$10,000 or imprisonment for seven years.

Once the election is finalised, ECSA will post results on their website.

If you are successful, your council's CEO will advise you when the first council meeting is after the election. You will be given at least three days' notice of this meeting. It may be almost straight away or could be as long as three weeks after.

You should prepare by learning about:

- the procedure for taking your place on council
- meeting procedures.

Find out more about council meetings in the Meeting Procedures Handbook, available on the LGA website.

### Did you know

**An authorised by statement must be included on any website/social media account you create to comply with the assist your campaign**

Having researched and assessed your strategies you should prepare a campaign plan setting out who will do what, when, and how much it will cost. This plan can be shared with your campaign team, and used to help manage the implementation of your campaign.

**Each candidate is responsible for obtaining their own advice and assistance to stage their campaign**

## Example campaign plan template

<b>Key local issues to campaign on</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue 1</li> <li>• Issue 2</li> <li>• Issue 3</li> </ul>		
<b>Key messages to convey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Message 1</li> <li>• Message 2</li> <li>• Message 3</li> </ul>		
<b>Campaign budget</b>	\$ xxx		
<b>Campaign team members</b>	<b>Name</b> e.g. John Citizen	<b>Mobile</b> 0400 000 000	<b>Email</b> johnc@mail.com
<b>Important contacts (e.g.)</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Mobile</b>	<b>Email</b>
ECSA Deputy returning officer			
Local journalist(s)/ media			
Graphic designer			
Printer			
<b>Action items (e.g.)</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>	<b>When will it be done by?</b>	<b>What will it cost?</b>
Develop and print flyers	e.g. JC	10/10/18	\$100.00
Create a website			
Establish social media accounts			

## Your induction to council

The council's CEO will arrange an orientation and induction for the newly elected council. Your induction may include:

- information about local government, your role and responsibilities
- information on how your council is structured and operates
- a tour of the council area and facilities.
- an introduction to key staff members.
- a council workshop with other council members, the CEO and key staff.

In your induction, you may get copies of council strategies, plans and policies, and legislation. In the meantime, you may find it valuable to read these documents:

- The Local Government Act 1999
- Council's organisational structure
- Council's strategic management plan
- Council's policies and procedures
- The current budget and budget proposals for next year
- The council's most recent annual report.

A Council Members Guide is available on the LGA website. Most of this information can be found on your council's website.

**It's not about winning for yourself. It's about looking at the bigger picture, taking stock of all the information and facts, seeking community input, and finding commonality with others about what is best for the community.**

## Declaring that you are a councillor

Once you have been elected, you must make a Declaration of Office before you are officially on the council.

This is a formal declaration to carry out your duties to the best of your ability. It is signed in front of a Justice of the Peace. This occurs at or before your first council meeting.

Each council has its own procedure for this ceremony. You may be asked to wear robes, read the declaration aloud or to give a short speech.

You must also complete declarations about yourself and your interests via the following official forms:

- a primary return (of your financial and other interests)
- an ordinary return (an update of changes to the primary return) each year.

The primary return must be completed within six weeks of the conclusion of the election. The CEO will brief you on the procedure as it applies to your council.

For transparency and accountability, your returns will be accessible to the public on a register of interests. This is published on your council website.

## Your training and development

The Local Government Act 1999 requires each council to have a training and development policy for council members to help you do your duties.

The Act requires council members to do regular training that aligns with council's policy. It must also comply with the LGA Training Standards (published at: [www.training.lga.sa.gov.au](http://www.training.lga.sa.gov.au)).

You must complete mandatory training within the first 12 months of your four-year term. Mandatory training will cover topics such as:

- the role and function of local government and council
- behavioural requirements
- legal responsibilities
- strategic planning
- decision making
- council and committee meetings
- financial management and reporting.

Being an effective council member takes time. Seek out ways to continue to learn throughout your term on council. The LGA offer a range of on-going learning opportunities that can help you.

## Local Government Association of SA

The Local Government Association provides leadership to councils for the benefit of the South Australian community

[lga.sa.gov.au](http://lga.sa.gov.au)

148 Frome Street

GPO Box 2693 Adelaide SA 5001

Telephone: 8224 2000

## Electoral Commission of SA

[ecsa.sa.gov.au](http://ecsa.sa.gov.au)

Level 6, 60 Light Square SA 5000

GPO Box 646 Adelaide SA 5001

Phone: 7424 7400 or 1300 655 232

**The LGA, ECSA and councils do not provide legal advice or support in relation to the development of campaign materials or online resources.**











Local Government Association of SA

148 Frome Street Adelaide SA 5001

Telephone: 8224 2000

[councilelections.sa.gov.au](http://councilelections.sa.gov.au)

