

Report on the conduct of the

# 2021 NSW Local Government elections

Part one



iVote® is a registered trademark of the State of New South Wales (NSW Electoral Commission). The term iVote refers to the NSW Electoral Commission's internet and telephone voting system.

All tables and figures are sourced to NSW Electoral Commission unless stated otherwise.

This report was produced using internal resources. To reduce our environmental impact, this report can be downloaded from our website at [elections.nsw.gov.au](https://elections.nsw.gov.au)

NSW Electoral Commission  
Office address: 231 Elizabeth Street, Sydney NSW 2000  
Postal address: GPO Box 832, Sydney NSW 2001  
T (+61 2) 9290 5999 | F (+61 2) 9290 5991  
Office hours: Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm  
[elections.nsw.gov.au](https://elections.nsw.gov.au)

The NSW Electoral Commission acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout New South Wales and their continuing connection to the land, sea, and community. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

# Contents

At a glance .....	6
About this report .....	7
Foreword from the Electoral Commissioner.....	8
Executive summary .....	10
About the NSW Electoral Commission.....	14
Recent legislative changes.....	15
About the 2021 NSW Local Government elections.....	16
Response to reviews and inquiries.....	21
Summary of proposals for legislative change .....	22
Election calendar .....	28
Funding and financial management.....	29
Election programme management .....	32
COVID-19 safety measures .....	33
Conduct of the elections.....	36
Registration of political participants.....	37
Candidate nominations.....	43
Electoral material.....	45
Voting.....	47
Counting and results .....	54
Staffing .....	58
Venues .....	64
Ballot papers and logistics .....	69
Compliance operations.....	70
Multi-voter analysis .....	74
Non-voter process .....	74
Communications campaign and stakeholder engagement.....	76
Communications and engagement.....	77
Services for political participants .....	88
Customer service and relationship management.....	89
Website .....	91
Election evaluation and customer research .....	95
Appendices .....	98
Glossary .....	166

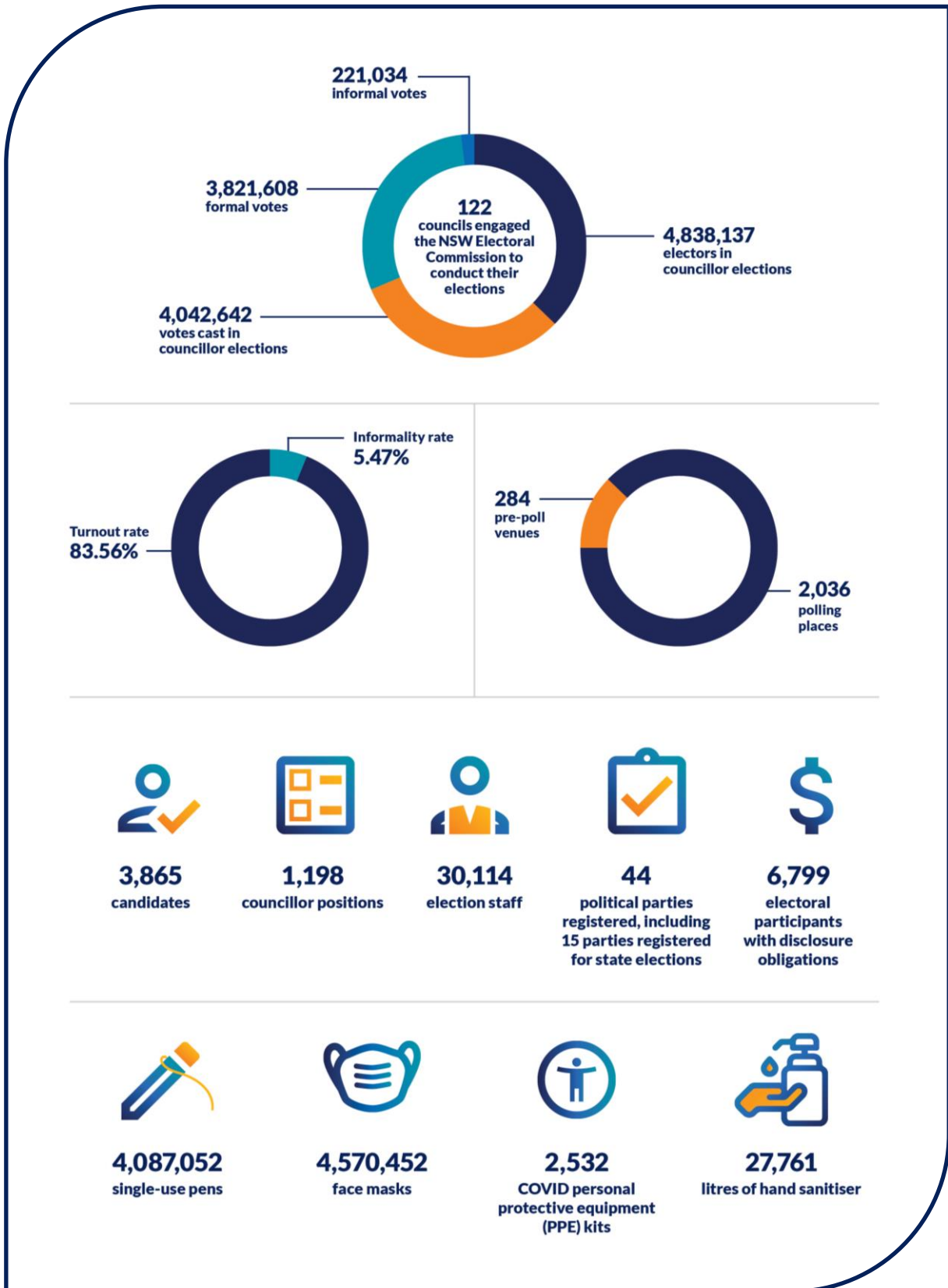
# Table of tables

Table 1: Votes cast by channel for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections.....	11
Table 2: Budget for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections .....	29
Table 3: 2021 NSW Local Government elections – Major expenditure items.....	30
Table 4: 2021 NSW Local Government elections – Election officials’ wages .....	31
Table 5: 2021 NSW Local Government elections – Registrations received .....	38
Table 6: Political parties registered for the Local Government elections (December 2021).....	39
Table 7: Political parties registered for State elections (December 2021).....	40
Table 8: 2021-22 financial year disclosure obligations for the 2021 Local Government elections.....	42
Table 9: Candidate nominations lodged for the 2021 NSW Local Government election.....	43
Table 10: Key dates for postal voting for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections .....	48
Table 11: 2021 NSW Local Government elections postal vote breakdown.....	49
Table 12: iVote key dates for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections .....	50
Table 13: Councils adopting Countback elections .....	55
Table 14: Councils not adopting Countback elections .....	57
Table 15: Staff employed for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections (by role) .....	58
Table 16: Staff diversity for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections.....	61
Table 17: Incident categories for the reporting period 28 October 2021 to 25 May 2022.....	63
Table 18: Total venue numbers by venue type for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections .....	64
Table 19: Venue accessibility summary by venue type .....	65
Table 20: Accessibility of school premises used for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections.....	65
Table 21: The number of councils serviced by each returning office.....	66
Table 22: Venues impacted by rainfall and flooding for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections....	68
Table 23: Ballot paper summary – as printed for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections.....	69
Table 24: Allegations regarding potential breaches of the Local Government Regulation .....	71
Table 25: Allegations regarding potential breaches of the Electoral Funding Act.....	72
Table 26: Apparent failure to vote notices issued for NSW elections .....	75
Table 27: NSW Electoral Commission communication channels .....	78
Table 28: Media enquiries received (via email)* during the period 25 October to 4 December .....	80
Table 29: Media enquiries received (via email)* during the period 5 December to 22 December .....	80
Table 30: Channels and results (campaign period 10 October to 4 December) .....	82
Table 31: Channels and results (campaign period 10 October to 4 December) .....	83
Table 32: Information for electors in 24 community languages.....	85
Table 33: Devices used to access information about the 2021 NSW Local Government elections .....	91
Table 34: NSW Electoral Commission website users by internet browser language setting (top five)....	92
Table 35: The top-ranking referral pages* .....	92
Table 36: Performance of social media channels during the 2021 NSW Local Government election period	93
Table 37: Recount requests for the 2021 NSW Local Government election.....	98

# List of appendices

Appendix A: Recount requests for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections .....	98
Appendix B: Councils, wards and contests for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections conducted by the NSW Electoral Commission .....	100
Appendix C: Formal votes for contests by area by voting channel for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections .....	116
Appendix D: Formal votes in mayoral contests by council by voting channel for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections .....	131
Appendix E: Pre-poll and election day venue counts by council .....	133
Appendix F: Venue accessibility by council .....	138
Appendix G: Languages spoken by election officials .....	146
Appendix H: Election staff employed who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, live with disability or speak a language in addition to English .....	153
Appendix I: 2021 Local Government elections state-wide advertising campaign .....	158

# At a glance



# About this report

This report on the conduct of the 2021 NSW Local Government elections is presented in two parts.

Part one provides an overview of the elections conducted by the NSW Electoral Commissioner on Saturday, 4 December 2021. It includes aggregated statistical information about the elections, information about voting methods, venues, staffing and how the election was funded. It also describes recent changes to the legislation that governs the conduct of local government elections.

Part one also summarises the integrity and enforcement activities of the Electoral Commission in relation to the conduct of participants in the elections. This work includes the registration of candidates, groups, and third-party campaigners for campaign finance regulation purposes; compliance operations undertaken during the elections; investigating allegations of breaches of electoral law; and any legal proceedings commenced to date in relation to the elections. More detailed information about the Electoral Commission's enforcement functions will be included in its annual report to the NSW Parliament.

Part one also includes recommendations by the Electoral Commissioner for legislative reform around the conduct of local government elections.

Part two provides information about each individual local council election, including candidates, results, breakdown of votes by vote type, staffing and venues.

This report is supplemented by the outcomes of independent research, which measured and evaluated the level of the satisfaction of election stakeholders (voters, candidates, local council general managers, and election staff) with the NSW Electoral Commissioner's conduct of the 2021 Local Government elections.

# Foreword from the Electoral Commissioner

Pursuant to clause 393AA of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*, I am pleased to present my report on the conduct of the 2021 NSW Local Government elections to the Minister for Local Government, the Hon Wendy Tuckerman, MP.

The constantly changing COVID-19 environment in New South Wales had a significant impact on the timing and conduct of these elections. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the then Minister for Local Government, the Hon Shelley Hancock MP, announced the postponement of the September 2020 Local Government elections, originally to 4 September 2021 and subsequently to 4 December 2021. In line with these changes, the Electoral Commission reviewed and amended its election operation plans and procedures, with much of this work being conducted by staff working remotely. The Electoral Commission also implemented a range of COVID-safe measures to help maintain the health and safety of voters, political participants, election staff and the public.

Notwithstanding the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, these elections saw improvements in both turnout and formality compared with the 2017 and 2016 Local Government elections.

This was the first local government election at which the Electoral Commission's technology assisted voting, platform (iVote – enabling internet and telephone voting), was used. Almost triple the number of voters used iVote to cast a vote than at any previous NSW election. Unfortunately, the much higher load on the iVote system meant some electors did not receive their voting credentials in time to vote before 6pm on election day. Having undertaken an analysis of the materiality of the problem across all elections, in January 2022 I commenced proceedings in the Supreme Court of New South Wales seeking a declaration about the validity of the elections for councillors in Kempsey Shire Council, Singleton Council and Shellharbour City Council (Ward A).

The Supreme Court decided that the issue was a material irregularity, and, on 3 May 2022, orders took effect that voided those three elections. I wish to express my regret again for the inconvenience caused to these three councils, their councillors, other election participants and electors.

Despite the issues experienced with iVote, other online services were introduced successfully for these elections by the Electoral Commission and will continue to be developed and refined, funding permitting, for future elections. The following services were delivered online for the first time for local government elections and, in some cases, for the first time for the Electoral Commission:

- enhanced online elector address look-up functionality
- campaign finance registrations
- nominations
- postal vote applications
- electoral material registrations
- political donations and electoral expenditure disclosures
- educational webinars and videos.



These digital initiatives supplement the Electoral Commission's existing election staff recruitment and apparent failure-to-vote portals, delivering greater convenience for election participants and voters, and improved processes for the Electoral Commission.

Of course, it is not only the NSW Electoral Commission making greater use of digital technology. Participants in elections, including voters, around the world have embraced social media to generate, source and distribute information about political issues and elections. This brings with it great benefits but also real risks, sometimes unreasonable expectations, and increased responsibilities, both for online platforms and electoral commissions.

The NSW Electoral Commission was alert to these issues at the December elections, especially in relation to its regulatory responsibilities, but does not have a specialised social media team available to focus on countering the threats to election integrity that emerge from online disinformation and misinformation about the conduct of elections. This is a gap that it would be highly desirable to close for future elections, including future local government elections.

In closing, I would like to thank all staff involved in conducting the 2021 NSW Local Government elections and the electors, councils, candidates, registered political parties and other stakeholders for their participation in this important event.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Schmidt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Schmidt  
Electoral Commissioner for New South Wales

# Executive summary

Local Government ordinary elections are meant to be held in New South Wales on the second Saturday in September every four years in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*.

The elections in 2020 were originally scheduled to be conducted on Saturday, 12 September 2020. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the then Minister for Local Government announced the postponement of the elections, first to 4 September 2021 and subsequently to 4 December 2021.

## Election service provision

These elections were the fourth conducted since changes introduced in 2011 to legislation gave councils the ability to choose their election manager. Councils have the option to choose the NSW Electoral Commissioner or to engage a commercial election service provider to conduct the election for them. Of the 128 councils in New South Wales, four did not hold elections in December 2021 and two did not engage the NSW Electoral Commissioner to conduct their elections:

- Fairfield City Council (engaged a commercial election service provider)
- Penrith City Council (engaged a commercial election service provider)
- Balranald Shire Council (under administration and therefore did not hold an election)
- Central Coast Council (under administration and therefore did not hold an election)
- Central Darling Shire Council (under administration and therefore did not hold an election)
- Wingecarribee Shire Council (under administration and therefore did not hold an election).

## Election summary

There were 4,042,642 votes cast in elections conducted by the NSW Electoral Commissioner: with 3,821,608 formal votes and 221,034 informal votes. This last figure represents an improvement in the informal voting rate, at 5.47 per cent down from 6.73\* per cent in 2017 and 6.05\* per cent in 2016. The councillor turnout rate for the 2021 elections was 83.56 per cent, higher than the 2017 turnout rate of 80.28\* per cent and 78.55\* percent in 2016.

*\*Note: The 2017 and 2016 comparisons differ from those published in the respective Local Government election reports. The turnout rate published for 2017 of 79.58 per cent and for 2016 of 79.27 per cent were the average turnout rates across councillor contests. For the 2021 elections, the numbers reported are the actual total turnout, similarly for the informality rate. The numbers in the Executive summary above marked with an asterisk (\*) have been amended to reflect like-for-like comparison.*

Table 1: Votes cast by channel for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections

Voting channel	No. of votes by channel
Ordinary	1,967,086
Pre-poll	1,050,913
Postal	207,143
Enrolment	148,514
iVote	668,790
Name already marked as voted (NAMAV)	196
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,042,642</b>

All results were declared by Thursday, 23 December 2021, with no recounts being conducted. Details of recount requests received and assessed can be found at Appendix A.

In total, the NSW Electoral Commission was responsible for 292 individual elections in 172 wards and 76 undivided council areas: 226 contested councillor elections, 33 contested mayoral elections, 9 referenda and 1 poll; 19 uncontested ward councillor elections, 3 uncontested undivided council councillor elections and 1 uncontested mayoral election. See Appendix B for a list of councils, wards and contests.

For the 122 councils, there were 284 pre-poll venues (including 49 of the 70 returning officers' offices that provided early voting services) and 2,036 polling places, serving 4,838,137 electors.

Forty-four (44) political parties were registered for the local government elections, including 15 parties registered for state elections.

A total of 3,865 candidates contested the elections from 3,962 nominations. Some candidates who nominated withdrew their candidacy, were ineligible to stand for election, or nominated for multiple positions (for both councillor and mayor). The recording of candidate gender is not mandatory but is used for statistical purposes. Of the candidates contesting the elections, 1,610 identified themselves as female and 2,165 identified themselves as male.

There were 1,193 councillors elected for a total of 1,198 councillor positions. Five councillor positions were required to be filled by subsequent by-elections.

The disclosure periods for the 2021-22 financial year are particularly complex given the high number of registered candidates and groups at these elections. Candidates must make disclosures even if they were not elected and will need to make disclosures for the full financial year. Also, many will be required to make more than one disclosure for each disclosure period. For example, a lead candidate of a group of candidates who was elected will need to submit three disclosures: as an individual candidate, as the lead candidate on behalf of the group, and as an elected member. There are 6,799 instances of disclosure obligations for the 2021-22 financial year.

The NSW Electoral Commission employed 30,114 election staff in a range of roles for varying lengths of time, with the majority being engaged for election day.

Conducting an election is a considerable logistical exercise. COVID-safety measures added to the challenges. Items procured and transported to venues across New South Wales for the 2021 Local Government elections included 4,087,052 single-use pens, 4,570,452 face masks, 2,532 COVID personal protective equipment (PPE) kits and 27,761 litres of hand sanitiser.

## Legislation changes for COVID-19

A number of COVID-related legislative changes were introduced for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections. These changes included:

- allowing the use of iVote
- allowing all electors to vote before election day at a pre-poll venue
- expanding eligibility for postal voting to electors who were self-isolating or electors who believed that attending a venue on election day would pose a risk to health and safety
- empowering the election manager to make directions about scrutineering, display of posters and handing out of electoral material to reduce the risk of infection from COVID-19.

## Measures implemented to manage risks of COVID-19

The preparation and delivery of an election with consideration of, and adherence to, COVID-19 safety measures required a high level of coordination and planning. These elections are believed to have been the largest public participation event held in Australia since the beginning of the pandemic. Central to its preparedness, the NSW Electoral Commission developed a *COVID-19 Safety Plan for Elections*, which included a range of policy and operational measures to protect staff, voters and other election participants. The Plan was supplemented by a range of educational and other awareness-raising material to manage the risks of COVID-19.

To ensure that the NSW Electoral Commission had access to relevant information and resources to develop its plan, a working group was established to facilitate close collaboration and coordination across key government agencies. Members of the working group included NSW Electoral Commission officers and representatives from the following NSW Government agencies:

- NSW Health
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- NSW Police
- Office of Local Government NSW
- NSW Department of Customer Service
- NSW Department of Education.

As permitted by amendments to the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*, the NSW Electoral Commissioner also issued three directions in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission during voting and counting during these elections. These directions related to the handing-out of material and display of posters within 100 metres of a polling place and the conduct of scrutineers in counting venues.

NSW Electoral Commission staff (head office and temporary election workers) were also required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and to wear a mask indoors and outdoors at all venues. These measures were adopted after risk assessments, based on the information available to the NSW Electoral Commission at the time.

## **iVote**

The Local Government (General) Regulation was amended to allow the use of iVote, the NSW Electoral Commissioner's technology-assisted voting platform, for the first time at council elections. The iVote platform was available from Monday, 22 November through the early voting period to election day Saturday, 4 December 2021. At close of the iVote registration period at 1pm on election day Saturday, 4 December 2021, almost triple the number of voters had used iVote than at any previous NSW election.

As a result of a systems issue experienced on election day, a number of electors who successfully applied for iVote were not issued with the necessary security credentials to enable them to cast a vote by the close of voting at 6pm on election day. While some of these voters were able to vote by other means, a significant number were not.

Following an analysis of the potential impact of this issue on the outcome of the elections, the NSW Electoral Commissioner formed the view that there was a material possibility that a different outcome might have occurred in three contests. Recognising that public trust in the legitimacy of election results is critical to our electoral system, the NSW Electoral Commissioner subsequently applied to the NSW Supreme Court to consider the validity of the elections held in Kempsey Shire Council, Singleton Council and Shellharbour City Council – Ward A.

The Court decided that that the elections for Kempsey Shire Council, Singleton Council and Shellharbour City Council (Ward A) were void, with its orders effective from 3 May 2022. The NSW Electoral Commissioner has agreed to meet the legal costs of the three councils and those councils will also not be required to pay for a second election. The NSW Electoral Commission also established an act of grace payments scheme to reimburse election participants in the voided elections for their lawfully incurred electoral expenditure.

## **Election evaluation and customer research**

To inform the future work of the NSW Electoral Commission, an independent research provider was engaged to measure election participants' satisfaction with election products and services and the overall conduct of the elections.

# About the NSW Electoral Commission

The NSW Electoral Commission's staff work across four divisions: Elections; Information Services; Funding, Disclosure, Compliance and General Counsel; and Corporate. The work of the Commission includes:

- conducting general elections and by-elections for the NSW Parliament
- conducting elections and by-elections for local councils (if engaged to do so)
- conducting elections for the NSW Aboriginal Land Council
- conducting elections for registered clubs, statutory boards and State registered industrial organisations (if engaged or required to do so)
- providing processes and guidance to assist political participants (including candidates, parties, elected members, political donors, third-party campaigners, associated entities and lobbyists) to comply with their obligations
- administering electoral funding legislation, including maintaining a scheme of public funding, and publishing political donation and expenditure disclosures and registers of political parties, candidates, agents, third-party campaigners, associated entities and political lobbyists
- engaging with the public to make it easier for people to understand and participate in the democratic process
- investigating possible offences and enforcing breaches of electoral, funding and disclosure, and lobbying laws
- maintaining the Electoral Information Register (in collaboration with the Australian Electoral Commission).

New South Wales legislation sets out how the NSW Electoral Commission and NSW Electoral Commissioner conduct and regulate elections and the obligations of voters and political participants.

# Recent legislative changes

## Local Government Act and Regulations

In September 2020, amendments to the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* (the Regulations) made by the *Local Government (General) Amendment (Elections) Regulation 2018* completed the legislative introduction of the Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method of counting votes. This Method was used for the first time at the 2021 local government elections.

In May 2021, the *Local Government Amendment Act 2021* amended the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) to allow the time in which a postal vote may be received to be prescribed by the Regulations.

In July 2021, the *Local Government (General) Amendment Regulation 2021* amended the Regulations in preparation for the 2021 local government elections. The key changes included:

- The time by which a postal vote may be received was prescribed as 6pm on the thirteenth day following the election day. This is equivalent to postal voting arrangements for federal elections. The Act previously required a postal vote to be returned by the fourth business day after the election.
- Technology assisted voting was permitted at local government elections administered by the NSW Electoral Commissioner.
- Special measures to mitigate COVID-19-related risks, including allowing all electors to vote before election day at a pre-poll venue; expanding eligibility for postal voting to electors who were self-isolating or electors who believed that attending a venue on election day would pose a risk to health and safety; and empowering the election manager to make directions about scrutineering, the display of posters and the handing out of electoral material.

In November 2021, the *Local Government Amendment (COVID-19–Elections Special Provisions) Act 2021* enabled regulations to be made that would modify the application of the Act for the elections for the purposes of responding to the public health emergency caused by COVID-19. Such regulations could only be made if the proposed regulations were in accordance with advice issued by the NSW Electoral Commissioner and the proposed regulations were reasonable to protect the health, safety and welfare of persons from the risk of harm caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Any regulations made were not permitted to enable an election to be conducted exclusively by means of postal voting, or exclusively by postal voting and internet voting. No regulations were ultimately made under this special regulation-making power.

## Electoral Funding Act

The *Electoral Legislation Amendment (Local Government Elections) Act 2021* amended the *Electoral Funding Act 2018* in June 2021, introducing the option from 1 July 2021 for a party agent to become the person responsible for the party's endorsed candidates under electoral funding legislation.

The method by which the electoral expenditure cap is calculated was also changed for these elections by the *Electoral Funding Amendment (Local Government Expenditure Caps) Act 2019*.

# About the 2021 NSW Local Government elections

## Postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Local government ordinary elections are legislated to be held in New South Wales on the second Saturday in September every four years in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*. The elections were originally scheduled for Saturday, 12 September 2020.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the then Minister for Local Government announced the postponement of the September 2020 Local Government elections for 12 months in the interests of public health and safety. The Minister subsequently announced that these elections would be held on 4 September 2021. On 24 July 2021, the Minister made an Order to further postpone these elections to Saturday, 4 December 2021 in response to the changing COVID-19 situation across New South Wales at that time.

## Elections conducted by the NSW Electoral Commissioner

The elections were the fourth conducted since changes to legislation gave councils the option to choose their election provider. Councils have the option to choose the NSW Electoral Commissioner or to engage a commercial election service provider to conduct the election for them. Councils cannot choose to run their own election.

There are 128 local government areas in New South Wales, each represented by a council. As detailed below, of the 128 councils in New South Wales four did not hold elections in December and two did not engage the NSW Electoral Commissioner to conduct their elections:

- Fairfield City Council (engaged a commercial election service provider)
- Penrith City Council (engaged a commercial election service provider)
- Balranald Shire Council (under administration and therefore did not hold an election)
- Central Coast Council (under administration and therefore did not hold an election)
- Central Darling shire Council (under administration and therefore did not hold an election)
- Wingecarribee Shire Council (under administration and therefore did not hold an election).

Although the NSW Electoral Commissioner did not conduct elections for the City of Fairfield and City of Penrith, information in this report about the requirements for registration for electoral funding purposes (accepting political donations and incurring electoral expenditure) applies to candidates and other participants in those councils' elections. Offences under local government electoral laws at all council elections are also enforced by the NSW Electoral Commission, including failure to vote or multiple voting at elections not conducted by the NSW Electoral Commissioner.

The City of Fairfield and City of Penrith councils should be contacted directly for information about the administration of candidate nominations, registration of electoral material, polling places, voting and results (see [fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au](http://fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au) and [penrithcity.nsw.gov.au](http://penrithcity.nsw.gov.au)) for their elections.

## Undivided and divided local government areas

A local government area is either undivided or divided. A divided council is split into wards, and each ward has its own councillor elections.



## Types of elections contested

See Appendix B for a list of councils that engaged the NSW Electoral Commissioner to conduct their elections.

### Councillor election

Councillors in an undivided council are elected by all voters in that council area. Councillors in a divided area are elected to represent each ward within the council area. An equal number of councillors are elected for each ward.

The number of councillors elected varies between councils. Councillors are elected for a four-year term, shortened in this case due to the postponement of the elections from 2020 to 2021.

### Mayor election

Mayors can be either elected by the voters (direct or popularly elected mayor) or elected by the new councillors (and from the councillors) following a council election.

Mayors who are elected by the voters serve a four-year term, noting the shortened term for elected councillors due to the postponement of these elections. The election of a mayor by voters and the election of councillors are conducted at the same time but are considered separate elections, with separate ballot papers. For example, if a council has a total of 10 councillors to be elected, and the mayor is elected by the voters, the election for that council would be for nine councillors and one mayor. A candidate can run for both councillor and mayor but, if elected as mayor, they cannot also hold office as a councillor.

Where elected by the councillors, the mayor serves a two-year term. At the end of the two-year term the councillors elect a new mayor for the following two years. The NSW Electoral Commission is not involved in the election of mayors by the councillors.

### Constitutional referendum

A council can decide to conduct a constitutional referendum. A constitutional referendum is required to be conducted to change the constitutional structure of the council. For example, changing the number of councillors, whether to divide the council area into wards or abolish all wards, or determine whether the mayor should be elected by the voters or by the councillors.

For a constitutional referendum to pass, a majority of voters in the council area must have voted in support of the proposal. Voting in a constitutional referendum is compulsory and the result is binding on the council. If the constitutional referendum is passed, the result takes effect at the next local government elections.

### Council poll

A poll is conducted to gauge the opinion of electors. A council may decide to conduct a poll on any issue and is used to guide the council in its decisions. For example, the construction of a roundabout at a particular intersection within the council area.

The council can decide whether to poll all voters in the council area or only a portion of voters. As such not all voters may be eligible to vote in a council's poll, however for a council poll to pass a majority of voters must have voted in support of the proposal. Voting in a poll is not compulsory and the result of a poll is not binding on the council.

## Uncontested council elections

In an uncontested election, the number of candidates nominated is the same or less than the number of councillor positions available for election. In these situations, all the nominating candidates are declared elected. If the number of candidates who nominate is less than the number of councillor positions, another election (by-election) is required to fill the remaining vacancies. A ward may be uncontested for its councillor election but still conduct a vote for a mayor, referendum or poll.

### Uncontested undivided councils

- Bourke (10 candidates nominated for the council's 10 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected)
- Cobar (11 candidates nominated for the council's 12 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected, by-election required to elect the final councillor)
- Narromine (9 candidates nominated for the council's 9 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected).

### Uncontested wards

- Carrathool – Ward B (5 candidates nominated for the ward's 5 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected)
- Greater Hume Shire – East Ward (3 candidates nominated for the ward's 3 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected)
- Kyogle – A Ward (3 candidates nominated for the ward's 3 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected)
- Lachlan – A Ward (2 candidates nominated for the ward's 2 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected)
- Lachlan – B Ward (2 candidates nominated for the ward's 2 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected)
- Lachlan – C Ward (2 candidates nominated for the ward's 2 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected)
- Lachlan – D Ward (2 candidates nominated for the ward's 2 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected)
- Lockhart – C Ward (3 candidates nominated for the ward's 3 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected)
- Murray River – Greater Murray Ward (2 candidates nominated for the ward's 3 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected, by-election required to elect the final councillor)
- Murray River – Greater Wakool Ward (2 candidates nominated for the ward's 3 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected, by-election required to elect the final councillor)
- Murray River – Moama Ward (3 candidates nominated for the ward's 3 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected)
- City of Shellharbour – Ward D (2 candidates nominated for the ward's 2 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected)
- Tenterfield – Ward A (2 candidates nominated for the ward's 2 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected)
- Tenterfield – Ward B (2 candidates nominated for the ward's 2 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected)
- Tenterfield – Ward C (1 candidates nominated for the ward's 2 councillor vacancies and was declared elected, by-election required to elect the final councillor)
- Tenterfield – Ward E (1 candidates nominated for the ward's 2 councillor vacancies and was declared elected, by-election required to elect the final councillor)

- Walcha –A Ward (2 candidates nominated for the ward’s 2 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected)
- Walcha –C Ward (2 candidates nominated for the ward’s 2 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected)
- Warren – C Ward (3 candidates nominated for the ward’s 3 councillor vacancies; all were declared elected).

### Uncontested mayoral election

- Dungog Shire Council (following the close of nominations, only one candidate had nominated for the position of mayor and was declared elected).

## Voting

### Voting channels

For the 2021 Local Government elections, electors could choose to vote using:

- pre-poll (early) in person voting (no eligibility criteria)
- iVote (subject to eligibility criteria)
- postal vote (subject to eligibility criteria)
- voting in person on election day.

See the section headed *Voting* on page on page 19.

### Absentee voting

Absentee voting is not available at Local Government elections.

### Voting methods

Local government elections utilise various voting methods:

- Mayoral elections use an optional preferential system.
- When two or more councillors are being elected, a proportional representation system is used.
- Councillor ballot papers may contain group voting squares in certain circumstances. In such cases, electors can vote above the line on the ballot paper for a group of candidates. A number '1' for a group above the line records a first preference vote for the first candidate in the group with preferences going to the other candidates in the group in the order in which they are listed. Preferences then go to the next group, if indicated. The alternative is marking squares 'below the line' in order of preference for individual candidates.
- Referenda and Polls use a “Yes” and “No” answer framework.

## Service charter

The *Service charter* provides an overview of the services delivered to stakeholders of the local government elections run by the NSW Electoral Commission.

Impartial, fair and safe elections are essential goals of any democratic society and are central to the mission of the NSW Electoral Commission. The *Service charter* outlines the targets and measures set by the NSW Electoral Commission. The overarching goals are to ensure the electors of New South Wales participate freely in transparent electoral processes and that stakeholders trust the NSW Electoral Commission has conducted the elections with fairness and integrity.

The *Service charter* is available on the NSW Electoral Commission's [website](#).

### Services provided for all councils

The NSW Electoral Commission retains responsibility for providing certain electoral services for all councils, including those that do not engage the Commissioner to conduct their elections:

- supply electoral roll products – composite rolls were supplied to all councils, each council was provided with a list of electors who are registered to automatically receive postal votes (registered general postal voters), confirmation of 'silent elector' details was also provided, copies of relevant electoral roll were provided to candidates on request
- a secure roll facility on the NSW Electoral Commission's website was provided to councils who engaged election services providers to administer their elections, to enable returning officers to check enrolment details prior to hard copy rolls being provided.

## Legislative framework

NSW Local Government elections are conducted in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*.

The political donations and electoral expenditure of political parties, candidates, and other election participants are regulated by the *Electoral Funding Act 2018* and *Electoral Funding Regulation 2018*.

# Response to reviews and inquiries

## **Inquiry into preference counting in local government elections**

In August 2017 the NSW Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) conducted an inquiry into preference counting in local government elections in New South Wales. As a result of the inquiry, the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* was amended so that the preference counting method involving random sampling of ballot papers be replaced with the Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method (WIGM). See *Counting and results* on page 54 for more information.

All reports and submissions relating to this inquiry are available on the NSW Parliament's [website](#).

## **Inquiry into the impact of expenditure caps for local government election campaigns**

In August 2018 the NSW Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters conducted an inquiry into the impact of expenditure caps for local government election campaigns. The scheme for caps on expenditure was changed in November 2019 through the *Electoral Funding Amendment (Local Government Expenditure Caps) Bill 2019*, and these elections were the first at which the new caps scheme applied. See the section in this report headed *Caps on electoral expenditure* for more information.

All reports and submissions relating to this inquiry are available on the NSW Parliament's [website](#).

## **Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal review**

In February 2019, the NSW Government engaged the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) of New South Wales to review the costs of conducting local government elections.

On 30 August 2019, IPART submitted its *Final Report* on local government election costs to the Minister for Local Government. The report was released by the NSW Government on 18 September 2019. The *Final Report* recommends a costing methodology to be applied in determining the amount the NSW Electoral Commissioner charges councils for local government election services.

All reports and submissions relating to this inquiry are available on IPART's [website](#). The NSW Government's response to the *Final Report* is available on the Office of Local Government's [website](#).

# Summary of proposals for legislative change

The NSW Electoral Commissioner has identified a number of legislative changes that he considers it would be useful to consider making for future NSW local government elections. Any such changes would need to be made as soon as possible to ensure there is sufficient time available in which to implement them for the next ordinary elections in 2024.

## Proposal 1

### Purpose

Ensure there is sufficient time to administer the implementation of alterations to the boundaries of one or more local government areas.

### Proposal

Provide that the next election held after an alteration is made is to be held as if the change had not been made if it was made during the period of 10 months before the closing date for that election, unless the NSW Electoral Commissioner otherwise approves in special circumstances.

### Equivalent Electoral Act provision (if applicable)

N/A.

### Rationale

The Local Government Act sets out how the boundaries of a local government areas may be altered by proclamation and what must be done before boundaries are altered, however, do not limit when changes may occur in relation to an election.

The proposed amendment will ensure sufficient time is available to administer consequential changes for the purposes of elections; for example, changes to mapping and spatial data of boundaries, the enrolment information of electors in the altered areas.

## Proposal 2

### Purpose

Facilitate centralised planning of elections and implementation of technology for administration of elections.

Align local government electoral practices with state electoral practices.

### Proposal

Provide that the NSW Electoral Commissioner may use the services of election officials and computer and other electronic resources to assist the Commissioner in the administration of elections under this Act.

### Equivalent Electoral Act provision (if applicable)

Electoral Act, section 80.

## Rationale

This provision would make it clear that the NSW Electoral Commissioner may use the services of election officials and electronic resources in the administration of elections, including where not expressly set out in functions under the Act and Regulations. The inconsistency with section 80 of the *Electoral Act 2017* creates legal ambiguity and risk for the legitimacy of future elections.

## Proposal 3

### Purpose

Facilitate the centralised planning of elections.

Align local government electoral practices with state electoral practices to remove ambiguity.

### Proposal

Amend section 296B of the *Local Government Act 1993* to provide that the NSW Electoral Commissioner, rather than the returning officer, is to appoint elections officials and polling place managers.

### Equivalent Electoral Act provision (if applicable)

Electoral Act, section 81.

### Rationale

Sections 296B(3) of the Act provides that the returning officer (rather than the NSW Electoral Commissioner) may appoint election officials.

Section 335(1) of the Regulations provides that the returning officer must 'assign' an election official to each polling place as polling place manager.

To facilitate centralised planning and operations and align with State electoral practices, it is more appropriate that the NSW Electoral Commissioner appoints all election officials and appoints an election official to be a polling place manager.

Section 296A may also be amended similarly for election services providers.

## Proposal 4

### Purpose

Protecting the security of information contained in the residential roll.

Align local government electoral practices with state electoral practices.

### Proposal

Amend section 298 of the *Local Government Act 1993* to provide that, before a copy of the residential roll is provided to the general manager of a council or to an electoral services provider engaged by the council, the NSW Electoral Commissioner may require the general manager and the electoral services provider give the NSW Electoral Commissioner an undertaking that:

- their systems and procedures are adequate to preserve the security of that information, and
- they will return the information to the NSW Electoral Commissioner or destroy the information after using it for the purpose of administering an election.

Amend section 298 (or 302) to clarify that a council or electoral services provider making the residential roll available for public inspection is not a “disclosure for the purpose of administering an election” for the purposes of subsection 298(5).

#### **Equivalent Electoral Act provision (if applicable)**

Electoral Act, sections 47, 48 and 50.

#### **Rationale**

Section 298(3) provides that as soon as practicable after the closing date for an election to be administered by an electoral services provider, the Electoral Commissioner is to provide the general manager with copies of the residential roll. Subsections (5) and (6) provide that such information provided to an electoral services provider must not be disclosed other than for the purpose of administering an election.

The proposed amendments provide for measures that will support the security of information contained in residential rolls for council elections that align with those that apply to the same information at State elections.

## **Proposal 5**

#### **Purpose**

Protecting the security of information contained in the residential roll.

Align local government electoral practices with state electoral practices.

#### **Proposal**

Amend section 284A of the Regulations to provide that the NSW Electoral Commissioner may, before providing a candidate with information, require the candidate to provide the NSW Electoral Commissioner with an undertaking that the candidate’s systems and procedures are adequate to preserve the security of the information.

#### **Equivalent Electoral Act provision (if applicable)**

Electoral Act, section 48(4).

#### **Rationale**

Sections 284B and 284C already provide for enforcement of prohibitions about use and disclosure of the information, however, it is problematic to regulate copying of the information or its disclosure to another person. For example, candidates engage service providers to distribute material by mail. The undertakings the NSW Electoral Commission may require about the adequacy of systems and procedures to preserve security should extend to those third parties. Unless a candidate makes the undertaking they should not receive enrolment information. An undertaking would set out requirements for the adequacy of the candidate’s systems and procedures to preserve the security of the information, and that the candidate understands the enforcement provisions in ss 284B and 284C of the Regulations. Noting, however, the NSW Electoral Commission cannot audit candidate or party compliance with an undertaking using its enforcement powers of compulsion to provide information or inspect.



## Proposal 6

### Purpose

Protecting the security of information contained in the residential roll.

Align local government electoral practices with State electoral practices.

### Proposal

Amend section 302(1) of the Act to provide that:

As soon as practicable after the residential roll for an area is prepared by the NSW Electoral Commissioner for an election, the Electoral Commissioner is to make a copy available for public inspection.

The copy of the residential roll is:

- to be made available, during ordinary office hours, for public inspection without fee at the office of the Electoral Commission and such other place or places as the Electoral Commissioner determines, and
- to remain available for public inspection until 40 days after the election is declared.

The Electoral Commissioner may make a copy of the residential roll available for public inspection without fee in an approved manner and form.

A person inspecting a copy of the residential roll under this section is not entitled to use a device (such as a camera, mobile phone, video recorder or other electronic device) to copy, record or transmit the contents of the roll or any part of the roll, but may take hand-written notes of any of the contents.

The copy of the residential roll made available must not contain any particulars relating to a person's date of birth.

### Equivalent Electoral Act provision (if applicable)

Electoral Act section 47

### Rationale

Section 302(1) provides that the NSW Electoral Commissioner is to make the latest copy of the residential roll available for public inspection at any reasonable time during office hours at the office of the NSW Electoral Commissioner.

The proposed amendments provide for measures to protect the security of information contained in residential rolls for council elections that align with those that apply to the same information at State elections.

## **Proposal 7**

### **Purpose**

Align local government electoral practices with State electoral practices.

### **Proposal**

Amend section 306(2) of the Act to specify that to be eligible to be nominated, a candidate must be enrolled and qualified to hold office as at 6pm on the closing date.

### **Equivalent Electoral Act provision (if applicable)**

Electoral Act, section 83(1); Local Government (General) Regulation, section 289(1).

### **Rationale**

Referring to “6pm on the closing date” would provide certainty as to when the processing of rolls can commence and align with the equivalent Electoral Act provision.

## **Proposal 8**

### **Purpose**

Reduce the burden of physically displaying candidate information sheets at polling places while maintaining the ability of electors to inspect them (whether in hard copy or electronic form).

### **Proposal**

Amend section 308 of the Act to remove the requirement for candidate information sheets to be displayed and provide instead that they are to be made available for inspection on request (whether in hard copy or electronic form).

### **Equivalent Electoral Act provision (if applicable)**

Local Government (General) Regulation, section 326.

### **Rationale**

Candidate information sheets must be physically displayed at polling places under section 308(4) of the Act. This requirement is impractical, particularly for councils with large numbers of candidates.

In 2021, changes were made to the arrangements for displaying candidate information sheets at pre-poll voting offices under section 326(3) of the Regulations. This amendment provided for a notice to inform electors that candidate information sheets were available for viewing on the election manager’s website.

Section 290 of the Regulations requires the election manager to publish the same information on its website until at least election day.

## Proposal 9

### Purpose

Align local government electoral practices with State electoral practices.

### Proposal

Amend section 309(3) of the Act to provide that if a candidate who is nominated for election to a civic office in respect of a ward or area dies:

- a) before 6 pm on the election day, the election is taken to have failed
- b) after 6 pm on election day and before the election has been declared, the election is not taken to have failed unless the deceased candidate is elected.

Insert a provision in section 309 (or Schedule 9A to the Regulation) that if a person declared to be a candidate for a countback election dies:

- a) before the casual vacancy is filled by the recount, the candidate may be taken to be a non-participating candidate
- b) in any other case, the countback election is not taken to have failed unless the deceased candidate is elected.

### Equivalent Electoral Act provision (if applicable)

Electoral Act, section 220.

### Rationale

Section 309(3) currently provides that if a candidate who is nominated by the returning officer under section 295 of the Regulation dies before the day when the poll at a contested election closes, the election fails for that ward or area.

## Proposal 10

### Purpose

Align local government electoral practices with state electoral practices.

### Proposal

Amend section 314 to provide that lack of knowledge that an election is being held is not a sufficient reason for failing to vote.

### Equivalent Electoral Act provision (if applicable)

Electoral Act, section 259(9).

### Rationale

The amendment is intended to align the enforcement regime for a failure to vote at a local government election with that applying to State elections.

# Election calendar

<b>july</b>	<p><b>SATURDAY 24</b></p> <p>New December 4 election date appointed by NSW Government Registrations under <i>Electoral Funding Act 2018</i> for the new date continue</p>		<b>sept</b>	<p><b>WEDNESDAY 22</b></p> <p>Last day to lodge annual electoral expenditure disclosures for 2020/21.</p>	
<b>october</b>	<p><b>MONDAY 25</b></p> <p>Lodgement of nominations commence. Start of regulated period for electoral material 6pm: close of roll for the purposes of being a candidate, nominator and roll printing</p>	<p><b>TUESDAY 26</b></p> <p>Lodgement of nominations Lodgement of postal vote applications open</p>	<p><b>WEDNESDAY 27</b></p> <p>Lodgement of nominations</p> <p><b>THURSDAY 28</b></p> <p>Lodgement of nominations</p>	<p><b>FRIDAY 29</b></p> <p>Lodgement of nominations</p>	
<b>november</b>	<p><b>MONDAY 1</b></p> <p>Lodgement of nominations</p> <p><b>TUESDAY 2</b></p> <p>Lodgement of nominations</p> <p><b>WEDNESDAY 3</b></p> <p>12 noon: close of nominations and close of registration of candidates and groups* Registration of electoral materials commences</p>	<p><b>THURSDAY 4</b></p> <p>10am: conduct of ballot paper draw</p> <p><b>MONDAY 22</b></p> <p>Pre-poll voting opens. Note: days and times will vary for each location iVote: commence applications and voting Display of registered electoral material on the NSWEC website commences</p> <p><b>TUESDAY 23</b></p> <p>Pre-poll voting iVote voting</p>	<p><b>WEDNESDAY 24</b></p> <p>Pre-poll voting iVote voting</p> <p><b>THURSDAY 25</b></p> <p>Pre-poll voting iVote voting</p> <p><b>FRIDAY 26</b></p> <p>Pre-poll voting iVote voting 5pm: close of registration of electoral material</p>	<p><b>SATURDAY 27</b></p> <p>Pre-poll voting iVote voting</p> <p><b>MONDAY 29</b></p> <p>Pre-poll voting iVote voting 5pm: close of postal vote applications Close of registration for third-party campaigners*</p> <p><b>TUESDAY 30</b></p> <p>Pre-poll voting iVote voting</p>	
<b>december</b>	<p><b>WEDNESDAY 1</b></p> <p>Pre-poll voting iVote voting</p> <p><b>THURSDAY 2</b></p> <p>Pre-poll voting iVote voting</p> <p><b>FRIDAY 3</b></p> <p>Close of pre-poll voting iVote voting</p>	<p><b>SATURDAY 4</b></p> <p><b>8am – 6pm</b> <b>Election day</b></p> <p>End of capped expenditure period 1pm: iVote close applications 6pm: iVote voting closes and end of regulated period for electoral material</p> <p><b>MONDAY 6</b></p> <p>6pm: iVote receipt portal closes</p> <p><b>FRIDAY 17</b></p> <p>6pm: close of return of postal vote certificates</p>	<p><b>MONDAY 20</b></p> <p>Conduct of distribution of preferences</p> <p><b>TUESDAY 21</b></p> <p>Conduct of distribution of preferences Progressive declaration of results</p> <p><b>WEDNESDAY 22</b></p> <p>Conduct of distribution of preferences Progressive declaration of results</p> <p><b>THURSDAY 23</b></p> <p>Progressive declaration of results</p>	<b>january</b>	<p><b>FRIDAY 28</b></p> <p>Last day to lodge political donations disclosures for July-December 2021</p>

\*Candidate, group and third-party campaigner registrations for the purpose of accepting political donations and making payments for electoral expenditure opened on the day after the last local government elections for the local government area.

# Funding and financial management

## Funding the Local Government elections

Councils are required to meet the costs of conducting their elections under their statutory agreements with the NSW Electoral Commissioner. The NSW Government allocates funding to cover the 'core costs' of the elections, which predominantly covers the NSW Electoral Commission's planning and preparation for elections.

### Budget calculations

The initial budget for the 2020 Local Government elections programme 2020 was \$65.9m, with \$46.0m of these costs being recoverable from councils. Funding for the postponement costs (to September 2021) of \$12.7m was then approved to retain essential election staff and replan the postponed elections.

Following the postponement, the NSW Electoral Commission replanned the elections to include increased non-attendance voting options, extended pre-poll and postal voting, and procured more polling places and larger count centres to comply with NSW Health orders and help minimise the risk to the public and election employees from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the November 2020 budget, approval was given for an additional \$37.3m in costs to run the local government election in pandemic conditions. This took the total cost of the expanded three-year election programme to \$115.9m.

The timing of the second deferral to 4 December 2021 came just as 70 leased offices across the State were due to open and voter awareness advertising for the election had commenced. Significant holding costs were incurred, which the NSW Electoral Commission met, along with replanning costs for the new delivery date. These costs, which were eventually funded by the Government, were estimated in the order of an additional \$29.1m on top of the allocated \$115.9m budget.

The NSW Electoral Commission's budget for the full attendance election on 4 December 2021 was \$145 million.

Table 2: Budget for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections

Item	Funded by NSW State Government	Council funded	Total
Total initial budget	\$19.9m	\$46.0m	\$65.9m
Deferral to 4 September 2021	\$12.7m	-	\$12.7m
COVID measures	\$37.3m	-	\$37.3m
Deferral to 4 December 2021	\$29.1m	-	\$29.1m
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$99.0m</b>	<b>\$46.0m</b>	<b>\$145.0m</b>

### Actual costs incurred

The actual cost of conducting the 2021 NSW Local Government elections came in under budget, \$103.06m, predominantly due to COVID-related costs being less than anticipated. Estimates were calculated based on the potential requirement for staff and venue numbers due to the prevalence, at the time, of the Delta variant. As the December 2021 election date approached, the severity and extent of the COVID pandemic could be better determined. This enabled more precise modelling of venue and staffing requirements, which were subsequently revised downwards, while still allowing the elections to be conducted in a COVID-safe manner.

Table 3: 2021 NSW Local Government elections – Major expenditure items

Expense item	2021 \$m	2021 % of total	2017 \$m	2017 % of total	2016 \$m	2016 % of total
Election official wages	32.807	48.6	8.301	48.1	6.765	50.6
Logistics	4.755	7.0	1.339	7.8	1.276	9.5
Information technology support	6.952	10.3	0.917	5.3	0.904	6.8
Ballot paper production	690	1.0	0.600	3.5	0.719	5.4
Returning officer office rental	4.792	7.1	0.899	5.2	0.661	4.9
Vote counting and results	3.137	4.6	0.708	4.1	0.576	4.3
Polling place hire	2.556	3.8	0.730	4.2	0.479	3.6
Communication campaign	2.656	3.9	0.639	3.7	0.378	2.8
Call centre	1.733	2.6	0.216	1.3	0.26	1.9
Enrolment expenses	-	-	0.293	1.7	0.216	1.6
iVote	1.667	2.5	-	-	-	-
Other costs	5.795	8.6	2.613	15.1	1.138	8.5
<b>Total direct costs</b>	<b>\$67.540m</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$17.253m</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$13.371m</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4: 2021 NSW Local Government elections – Election officials' wages

<b>Expense item</b>	<b>2021 \$</b>	<b>2021 % of total</b>	<b>2017 \$</b>	<b>2017 % of total</b>	<b>2016 \$</b>	<b>2016 % of total</b>
Polling place staff	14,564,265	44.4%	3,589,048	43.0%	2,445,000	36.1%
Returning officer office staff	11,114,200	33.9%	2,734,919	32.9%	2,432,000	35.9%
Returning officers	4,871,950	14.9%	1,313,533	15.8%	1,128,000	16.7%
Returning officer support officers	925,611	2.8%	272,903	3.1%	371,000	5.5%
Support staff & training	1,331,313	4.1%	404,253	4.9%	389,000	5.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,807,339</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8,300,764</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,765,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Election programme management

Delivering an election requires focused planning and preparation. These processes start well in advance of election day. The 2021 NSW Local Government elections, as with all elections, were approached as a programme of work with the following project streams:

- staff, training, and work health and safety
- logistics and venues
- ballot paper printing and distribution
- customer service
- candidates and parties
- counting and results
- attendance and non-attendance voting
- technology
- communications and engagement
- event readiness
- event financial management
- data management.

The NSW Electoral Commission's Enterprise Portfolio Management Office provided support and assurance services to the project teams, the governance framework, monitoring progress during the design, development, operational readiness, go-live and closure phases of the projects. Working Groups were established to provide specialist input. These included:

- Elections Policy Working Group
- Elections Workforce Working Group
- Elections Work Health and Safety Working Group
- Scoping and Risk Working Group
- COVID Safety Working Group (see COVID-19 safety measures on page 33)
- iVote Working Group
- Data Analytics Working Group.

Management and leadership of service delivery was transferred to the Election Operations Group during the operational phase of the elections.

The post-election review process identified areas of good practice and opportunities for improvement.



# COVID-19 safety measures

## Coronavirus Reference Group

The preparation and delivery of an election with consideration of, and adherence to, COVID-19 safety measures required a high level of coordination and planning.

The NSW Electoral Commission established the Coronavirus Reference Group (CRG) in February 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in Australia. The purpose of the group was to monitor the evolving public health situation and identify and mitigate the risks to individuals and elections service delivery.

The CRG included the NSW Electoral Commissioner and members of the senior executive and management who are responsible for service delivery, health and safety, and risk management. The CRG met frequently, varying from every few days, to every two weeks, depending on the rate at which the COVID-19 environment changed and the potential impacts on the NSW Electoral Commission.

An early focus of the CRG was liaison with the suppliers of the wide range of goods and services that contributed to the delivery of the Local Government elections. Elections staff worked closely with suppliers to identify any supply-chain impacts and, as the pandemic developed throughout 2020 and 2021, manage supply interruptions due to staff illness or isolations, and restrictions introduced through Public Health Orders.

The CRG established liaison arrangements between the NSW Electoral Commission and other government agencies that played key roles in managing the COVID-19 pandemic and Local Government election service delivery. This collaboration was managed by the COVID Safety Working Group.

## COVID Safety Working Group

A COVID Safety Working Group was established to develop and implement specific control measures to reduce the work health and safety risks for staff, particularly those directly involved in election service delivery. The Working Group was directed by the CRG and made recommendations on the prioritisation, development and implementation of policies, procedures, strategies and other control measures.

The Working Group consisted of directors and managers who were responsible for the day-to-day management of teams and service delivery, supported by human resources and health and safety specialists.

The Working Group assessed the COVID-19 related risks for dozens of specific operational issues and different cohorts of staff, election participants and the public. These risk assessments guided the Working Group's development of recommended controls that were escalated to the CRG for their consideration and approval by the Electoral Commissioner. These controls spanned: staff working conditions (for example, restrictions for on-site attendance, mask-wearing and vaccination requirements); infection control arrangements for election operations (for example, venue occupancy levels, scrutineer protocols); and the protection of electors (for example, hygiene measures and queue controls at polling places).

## Collaboration with NSW Government agencies

The preparation and delivery of an election with consideration of, and adherence to, COVID-19 safety measures required a high level of coordination and planning.

To ensure access to relevant information and resources, the NSW Electoral Commission collaborated with key government agencies, meeting monthly from early in 2021.

Members of the inter-agency group included NSW Electoral Commission participants as well as attendees from the following NSW Government agencies:

- NSW Health
- Department of Premier and Cabinet
- NSW Police
- Office of Local Government NSW
- NSW Department of Customer Service
- NSW Department of Education.

Representatives from Fairfield City and Penrith City councils (the councils that did not engage the NSW Electoral Commissioner to run their elections) were also invited to participate, to ensure consistent understanding of public health and safety factors across all elections being held.

The main objectives of the inter-agency collaboration were to assist the NSW Electoral Commissioner to:

- review current medical and technical advice received from NSW Health on COVID-19 as it became available
- consult with other state agencies on matters relating to the implementation of safety procedures related to COVID-19
- identify and prioritise gaps in the COVID-19-related preparedness of the NSW Electoral Commission for the delivery of the local government elections in 2021
- review the content and coordination of communication materials and campaigns about COVID-19.

### **Specific COVID safety measures for these elections**

The NSW Electoral Commission developed the *COVID-19 safety plan* which introduced measures to safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of voters, election staff, political participants. In addition to following the safety measures, the Commission instructed people to refer to NSW Health advice. The *COVID-19 safety plan* is available on the NSW Electoral Commission's [website](#). The following specific measures of note were introduced for these elections:

Campaigning guidelines for candidates were published in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The guidelines were updated regularly during the election timeline to reflect the changing public health situation and NSW Health advice. To be eligible to work in voting venues, counting places, and returning officers' offices, election officials had to be vaccinated for COVID-19 (except in cases of a medical contraindication) and wear a face mask when working.

Based on the assessment of risks arising from COVID-19, directions were made by the NSW Electoral Commissioner about the display of posters and the handing out of electoral material near election venues. The Directions were:

- *Direction under s 356TB – Handing out electoral materials – arrangements for COVID-19* – prohibiting the handing out of electoral material in publicly owned or occupied areas within 100 metres of the entrance to a polling place.
- *Direction under s 356TA Posters – arrangements for COVID-19 pandemic* – prohibiting the placement or adjustment of posters in publicly owned or occupied areas within 100 metres of the entrance to a polling place between 7am and 7pm on days that the polling place was open for voting.
- *Direction under s 337A(1)(a) – Special provisions about scrutineers for COVID-19 pandemic* – procedures to be followed relating to the number of scrutineers in election venues and other safety conditions, such as being vaccinated.

Since voting is compulsory for enrolled residents, electors did not need to be vaccinated to vote in person at the 2021 Local Government elections.

# Conduct of the elections

# Registration of political participants

The NSW Electoral Commission is responsible for the registration of electoral participants under the *Electoral Funding Act 2018*. The Act prescribes the registration of candidates, groups of candidates, and third-party campaigners for electoral funding purposes and the rules for the management and disclosure of political donations and electoral expenditure.

Information in this report about the requirement for registration for electoral funding purposes (accepting political donations and incurring electoral expenditure) applies to all candidates and other participants in the 2021 NSW Local Government elections, including those for Fairfield City Council and Penrith City Council. Offences under local government electoral laws at all council elections are also enforced by the NSW Electoral Commission.

## Funding and Disclosure Online

Expectations around the role of technology in the electoral context, both for service delivery and regulatory function, continue to grow. In June 2021, the NSW Electoral Commission launched the first stage of a new online portal, *Funding and Disclosure Online*, to enable political participants to register, lodge disclosures and apply for public funding.

The portal was not planned for release for these elections, but the deferral of the election date meant that political participants at the elections were able to use the portal to apply to be registered as a candidate or group for electoral funding purposes, as well as to update their registered details for the first time. They will now also be able to meet their disclosure obligations online.

## Registration of candidates, groups of candidates, third-party campaigners, and parties

### Candidates and groups of candidates

Candidates and groups of candidates were required to be registered for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections under the *Electoral Funding Act 2018* before accepting political donations or making payments for electoral expenditure.

The registration of a candidate or group for campaign finance purposes is a separate process to the candidate or group being nominated for the election (to have their name printed on the ballot paper).

Councillors seeking re-election did not need to be registered before accepting political donations or making payments for electoral expenditure.

Candidates and groups were able to register through the NSW Electoral Commission's *Funding and Disclosure Online* system or by printing, completing and submitting the applicable form (available from the NSW Electoral Commission's website).

A total of 250 candidates and 34 groups registered through *Funding and Disclosure Online*. A total of 2,278 candidates and 370 groups registered using the manual, paper-based process. This take-up rate was pleasing given the portal was not originally intended to be available for these elections and the changing date for the election day itself.

Any candidates and groups not registered before being nominated were taken to be registered when they were nominated by the Returning Officer (the day after the close of nominations). From this time, all nominated candidates and groups could lawfully accept political donations and make payments for electoral expenditure for the election.

### Third-party campaigners

A third-party campaigner is a person or entity (other than a political party, candidate, group of candidates, elected member, or associated entity) that incurred more than \$2,000 in electoral expenditure for an election in a local government area during the capped expenditure period, which began on 1 July 2021 and ended on election day.

Electoral expenditure incurred by a third-party campaigner is expenditure that has the dominant purpose of promoting or opposing a political party or candidate or influencing the vote at an election.

Third-party campaigners were able to register by using the form available on the NSW Electoral Commission's website. When registering, a third-party campaigner was also required to appoint an official agent responsible for managing and disclosing the third-party campaigner's political donations and electoral expenditure. This includes operating a campaign account on behalf of the third-party campaigner.

Third-party campaigners were required to be registered for the elections in a local government area before paying for electoral expenditure.

The details of registered candidates, groups, third-party campaigners, and official agents are included in publicly available registers published on the NSW Electoral Commission's website.

Table 5: 2021 NSW Local Government elections – Registrations received

	Candidates	Groups of candidates	Third-party campaigners
Total number of registrations	4,289	769	28
Cancelled registrations	81	7	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,208</b>	<b>762</b>	<b>27</b>

Note: These figures include registrations for Fairfield City and Penrith City councils that are not included in the nominations data. Candidates who registered for both mayoral and councillor are counted twice in these numbers.

Candidates are not required to provide a reason for cancelling their registration; however, a considerable number cancelled following the election postponement announcements.

Not all candidates who are registered proceed to nomination, but all nominated candidates must be registered. This means the number of candidate registrations does not necessarily equal the number of candidate nominations.

### Local government register of political parties

The NSW Electoral Commissioner maintains publicly available registers of political parties. Extracts from the registers are published on the NSW Electoral Commission's website. Parties are registered for local government elections under the *Local Government Act 1993* and for State elections under the *Electoral Act 2017*. Parties registered for state elections are also registered for local government elections.

Forty-four (44) political parties were registered for the local government elections, including the 15 parties registered for state elections.

Table 6: Political parties registered for the Local Government elections (December 2021)

Party
Australia First Party (NSW) Incorporated (Councils)
Australian Federation Party New South Wales
Australian Women's Party
Battler
Clover Moore Independent Team
Community First Team
Democratic Labour Party
Georges River Residents and Ratepayers Party
Good for Manly
Independent Community Voice
Kogarah Residents' Association
Lake Mac Independents
Liverpool Community Independents Team
Lorraine Wearne Independents
Manly Independents – Putting Residents First
Nella Hall Independents
Our Local Community
Our Sustainable Future
Residents First Woollahra
Central Coast Heart
Science Party NSW
Serving Mosman
Shoalhaven Independents Group
Strathfield Independents
The Arts Party NSW
The Ben Shields Team
The Local Independent Party
Totally Locally Committed Party
Your Northern Beaches Independent Team

Table 7: Political parties registered for State elections (December 2021)

Party name
Animal Justice Party
Australian Labor Party (NSW Branch)
Christian Democratic Party (Fred Nile Group)
Flux NSW
The Greens NSW
Liberal Democratic Party
The Liberal Party of Australia, New South Wales Division
National Party of Australia – NSW
The Open Party
Pauline Hanson's One Nation
Reason Party
Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party (NSW) Incorporated
The Small Business Party
Sustainable Australia Party – Stop Overdevelopment/Corruption
Socialist Alliance

Note: New parties have registered, and one party's registration has been cancelled since the 2021 NSW Local Government elections. The above registrations are accurate as at 4 December 2021.

## Caps on electoral expenditure

Electoral expenditure for these elections was capped, meaning there was a limit on the amount of expenditure that could be incurred during the capped expenditure period by political parties, candidates, groups of candidates, and third-party campaigners. The scheme for caps on expenditure was changed in November 2019 through the *Electoral Funding Amendment (Local Government Expenditure Caps) Act 2019*, and these elections were the first at which the new caps scheme applied.

The legislated caps are based on the number of enrolled electors in each local government area or ward as determined by the NSW Electoral Commissioner. The capped expenditure period began on 1 July 2021 and finished at the end of election day, 4 December 2021.

As legally required, all registered candidates, groups of candidates, and third-party campaigners were notified of the number of enrolled electors in their area or ward and the specific expenditure caps that applied to them. This notification was sent either when the caps were determined (to those who had already registered) or when each candidate, group, or third-party campaigner registered.

Information on the number of enrolled electors and applicable caps in each area and ward is available on the NSW Electoral Commission's [website](#).



## Caps on political donations

Political donations made to political parties, elected members, candidates, groups of candidates, associated entities, and third-party campaigners are capped in New South Wales. The caps on political donations are adjusted for inflation each financial year. In summary, the caps are:

- \$6,700 cap from 1 July 2021 for any political donation to, or for the benefit of, a registered party or of a group
- \$3,100 cap from 1 July 2021 for any political donation to, or for the benefit of:
  - a party that is not a registered party, or
  - an elected member, or
  - a candidate, or
  - a third-party campaigner.

Political donations accepted from the same donor by the same recipient in a financial year are to be aggregated for the purpose of the donation caps. Donations accepted from the same donor by elected members, candidates, and groups of candidates endorsed by the same party in a financial year are to be aggregated for the purposes of the donation caps.

Donations to candidates, groups, and elected members of the same party are to be aggregated separately for local government elections and other purposes.

## Prohibition on cash donations over \$100

These were the first local government elections at which the new ban on cash donations was in effect.

The NSW Electoral Commission undertook a range of awareness-raising activities for its stakeholders about the rules for receiving donations, including the new cash cap. These activities including webinars, educational videos and a social media campaign.

## Disclosure of political donations and electoral expenditure

Registered candidates, groups of candidates, councillors and mayors, political parties, third-party campaigners, associated entities, and major political donors are required under the *Electoral Funding Act 2018* to disclose their political donations and electoral expenditure to the NSW Electoral Commission.

Awareness of and compliance with disclosure obligation requirements is promoted to stakeholders in a range of ways prior to, during, and following each of the disclosure lodgement periods. This includes through updates to the NSW Electoral Commission's website, webinars, the publication of fact sheets, direct emails and SMS, and social media on the Commission's various platforms.

The following disclosures are required:

- political donations made and received, and electoral expenditure incurred, by candidates, groups of candidates, elected members, political parties, third-party campaigners, and associated entities
- electoral expenditure incurred during a capped expenditure period, and political donations received (for the purpose of making payments for that electoral expenditure) by third-party campaigners
- reportable political donations made by major political donors.

The following disclosures are required for disclosure periods up to and including the end of the 2021-22 financial year:

- half-yearly disclosure of political donations (1 July-31 December 2021) – due: 25 February 2022 (note that the lodgement period was extended by 4 weeks for this disclosure period only)
- half-yearly disclosure of political donations (1 January-30 June 2022) – due: 28 July 2022
- annual disclosure of electoral expenditure (1 July 2021-30 June 2022) – due: 22 September 2022
- annual major political donor disclosure (1 July 2021-30 June 2022) – due: 28 July 2022.

The disclosure periods for the 2021-22 financial year are particularly complex given the high number of registered candidates and groups at the elections. Candidates must make disclosures even if they were not elected and will need to make disclosures for the full financial year. Also, many will be required to make more than one disclosure for each disclosure period. For example, a lead candidate of a group of candidates who was elected will need to submit three disclosures: as an individual candidate, as the lead candidate on behalf of the group, and as an elected member.

Table 8: 2021-22 financial year disclosure obligations for the 2021 Local Government elections

Registered electoral participant (by participant type)	Half-yearly period 1 Jul – 31 Dec 2021*	Half-yearly period 1 Jan – 30 Jun 2021	Annual electoral expenditure 1 Jul 2021 – 30 Jun 2022
Candidates	4,107	4,107	4,107
Groups of candidates	768	768	768
Political parties	49	49	49 <sup>#</sup>
Elected members	1,854	1,854	1,854
Third-party campaigners	17	17	17
Associated entities	4	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,799</b>	<b>6,799</b>	<b>6,799</b>

\*Although this disclosure lodgement period was extended by four weeks, 681 stakeholders applied for, and were granted, a further extension. <sup>#</sup>The number of political parties (49) differs from the 44 parties referred to in the *Local government register of political parties* section. This is because there are 49 parties with disclosure obligations, including four unregistered parties, and one party whose registration was cancelled. The table does not include any candidates who withdrew their registration prior to 1 July 2021.

Disclosures are published on the NSW Electoral Commission's [website](#).

## Funding and disclosure helpdesk

The funding and disclosure helpdesk responded to 2,980 telephone enquiries from candidates and other political participants, between the period 4 October and 24 December 2021.

# Candidate nominations

## Candidate nominations – councillor and mayoral elections

The *Local Government Act 1993* provided for nomination forms and deposits be lodged from 8am on 25 October 2021 up to 12noon on Wednesday, 3 November 2021.

Candidate nominations, requests to form a group and payment of the nomination deposit could be completed online (see [Online nominations](#) below). Alternatively, candidates and registered political parties could lodge their completed paper nominations, group forms and nomination deposits directly with the Returning Officer or nominated Council offices for the Council being contested.

A total of 3,704 candidate nominations and 723 groups were accepted for the councillor contests; with 161 candidate nominations accepted for the mayoral contests.

## Online nominations

Ahead of the 2019 NSW State election, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) recommended the introduction of an online system to make it easier for candidates and parties to submit their legislated forms, and to streamline the processing of this information. In response to this recommendation, the NSW Electoral Commission developed the *Nomination Online Management System*, which was first implemented for the 2019 State election.

The *Nomination Online Management System* was configured and further developed for use at the 2021 NSW Local Government elections. The system enabled candidates and registered political parties to prepare documentation in advance of the opening of the nomination period to ensure all mandatory information was provided and applicants were verified against the electoral roll. These documents were then lodged online with the nomination deposit.

Table 9: Candidate nominations lodged for the 2021 NSW Local Government election

Nominations	Online lodgement	Manual lodgement	Total
Nominations accepted	3,169	696	3,865
Nominations rejected	49	33	82
Nominations withdrawn	13	2	15
<b>Total nominations</b>	<b>3,231</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>3,962</b>

Most rejections were the result of mandatory information missing from the nomination forms lodged. Of the total nominations lodged for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections, 82 per cent were lodged online.

The online system was demonstrated to parties and candidates for the nomination period and a candidate helpdesk established to address concerns or problems identified by users. Benefits of using *Nomination Online Management System* included:

- verifying the enrolment of candidates and nominators
- assisting in minimising errors and ensuring all compulsory sections of the nomination form have been completed
- allowing candidates and/or registered political parties, administrators and groups to oversee and manage the progress of each nomination
- allowing for the nomination and deposit to be lodged online
- allowing for automated messaging between the NSW Electoral Commission and the candidate or party concerning the acceptance or rejection of each nomination.

The *Nomination Online Management System* reduces the administrative burden on electoral participants and simplifies the process of complying with legislation. It also reduces the risk of errors being introduced when information is entered from paper forms into the election systems, which is particularly important for candidate names on ballot papers.

Candidates were encouraged to use the online system where possible, particularly in light of the changing COVID environment which saw lockdowns and building closures that could have prevented a paper-based form from being submitted. Candidates were also encouraged to not leave their nomination lodgement until the end of the nominations period. Although it is the responsibility of every candidate to lodge nomination papers that are correct in full prior to the strict closing deadline, lodging early increased the chances of NSW Electoral Commission officers noting errors or omissions in time for candidates to rectify them prior to close of nominations.

## **Candidate helpdesk**

The candidate helpdesk responded to 12,353 telephone enquiries and received 11,354 emails between the period 4 October to 24 December 2021, regarding nominations, electoral material, scrutineers and results.

Callers to the helpdesk could select either the candidate helpdesk queue or the funding, disclosure and compliance queue using the IVR prompts. Callers could also access the helpdesk through IVR options in the general elector enquiry line. Contact could also be made via email.

The helpdesk contact details were published in all communications with registered political parties and registered candidates. Operator staff numbers increased from six to 16 during peak periods, with 14 operators on election day.

The increase in the volume of calls and emails compared to previous election events was noticeable and were at a peak around key dates and processes, for example closure of nomination lodgement, registration of electoral material, directions from the NSW Electoral Commission regarding electoral material and campaigning (100-metre rule).

The candidate helpdesk was operational from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, with Saturdays open during key operational dates. The funding, disclosure and compliance phone lines were open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. The maximum number of calls in a day, of 990, occurred on election day, 4 December; the average number of calls per day was 214; and the average call duration was 5 minutes 29 seconds.

# Electoral material

## What is electoral material?

Electoral material produced for elections in New South Wales can be in printed or electronic format. Examples of electoral material are: 'how-to-vote' cards; advertising in newspapers, on radio or TV; social media posts by election participants; bulk emails and letters sent to electors; posters; leaflets; and stickers.

Electoral material must not state or imply it is an official communication from the NSW Electoral Commissioner or the NSW Electoral Commission. This can include giving a misleading impression created through the use of colours or other visual design features.

Electoral material produced, published, distributed or displayed during the *regulated period* for an election must comply with the rules set out in legislation. Breaking these rules during the regulated period is a criminal offence, and the NSW Electoral Commission monitors and enforces compliance. For the 2021 NSW Local Government elections, the regulated period was Monday, 25 October to 6pm on election day, Saturday, 4 December. The rules that applied to electoral material for these elections are set out in the Division 9A of Part 11 of the *Local Government (General Regulation) 2021*.

## Registration of electoral material

Electoral material for distribution on *election day* must be pre-registered with the NSW Electoral Commission. Copies of registered electoral material for the 2021 Local Government elections were published on the NSW Electoral Commission's website. Registered electoral was published on the NSW Electoral Commission's website for the 2019 NSW State election for the week prior to election day. The December 2021 election was the first time such material was published for a Local Government election, and for the 2021 elections the display period was extended to two weeks.

For these elections the NSW Electoral Commission implemented an online system for the registration of electoral material for distribution on election day. Items could also be manually submitted for registration at a Returning Officer's office or by email.

In total, 3,236 pieces of electoral material were submitted for registration. Of this, 3,124 items were lodged using the online system and 110 items were lodged via the paper-based manual process.

- 1,727 pieces of electoral material were approved, of which:
  - 1,415 items were about candidates for councillor elections
  - 52 items were about candidates for mayor elections
  - 254 items contained multi-contest instructions (251 for mayor and councillor, 3 for councillor and poll)
  - 6 were considered generic material (that is, they did not contain "vote 1" directions for a candidate).
- 1,509 pieces of electoral material were rejected or withdrawn, of which:
  - 1,242 items were about candidates for councillor elections
  - 43 were about candidates for mayor elections
  - 214 contained voting instructions for more than one contest (210 mayor and councillor, 4 for councillor and poll)
  - 10 were considered generic material.

The majority of rejections were due to applicants not representing the ballot paper correctly; for example, not providing a clear representation of the ballot paper, spelling errors in candidate names, and not showing the correct independent status or registered party name next to the candidate.

### **Display of electoral material**

All registered electoral material was displayed on the NSW Electoral Commission's website progressively from the start of the pre-poll (early voting) period, Monday, 22 November 2021.

The NSW Electoral Commission encouraged that registered electoral materials be made accessible by political participants to enable the use of tools such as screen readers by electors who are blind or have low vision or require. The NSW Electoral Commission provided a guide to creating accessible documents.

# Voting

## **Attendance (in-person): Pre-poll (early voting)**

### **Key dates and eligibility**

Pre-poll voting was available from Monday, 22 November to Friday 3 December 2021.

To increase COVID-19 safety, voters did not need to meet any eligibility criteria to pre-poll (vote early) at these elections. Any person who was enrolled to vote was permitted to vote early in person.

Pre-poll locations were available in every council area where an election was conducted by the NSW Electoral Commission, typically at Returning Officers' offices and other nominated locations within the council area.

There were 284 pre-poll venues for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections, 49 of these were also utilised as Returning Officer offices. All pre-poll locations and their accessibility rating were listed on the NSW Electoral Commission's website.

### **Declared facilities not available for these elections**

In previous elections, some nursing homes, convalescent homes, hospitals and aged-care facilities were appointed by the NSW Electoral Commissioner as declared institutions/facilities. Election officials would visit these institutions in the five days before an election day to allow residents to vote in person on site. Voting at declared institutions and facilities is restricted to the residents of that institution or facility.

As a COVID-19 safety measure, the NSW Electoral Commission did not provide in-person voting services at declared institutions/facilities for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections. As part of the NSW Electoral Commission's commitment to ensuring that every eligible elector had the opportunity to vote, postal vote applications were provided to all registered declared institutions/facilities.

## **Attendance (in-person): Voting on election day**

Electors could vote in person on election day Saturday, 4 December 2021 from 8am to 6pm. There were 2,036 polling places open on election day. All venues had an accessibility rating listed on the NSW Electoral Commission's website.

## **Postal voting**

### **Postal vote application status communication**

An electronic communication process was introduced for these elections to inform electors of the status of their postal vote application. Email or SMS communications were sent to those electors who provided their email address or mobile number during the application process. This resulted in a decrease in the number of application status enquires and an increase in electors' ability to resolve their postal application issues.

### **Legislation changes**

#### **Preliminary scrutiny for postal voting**

Changes to legislation introduced preliminary scrutiny and extraction of postal vote envelopes/certificates from 13 days before election day. This reform allowed the Centralised Postal Vote Count Centre to commence preliminary scrutiny from 14 days before election day.

### Extended return for postal voting

Changes to legislation introduced an extension of the postal vote return date to 6pm on the thirteenth day after election day (that is, Friday, 17 December 2021). This reform allowed more postal vote certificates to be scrutinised and postal vote ballot papers included in the count. Previously, postal vote return closed at 6pm on the first business day following election day.

### Additional eligibility criteria as a COVID-19 measure

Additional criteria were introduced for these elections to make it easier and safer for electors to vote. In addition to existing postal vote eligibility criteria, electors were able to use postal voting if they:

- were a permanent or temporary resident in a hospital, nursing home, retirement village or similar facility
- were self-isolating because of COVID-19 related reasons
- reasonably believed that attending a polling place on election day would pose a risk to the health or safety of themselves or people around them, because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Key dates

Table 10: Key dates for postal voting for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections

Date	Activity
Tuesday, 26 October 2021	Lodgement of postal vote applications open
Monday, 8 November 2021	Postal vote packs sent commencing this week to electors with accepted applications and all electors registered as a general postal voter
Friday, 26 November 2021	Could register for iVote if elector did not receive postal vote pack by 5pm
Monday, 29 November 2021	5pm: Close of postal vote applications
Saturday, 4 December 2021	Election day: 8am–6pm
Friday, 17 December 2021	6pm: Return of completed postal vote certificates closes

### Centralised postal vote processing

The Centralised Postal Vote Count Centre (CPVCC) operated from 25 October to 17 December 2022. The CPVCC facilitated all aspects of postal voting, including the processing of postal vote applications, distribution and receipt of postal vote packs, scrutiny of postal vote certificates and counting postal vote ballot papers.

The centralisation of these processes allowed for improved control and provided consistency of approach in the processing of postal votes across New South Wales. In addition, the redirection of processing of postal votes from the 70 returning officers to a centralised operations unit reduced the effort required by each of the returning officers, enabling them to focus on their specific local operations during the election operation period.

### Braille postal vote packs

The NSW Electoral Commission provided electors who are blind or have low vision the option to vote via Braille postal ballot papers. Eleven electors utilised this service and were sent postal vote packs containing ballot papers, postal vote instructions and a postal vote certificate all in Braille. The NSW Electoral Commission thanks Vision Australia for the production of these ballot papers.



## Postal vote analysis

Table 11: 2021 NSW Local Government elections postal vote breakdown

Postal vote breakdown	Value
Issued	289,569
Accepted	208,270
Rejected	25,320
Not returned	55,979

Reasons for rejection include:

- not signed by witness
- not signed by elector
- elector and witness dates do not match
- no elector date and received after election day
- secret question (for online postal vote applicants) not answered or answered incorrectly
- dated after election day
- received by the NSW Electoral Commission after closing date
- elector had voted at this election using another voting method
- signature does not match postal vote application.

During the postal vote certificate extraction process some certificates are found to be empty or contain more than one ballot which requires both to be excluded. This means that the number of postal votes included in the count can be less than the total accepted postal certificates during scrutiny.

## iVote

### Technology-assisted voting

iVote refers to the NSW Electoral Commission's technology-assisted (internet and telephone) voting system. The iVote voting system has provided eligible voters with the opportunity to cast their vote online or over the telephone in New South Wales state general elections and by-elections since 2011 and more recently in the 2021 NSW Local Government elections.

### Legislative change

#### First time iVote offered for Local Government elections

The Local Government (General) Regulation was amended in 2021 to allow the use of iVote – by voters meeting eligibility criteria – for the first time at council elections conducted by the NSW Electoral Commission.

#### New iVote eligibility criteria

In addition to existing iVote eligibility criteria, electors were able to use iVote if their postal voting pack was not delivered to them before 5pm, 26 November 2021.

## Functionality changes since the 2019 NSW state election

### Password reset functionality

For these elections a self-service portal was implemented enabling iVote users to reset their own password. This resulted in an improved user experience and a substantial decrease in calls to the NSW Electoral Commission's elector call centre compared with state elections.

### Application and voting opening on the same day

iVote applications and voting opened at the same time for these elections. This helped to minimise the incidence of forgotten passwords.

### IVR not available

The version of iVote available at these elections included internet and operator-assisted voting. The interactive voice recognition (IVR) functionality was not available due to the scale of these elections compared with state elections: a higher number of candidates, many more councils and wards compared with the number of state electoral districts, more political party names and additional ballot papers and voting instructions to cover different councillor voting variations, mayoral elections, referendum and polls.

### Eligibility criteria to use iVote

Electors were eligible to use iVote at the 2021 Local Government elections if they:

- are blind or have low vision
- were unable to vote without assistance or have difficulty voting at a polling place because of a disability or difficulties reading
- are a silent elector
- lived more than 20 kilometres from a polling place
- were not within the council area during election day
- applied for a postal vote but did not receive their postal ballot papers before 5pm on 26 November 2021.

### Key dates

Table 12: iVote key dates for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections

Date	Activity
Monday, 22 November 2021	iVote applications and voting opens 9am
Friday, 26 November 2021	Can register for iVote if you did not receive your postal vote pack by 5pm
Saturday, 4 December 2021 – election day	1pm: iVote applications close 6pm: iVote voting closes
Monday, 6 December 2021	6pm: iVote receipt portal closes

## **iVote system outages, service disruptions and potential voter impact**

### **Service incidents did not affect security of the iVote system**

The iVote platform was available for registration and voting from Monday, 22 November through to election day Saturday, 4 December. From the opening on 22 November to the close of voting, 671,594 votes were cast, compared with 234,401 at the 2019 NSW State election.

The platform experienced intermittent performance issues that negatively impacted electors' ability to access iVote. Service interruptions experienced before election day were mitigated by electors having the opportunity to access iVote at a later stage. It should be noted that none of these service incidents affected the security of the iVote system.

At close of the iVote registration period at 1pm on election day Saturday, 4 December 2021, almost triple the number of voters had used iVote than at any previous election.

### **Significant performance issues on election day**

Performance issues were significant on election day, where a number of electors successfully applied for iVote but were not issued with the necessary security credential to enable them to vote by the close of voting at 6pm on election day.

Half (53 per cent) of those voters were able to vote by other means. The NSW Electoral Commissioner issued a statement at the close of voting on election day saying an assessment would be undertaken to assess the impact of this iVote issue.

### **Kempsey Shire Council, Singleton Council and Shellharbour Council (Ward A) impacted**

On the basis of this analysis, the NSW Electoral Commissioner formed the view that there was no material impact on these elections, with the exception of three contests:

- Kempsey Shire Council – councillor elections
- Singleton Council – councillor Elections
- City of Shellharbour (Ward A) – councillor elections.

The NSW Electoral Commissioner considered that there was a possibility that, if all individuals who registered to use iVote on election day had been able to vote, a different outcome might have occurred in those contests.

### **Supreme Court proceedings**

On 11 January 2022 the NSW Electoral Commissioner applied to the Supreme Court of New South Wales seeking a declaration about the validity of the 2021 NSW Local Government elections for councillors in Kempsey Shire Council, Singleton Council and Shellharbour City Council (Ward A).

The proceedings were heard in the Supreme Court before his Honour Justice Beech-Jones Chief Judge at Common Law on 22 and 23 February 2022.

In assessing which contests may have been impacted, the NSW Electoral Commission's analysis took into account the margin between elected candidates and unelected candidates and the margin between excluded candidates and non-excluded candidates in various rounds of vote counting. The NSW Electoral Commission's analysis also took into account the outcomes of extensive simulations of results for each contest. That data was provided to the Court and to participants in the proceedings. The results of that analysis were also published on the NSW Electoral Commission's website.

The number of iVote applicants who were unable to vote online due to this issue and did not vote by other means for Kempsey Shire Council, Singleton Council and Shellharbour – Ward A were 34, 55 and 54, respectively. While these constituted a very small proportion of the total voters in each election, the Court found that the fact these numbers exceeded the margins between candidates at different point in the counts in these three contests was sufficient to characterise the issue as a material irregularity.

The Supreme Court decided that the elections for Kempsey Shire Council, Singleton Council and Shellharbour City Council – Ward A held on 4 December 2021 were consequently void, with its orders taking effect on 3 May 2022. By operation of the *Local Government Act 1993*, the election manager must fix a date for new elections on a Saturday no later than three months after 3 May 2022. Any new elections must be conducted as if casual vacancies have occurred for all councillors' positions.

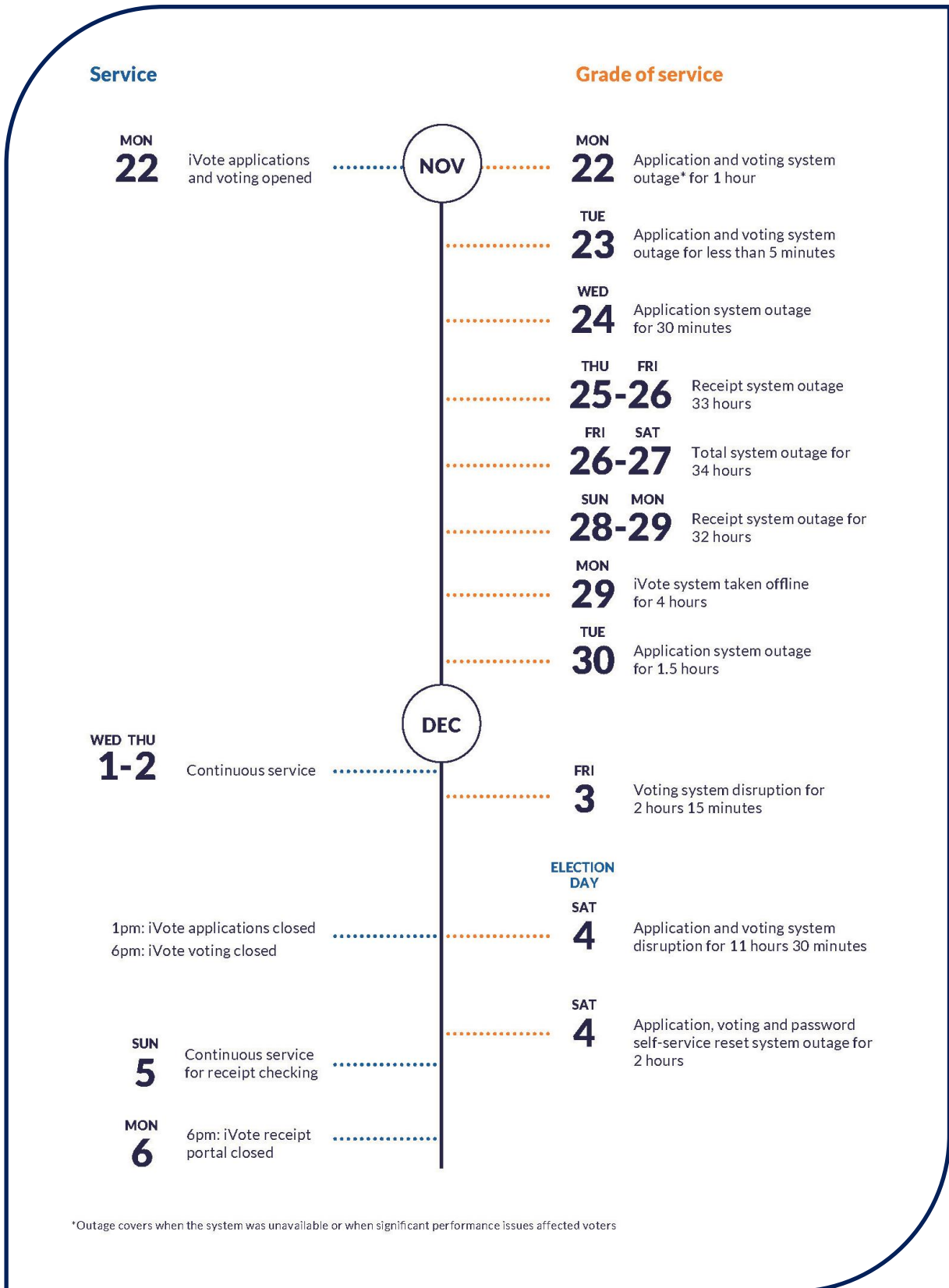
The NSW Electoral Commissioner made a statement clarifying that no wrongdoing was suggested on the part of councils and councillors referred to as defendants in these proceedings. The issue in these proceedings was the operation of the iVote system. The NSW Electoral Commissioner also agreed the three councils involved would not have to pay for conducting the new elections.

The NSW Electoral Commissioner also consented to pay the defendants' legal costs.

In recognition of the financial impact on the candidates, groups and parties who participated in the affected elections, the NSW Electoral Commission requested and received delegated authority under section 5.7 of the *Government Sector Finance Act 2018* to offer act of grace payments. Participants in the affected elections who incurred lawful electoral expenditure in respect of nominated candidates were invited to apply for a payment (on a reimbursement basis) up to the amount of the legislated cap for the particular contest.

Note: All statements issued by the NSW Electoral Commissioner and the iVote analysis are published on the NSW Electoral Commission's [website](#). Supreme Court findings are published on the NSW Caselaw [website](#).

iVote outage timeline



Note: Timeline showing when the iVote platform or iVote system components were unavailable or when significant performance issues affected iVote users

# Counting and results

After the close of voting on election day, the ballot boxes are opened, and the ballot papers sorted and counted. A series of counts are undertaken before the final results are declared.

A check count was conducted on all mayor and councillor ballot papers. This comprises batching, which is counting the ballot papers into bundles of 50 without examining the preferences and data entry (two rounds of data entry, and a reconciliation process). The ballot papers were counted using the NSW Electoral Commission's computer count system. The check count commenced on the Monday following election day and continued as required until the close of receipt of postal vote certificate envelopes at 6pm, Friday 17 December 2021.

Candidates could appoint scrutineers to observe voting and the counting of votes to verify that the election processes are being carried out in a proper manner.

## Counting of councillor ballot papers: proportional representation system

In 2017 the NSW Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) conducted an inquiry into preference vote counting at Local Government elections in New South Wales. Subsequent legislative changes resulted in the preference counting method involving random sampling of ballot papers being replaced with the Weighted Inclusive Gregory Method (WIGM). This new counting method is used to count the ballot papers where there are two or more councillor vacancies to be filled, introducing significant benefits for local government elections, including:

- a new logic of preference allocation:
  - more accurately reflects the intent of voters
  - generates unvarying results that are reproducible each time the count is generated
  - enables Countback to be used to fill a subsequent vacancy.
- improved public confidence in the integrity of the result.

See Appendix C for formal councillor vote counts by council.

## Counting of mayoral ballot papers

The NSW Electoral Commission introduced a change to the mayoral check count. Changing from a manual process to a data-entry process and an automated distribution of preferences. See Appendix D for formal mayoral vote counts by council.

## Distribution of preferences timeline

For this election, the deadline for receipt of completed postal votes and postal vote certificates was extended from the first Monday after election day, to 13 days after election day, that is Friday, 17 December 2021 at 6pm. Therefore, the distribution of preferences to determine the elected candidates could not be conducted until two weeks after election day.

The mayor and councillor distribution of preferences for 259 contests were conducted within three days in the week following the close of receipt of postal votes.

## Work health and safety considerations for count staff

In accordance with NSW Electoral Commission work health and safety guidelines:

- election-night counts were completed or ceased by 10.30pm
- referendum/poll ballot papers were only tallied on election night, not counted to 'Yes' or 'No'
- no counting was conducted on the Sunday following election day.

## Countback elections

Another legislative amendment enabled the use of a Countback election to fill a councillor vacancy (for example, following the resignation or death of a councillor) that occur after December 2021. This measure dispenses with the need for attendance by-elections.

To adopt the use of Countback elections:

- the council must pass a resolution at its first meeting after the 2021 election that Countback is to be used to fill a councillor vacancy
- the councillor vacancy needs to occur within 18 months of the last ordinary election of councillors

The results of the December 2021 Local Government elections will be used to determine the new councillor to fill the vacancy.

Following the December 2021 elections, 99 councils resolved at their first meeting after the elections to adopt Countback to fill councillor vacancies and 29 councils resolved not to adopt Countback.

Table 13: Councils adopting Countback elections

Council	Council	Council
Albury	Glen Innes Severn	Oberon
Armidale	Goulburn Mulwaree	Orange
Ballina	Greater Hume	Parkes
Bathurst	Griffith	Parramatta
Bayside	Gunnedah	Port Macquarie-Hastings
Bega Valley	Gwydir	Port Stephens
Bellingen	Hawkesbury	Queanbeyan-Palerang
Berrigan	Hay	Randwick
Blacktown	Hilltops	Shellharbour
Bland	Hornsby	Shoalhaven
Blayney	Inner West	Singleton
Bogan	Inverell	Snowy Monaro
Byron	Junee	Snowy Valleys
Cabonne	Kempsey	Sutherland

Council	Council	Council
Camden	Kiama	Sydney
Campbelltown	Lake Macquarie	Tamworth
Canada Bay	Lane Cove	Temora
Canterbury-Bankstown	Lithgow	The Hills
Cessnock	Liverpool	Tweed
Clarence Valley	Liverpool Plains	Upper Hunter
Coffs Harbour	Lockhart	Upper Lachlan
Coolamon	Maitland	Walcha
Coonamble	Mid-Coast	Walgett
Cootamundra-Gundagai	Mid-Western	Warren
Cowra	Moree Plains	Warrumbungle
Cumberland	Mosman	Waverley
Dungog	Muswellbrook	Weddin
Edward River	Nambucca Valley	Wentworth
Eurobodalla	Narrabri	Willoughby
Federation	Narrandera	Wollondilly
Forbes	Newcastle	Wollongong
Georges River	North Sydney	Woollahra
Gilgandra	Northern Beaches	Yass Valley



Table 14: Councils not adopting Countback elections

Council	Council
Balranald	Lachlan
Blue Mountains	Leeton
Bourke	Lismore
Brewarrina	Murray River
Broken Hill	Murrumbidgee
Burwood	Narromine
Carrathool	Penrith
Central Coast	Richmond Valley
Central Darling	Ryde
Cobar	Strathfield
Dubbo	Tenterfield
Fairfield	Uralla
Hunters Hill	Wagga Wagga
Ku-ring-gai	Wingecarribee
Kyogle	

# Staffing

## COVID-19 provisions for election staff

The following staffing measures were implemented for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections in response to COVID:

- All election officials were deemed to be essential workers under NSW Health orders and permitted to attend office locations during lockdown periods.
- Three additional staff members were appointed to every pre-poll venue and polling place. These staff were responsible for queue control, ensuring QR and manual check-in to venues, physical distancing, mask wearing, wiping surfaces and hygiene within the venues.
- The table loading for the election was reduced from 450 to 300 electors per ordinary issuing officer per day. Table loading is the number of votes an ordinary vote issuing officer can be expected to issue in a day of operation.
- In addition to ordinary vote issuing offices, voting centres had a polling place manager, deputy polling place manager, and declaration vote issuing officers/information officers.
- All staff were required to be vaccinated for COVID-19.

## Staff numbers and roles

The NSW Electoral Commission employed 30,114 staff for the elections in various roles and for various timeframes.

Table 15: Staff employed for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections (by role)

Role	Number employed
Returning officers	70
Election officials	16,765
Declaration vote issuing officers	2,556
Deputy polling place managers	2,137
Polling place managers	2,144
Office assistants	4,675
Senior office assistants – pre-poll	292
Senior office assistants – staffing and venues	76
Senior office assistants – election materials	75
Senior office assistants – counting and results	84
Senior office assistants – counting centre	50
Contingent workforce (via recruitment agencies)*	1,188
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,114</b>

\*The contingent workforce was employed at the centralised operations.

## Senior election officials

Senior election officials fill the positions of returning officer and returning officer support officer. Returning officers are the front line for the NSW Electoral Commission's engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders, including election staff, candidates, political parties, electors and the general public.

A structured and competitive recruitment process conducted in 2018 built a highly capable and effective talent pool of senior election officials, with role descriptions aligned to the NSW Government's capability framework. This talent pool (319 people) resources all NSW state and local government elections and by-elections. A subsequent recruitment drive was conducted for the 2021 Local Government elections to provide the additional election officials required to staff the elections.

## Returning officer support officer support centre

A support centre was established for the 70 returning officers, employing 12 returning officer support officers (ROSOs) assisted by three administration personnel and the support centre team leader. Each ROSO was allocated up to six returning officers.

As a result of the delay to the election the ROSO support centre operated for 28 weeks. The support centre received 4,697 calls, initiated 8,749 outbound calls, responded to 11,277 emails and conducted over 700 webinars and conference calls to support the returning officers during the election period. All returning officers were surveyed after elections about the support centre, with a 100 per cent response rate.

- 92 per cent of the returning officers stated that the ROSO support centre was co-operative and supportive; and 86 per cent stated the support centre provided assistance in solving issues and challenges
- 92 per cent of the returning officers were either satisfied or very satisfied with information provided to them via a web-based election portal, 81 per cent stated that information was easy to locate and 89 per cent stated the structure was easy to navigate
- 97 per cent of the returning officers surveyed were very satisfied with the information provided to them via the election bulletin format, saying that they were easy to read and understand and 92 per cent stated they were very satisfied with the frequency, presentation and relevance of information provided.

## Election officials

Election officials were placed in returning officers' offices, at pre-poll venues and worked at polling places on election day.

A staffing model based on vote projections helped determine the number and type of polling place staff appointed to each polling place on election day. Vote projections are calculated using historical trends and population growth and movement. Other factors considered include community demographics (for example, culturally and linguistically diverse populations) and local events scheduled on election day (for example, festivals and concerts).

To meet our work health and safety requirement that staff should not work in isolation, a deputy polling place manager was employed at every polling place. This person assisted with the set-up of the polling place on the Friday evening before election day and ensured appropriate breaks and support for the polling place manager on election day.

## Recruiting election officials

Applications for election work were captured via an online expression of interest. A social media recruitment campaign was supported with media releases, media outreach, and local digital display, social media and print advertising.

Extensive outreach was conducted via local councils, community groups, schools, TAFE, colleges, universities, employment agencies, the NSW Aboriginal Land Council and many volunteer organisations across New South Wales to promote the opportunity to work at the election.

The NSW Electoral Commission collaborated with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to contact more than 70,000 of the AEC's database of election workers. A further 20,000 emails were sent by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to engage with their temporary workforce, many of whom had worked on the 2021 census.

## Employment helpdesk

An employment help desk operated from 1 June 2021 to 24 January 2022. The help desk was resourced during peak times by 12 staff and received 20,259 calls. The most calls received in a single day during these elections (713) were received on the Monday prior to election day. The help desk received 16,282 emails and sent 405,276 emails to applicants and staff.

## Staffing the centralised operations

Two external recruitment agencies were engaged to provide staff to work at the NSW Electoral Commission's centralised operations across five sites: NSW Electoral Commission head office sites at Elizabeth Street and Macquarie Street; the Centralised Postal Count Centre at Sydney Showground, Munro Pavilion; the Sydney Count Centre at Sydney Showground, Falkiner Pavilion; and the Newcastle Count Centre at Newcastle Entertainment Centre and Showground.

In total, 1,188 contracted (contingent) staff worked a total of 110,240 hours across the election period.

## Staff training

Online training was compulsory for all staff working at the elections. The training covered the processes and procedures relevant to the election role being performed, and included information about COVID, cyber security, ballot paper security and workplace health and safety (stress and fatigue management). Returning officers, senior office assistant election material, senior office assistant counting and results, senior office assistant pre-poll and polling place and deputy polling place managers also participated in face-to-face training.

### Returning officer training

Subject matter experts from across the NSW Electoral Commission supported the delivery of 12 sessions of training to returning officers. Due to COVID lockdowns, seven sessions were delivered face-to-face, with the remainder being reconfigured to allow for remote delivery. Head office staff were encouraged to participate in the training for professional development.

### Senior office assistant counting and results

Three days of check count training was delivered to senior office assistants (counting and results), with the counting team. A total of 41 staff received training on the check count process which focussed on the Proportional Representation Computer Count system (PRCC) – used for batching, data entry and calculation of distribution of preferences which determines successful candidates in an election.

### Senior office assistant election material face-to-face training

Ten half-day training sessions were delivered to 72 senior office assistants (election material) and two ROSOs over a five-day period.

### Coaching

Coaching was provided to all 36 metro-based returning officers and regional offices in Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Shellharbour, Wollongong and Kiama.

### Polling place manager training

The training team, two ROSOs and the attendance voting lead provided 40 sessions of polling place manager training to support the 13 returning officers with over 100 deputy and polling place managers to train.

### Webinars

The training team together with head office subject matters experts conducted 11 webinars on key topics covering: nominations, ballot paper draw, deliveries, pre-poll, results, polling place manager training, election day attendance, election night, election day scrutiny and venue decommissioning.

### Contingent workforce

The training team supported head office subject matters experts to train supervisors for the count centres and the elector enquiry call centre.

The contingent workforce online module covered activities in the iVote call centre, nominations, employment helpdesk, ROSO support centre, elector enquiry centre helpdesk, centralised postal vote count centre (CPVCC) and the count centres at Homebush and Newcastle. It was also relevant for council staff who were involved in issuing nominations and working at council offices during pre-poll.

## Workforce diversity, inclusion and accessibility

The NSW Electoral Commission embraces diversity and inclusion and is committed to creating a workplace that reflects the population of New South Wales.

Table 16: Staff diversity for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections

Election day and office staff	Local Council election 2021	Local Council election 2017	Local Council election 2016
Spoke a language other than English	25.03%	30.36%	18.7%
Identify as Aboriginal	2.85%	2.21%	2.30%
People living with disability	2.43%	2.82%	1.82%

Half of the temporary election staff employed at the 2021 NSW Local Government elections stated that they had no previous election experience, compared with 22.32 per cent who were new to election work for the 2017 elections and 19.64 per cent for the 2016 elections.

See Appendix G for a list of the languages spoken by election officials. See Appendix H for the number of election staff employed, by council area, who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, live with disability or speak a language in addition to English.

## Workforce health and safety principles

Work health and safety principles were introduced for all staff at these elections:

- Staff should not work in isolation.
- Staff should take sufficient breaks (30 minutes every five hours).
- Staff should have a minimum break of eight consecutive hours between rostered shifts.
- Staff should not work more than six consecutive days.
- Staff should not work more than a 10-hour shift, with the exception of election day.
- All counting to cease at 10.30pm on election night.
- Polling place staff will not work past 11pm on election night without prior approval.
- Election staff should not drive more than one hour from their venue to a nominated material drop off point.
- Returning officer office staff will not work past 11pm on election night without prior approval.
- Return of material staff will not work past 12.30am.

The additional three election staff appointed to every pre-poll venue and polling place to help implement the COVID safety measures provided the benefit of extra staff to conduct count activities following the close of voting.

COVID-19 safety measures were mandatory for staff and electors:

- mask wearing inside and outside all venues
- QR code check-in and manual check in at all venues
- hand sanitiser
- disinfectant spray
- disinfectant wipes
- plastic inserts provided for voting booths
- disposable gloves
- face shields (available if requested)
- single-use pens
- physical distancing.

## Work health and safety reporting

### COVID-19 notifications

From the end of October 2021, when some temporary election staffing roles had commenced, through to the end of the pre-poll period (3 December 2021), the NSW Electoral Commission received 186 COVID notifications from staff (including head office and election staff). For election day (4 December), the NSW Electoral Commission received 104 notifications.

The notifications ranged from low-risk and monitoring to alerts of positive cases. Each notification was dealt with according to the Electoral Commission's COVID-19 policies and procedures, including:

- one voting venue being temporarily closed, and new staff hired to maintain election services
- overnight cleaning of venues.

### Injuries at election venues

The NSW Electoral Commission received 74 notifications of injuries at election venues for the period of 28 October 2021 to 25 May 2022. As with previous elections, slips, trips and falls continue to be the most prevalent cause of injury. These comprised:

- 43 injuries to the NSW Electoral Commission workforce, of which 21 were classed as 'slip, trip, fall'
- 28 injuries to electors, of which 24 were classed as 'slip, trip, fall'
- three injuries to contractors, of which two were classed as 'slip, trip, fall'.

Table 17: Incident categories for the reporting period 28 October 2021 to 25 May 2022

Incident category	Totals
Report of injury – no action required	4
Injury requiring first aid treatment	34
Injury requiring medical treatment	5
Injury requiring time off work	3
Injuries resulting in a claim on public liability	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>

# Venues

The process of venue selection usually commences more than a year before an election. The election date change required venue bookings and rental agreements to be cancelled and re-booked. The NSW Electoral Commission endeavoured to secure premises that had been used at previous elections. Most venues are required for only one day (election day polling places), others for a period of up to two weeks (pre-poll centres), election managers offices for three months, with extended leases on the centralised operations and count centres.

The announcement of the deferral of the elections to December 2021 came just as 70 leased returning offices across New South Wales were due to open. Significant additional costs were incurred to hold these premises for the new election date.

The NSW Electoral Commission provided contact information for polling place managers to NSW Police as well as the addresses of pre-poll and election day voting venues in the event of an emergency.

## Procurement, inspection and selection

The hiring of appropriate venues for voting at the local government elections was a significant exercise. To support the NSW Electoral Commission's Venues team, eight venue procurement officers (VPOs) were employed for a 14-week period to locate and hire 70 returning offices and approximately 300 pre-poll venues across the state.

Involving councils in the procurement process enabled some councils to provide council-owned venues in the locations and for the periods required. This helped to reduce the total cost of conducting the elections for those councils. Where councils were unable to provide suitable venues, the VPOs sourced commercial properties. While the VPOs were focussed on securing returning offices and pre-poll venues, the Venues team located and hired approximately 2,200 polling places for election day voting.

The NSW Electoral Commission selected the most suitable premises from those available. Venue considerations were extensive and included size, location, accessibility, amenities, street frontage, access for deliveries, internet connectivity and workplace health and safety. The ability to secure premises that met functional requirements presented challenges, particularly in negotiating agreements to enter short-term leases when the supply of premises is limited. The requirement for physical distancing due to COVID necessitated larger voting premises and/or more of them, which presented a challenge in some council areas.

Table 18: Total venue numbers by venue type for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections

Venue type	Number
Polling place	2,036
Pre-poll venue	284*
Returning office	70
Centralised operations (Queen's Square, Sydney)	1
Centralised count centres (Sydney and Newcastle)	3
<b>Total venues</b>	<b>2,345</b>

\*The number of pre-poll venues includes 49 returning offices that were utilised for pre-polling. See Appendix E.

See Appendix E for pre-poll and election day polling places by council.



## Venue accessibility

The NSW Electoral Commission published on its website the accessibility level of every voting centre; that is, fully accessible, assisted access (partially accessible) and non-accessible (no wheelchair access). If partially accessible, a description of the accessibility was also displayed on the website. This enabled people with disability to assess whether they could access individual venues. Each voting centre provided a wheelchair accessible voting screen, maxi pens and magnifiers, with the support available displayed on posters.

Table 19: Venue accessibility summary by venue type

Venue type	Number of fully accessible venues	Number of assisted access venues	Number of non-accessible venues	Total number of unique venues	Fully accessible venues % of total	Assisted access venues % of total	Non-accessible venues % of total
Polling place	521	1,291	224	2,036	26%	63%	11%
Pre-polling place	110	120	5	235	47%	51%	2%
Returning office	31	37	2	70	44%	53%	3%

Note: The table should be read as follows: the number of fully accessible polling places is 521, which is 26% of all polling places.

- The percentage of fully accessible polling places for the 2021 elections (26%) is an increase on the 2017 elections (18%) and 2016 elections (19%).
- The percentage of fully accessible pre-poll venues for the 2021 elections (47%) is a decrease on the 2017 elections (56%) and equal to the 2016 elections (47%).
- The percentage of fully accessible returning offices for the 2021 elections (44%) is an increase on the 2017 elections (40%) but a decrease to the 2016 elections (46%).

See Appendix F for venue accessibility by council.

## Use of school premises on election day

Approximately 60 per cent of election day polling places were schools. Schools are generally well located, have the space and amenities required and are available on Saturdays.

Table 20: Accessibility of school premises used for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections

School premises	Number of venues
Full accessibility	298
Assisted access	784
Non-accessible	138
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,220</b>

The NSW Electoral Commission has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Education for the use of public school premises on election day. Public school premises are not free and must be paid for by the NSW Electoral Commission according to fees set by the Department of Education for community users of school premises.

### Sharing of returning office and returning officer resources

To provide an opportunity for cost savings, the NSW Electoral Commission established 'regional' returning offices. For each of the regional returning offices, a single returning officer managed the elections for a number of councils.

Table 21 lists the returning office locations for the 2021 Local Government elections and the number of councils serviced by each office (including councils with declared contests).

Table 21: The number of councils serviced by each returning office

Returning officers' office	No. of councils	Returning officers' office	No. of councils
Albury Region	2	Lake Macquarie	1
Armidale Region	3	Lismore Region	3
Bathurst Region	3	Lithgow Region	2
Bayside	1	Liverpool	1
Bega Valley Region	2	Maitland	1
Blacktown	1	Mid-Coast	1
Blue Mountains	1	Moree Plains Region	3
Broken Hill Region	2	Murray River Region	2
Byron Region	2	Muswellbrook Region	3
Camden	1	Nambucca Valley Region	2
Campbelltown	1	Newcastle	1
Canterbury-Bankstown	1	North Sydney Region	2
Cessnock	1	Northern Beaches	1
Clarence Valley Region	2	Orange Region	2
Cobar Region	4	Parkes Region	3
Coffs Harbour	1	Parramatta	1
Coolamon Region	4	Port Macquarie-Hastings	1
Cootamundra-Gundagai Rgn	3	Port Stephens Region	2
Cowra Region	3	Queanbeyan-Palerang Region	2

Returning officers' office	No. of councils	Returning officers' office	No. of councils
Cumberland	1	Randwick	1
Dubbo Region	2	Ryde	1
Federation Region	3	Shellharbour	1
Georges River	1	Shoalhaven	1
Gilgandra Region	3	Strathfield Region	3
Goulburn Mulwaree Region	3	Sutherland	1
Griffith Region	4	Sydney	1
Gunnedah Region	3	Tamworth Region	2
Hawkesbury	1	The Hills	1
Hornsby	1	Tweed	1
Hunter's Hill Region	2	Wagga Wagga Region	2
Inner West	1	Waverley	1
Inverell Region	2	Willoughby	1
Kempsey	1	Wollondilly	1
Kiama	1	Wollongong	1
Ku-ring-gai	1	Woollahra	1

## The impact of high rainfall and flooding across New South Wales

November 2021 was the wettest November for New South Wales (and Australia) since national records began in 1900<sup>1</sup>. The heavy rains contributed to substantial flooding, particularly in inland New South Wales. This resulted in numerous flood watches and warnings over the two-week voting period and covered areas of the State from the Queensland border to the Victorian border. There were 12 local government areas particularly impacted, with local and major road closures limiting movement in and around some council areas.

There were some election venue closures and changes as a result of the flooding. Fortunately, the impact of this was localised. Due to the remote nature of some venues it was not always possible for electors to seek an alternative voting location. In these cases, electors impacted by venue closures and flooding were directed to other voting channels where possible.

<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Meteorology, <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/statements/scs75.pdf?20220214>

Table 22: Venues impacted by rainfall and flooding for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections

Council	Venue	Impact
Forbes	Forbes pre-poll	Venue moved prior to pre-poll opening due to previous venue being used as Emergency Operations Centre
Muswellbrook	Denman pre-poll	Pre-poll opening was delayed by an hour on one day due to staff having to wait for roads to be declared safe for travel
Narrabri	Wee Waa pre-poll	The town was isolated by floodwaters. Additional staff were recruited who resided within the levee banks. The venue was able to open for all days of pre-polling
Narrabri	Pilliga Public	Roads to the venue were closed or unsuitable for travel. Venue use was cancelled prior to election day
Moree Plains	Boggabilla Central	The town was evacuated due to flooding. Venue use was cancelled prior to election day
Moree Plains	Toomelah Public	Village evacuated due to flooding. Venue use was cancelled prior to election day
Moree Plains	Moree East Public	Venue was used as a flood evacuation centre. Polling was moved to the Shae Academy prior to election day.

# Ballot papers and logistics

## Ballot paper printing and distribution

For the 2021 NSW Local Government elections a total of 9.63 million ballot papers (ordinary and postal ballot papers) were printed and packed into 8,627 cartons for secure delivery. The movement of cartons was electronically tracked throughout the election process to ensure the security and integrity of ballot papers.

Table 23: Ballot paper summary – as printed for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections

Election/contest	Ordinary ballot papers	Postal ballot papers
Councillor	6,129,300	481,100
Mayor	2,310,600	199,000
Referendum	163,400	15,100
Poll	313,700	23,000
Total	8,917,000	718,200
<b>Total (ordinary and postal)</b>		<b>9,635,200</b>

## Equipment and materials supplied

Conducting an election is a major logistical exercise. Items procured and transported to venues across New South Wales for the 2021 Local Government elections included:

- 4,087,052 single-use pens
- 4,570,452 masks
- 2,532 stationery kits
- 2,532 COVID personal protective equipment (PPE) kits sent
- 27,761 litres of hand sanitiser
- 33,391 voting screens (including wheelchair accessible screens)
- 7,608 pieces of furniture.

# Compliance operations

The NSW Electoral Commission is responsible for ensuring compliance with and enforcement of the election provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act); the *Local Government Regulation 2021* (LG Regulation) and the *Electoral Funding Act 2018* (EF Act). Compliance and enforcement functions are undertaken by staff in different capacities across the NSW Electoral Commission during the election period, including by temporary staff engaged to work in polling places as election officials.

The NSW Electoral Commission maintains a specialist Investigation team within the Funding, Compliance, Disclosure and General Counsel Division of the NSW Electoral Commission, which runs a 'field' compliance operation at election events.

The objectives of the 2021 Local Government compliance operation were:

- to provide a visible NSW Electoral Commission compliance presence for the duration of the pre-poll period
- to provide a visible NSW Electoral Commission compliance presence on election day, particularly at polling places with projected high voter turnout
- respond to and review allegations relating to breaches of the LG Act, LG Regulation and EF Act
- proactively address compliance issues during the election event rather than after the fact.

During the election, five field teams (each comprising of two investigators) visited numerous pre-poll and election day venues throughout New South Wales. The teams were mainly based in the Sydney metro area, the Illawarra and the Hunter. Two teams were sent to regional areas including the Northern Rivers, Mid-North Coast and Central West. Throughout pre-poll and on election day, the teams attended 47 of the 122 local government areas conducting elections, representing 38 per cent of all local government areas. The teams were deployed in accordance with intelligence gathered in the lead-up to and during the election period. Resourcing limitations and COVID safety considerations limited regional coverage; however, remote support was provided to officers conducting the elections and teams were available to mobilise to regional areas as necessary.

Some pre-poll venues were attended numerous times as emerging issues were identified, including persistent breaches of the NSW Electoral Commissioner's COVID-19 directions for posters and handing out electoral materials within 100 meters of a polling venue. Of note, while a number of isolated breaches were reported, only two local government areas were noted as experiencing ongoing issues with these arrangements. This resulted in written directions being issued to the relevant candidates within the Cumberland and Canterbury Bankstown local government areas. To manage the new handing out and poster rules consistently across New South Wales, the Investigation team put in place a *Compliance Strategy - 100 Metre Rules*, which was based on the guiding principles of safety, fairness and practicality. Guidelines were also established to assist polling place officials in establishing the boundaries, communicating these to candidate workers and volunteers and to monitor compliance. In instances where polling place officers experienced continued non-compliance, they were advised to escalate the matter to the Candidate help desk at the NSW Electoral Commission head office to obtain further assistance. Election officials were able to give formal directions to individuals who appeared to contravene the 100-metre rules. If the conduct of individuals was aggressive, officials were advised to immediately contact the NSW Police.

Overall, compliance with the COVID-19 directions was positive, noting candidates within some local government areas such as Dubbo and Sutherland agreed among themselves not to canvass for votes or display posters at polling places. Having said this, a number of candidates and their volunteers did express concerns regarding the directions.

## Allegations relating to 2021 Local Government elections

The NSW Electoral Commission received a total of 322 allegations relating to the local government elections. Thirty-five of the allegations received fell outside the regulatory responsibility of the NSW Electoral Commission. These included such issues as use of council resources, alleged criminal conduct that was not an election offence and accusations of defamation.

In anticipation of greater campaigning through social media, the NSW Electoral Commission engaged with representatives of social media platforms informing them of the upcoming election and establishing reporting pathways should non-compliant electoral material be identified. Social media was monitored throughout the regulated period by the Investigation team and the Communications team. In the majority of cases involving non-compliance in relation to social media material, the person responsible was contacted and voluntarily remediated the breach. No other significant issue was identified.

## Allegations received in relation to Local Government Regulation

Of the 324 allegations received by the NSW Electoral Commission, 239 allegations related to potential breaches of the Local Government Regulation.

Table 24: Allegations regarding potential breaches of the Local Government Regulation

Contravention type	Total allegations received	No further action	Warning/ education notices issued	Ongoing (as of 27/05/2022)
False information on Candidate Information Sheet (CIS)	34	13	2	19
Printing, publishing or distributing non-compliant electoral material	50	34	11	5
Issues with the display of posters	25	20	5	-
Name and address absent from electoral material	99	21	66	12
Distribution of unregistered electoral material on election days	2	1	-	1
Canvassing within 6 metres of an entrance to a polling place	11	5	5	1
Electoral bribery, treating and selling of votes	9	8	-	1
Interference with right to vote	3	2	1	-
Electoral material falsely appearing to be made by the NSW Electoral Commission	1	1	-	-
False or misleading declaration and statements (other than CIS)	3	-	-	3
Improper use of enrolment information	1	1	-	-

Contravention type	Total allegations received	No further action	Warning/ education notices issued	Ongoing (as of 27/05/2022)
Party ineligible for registration	1	-	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>43</b>

## Allegations received in relation to the Electoral Funding Act

In total, the NSW Electoral Commission received 50 allegations regarding potential breaches of the *Electoral Funding Act 2018*. It is likely this number will increase following the compliance audits of donation and expenditure disclosures for the political participants of this election, noting the disclosure of electoral expenditure is not due until September 2022.

Table 25: Allegations regarding potential breaches of the Electoral Funding Act

Contravention type	Total allegations received	No further action	Warning/ education notices issued	Ongoing (as of 27/05/2022)
Making payment for electoral expenditure prior to registration	11	8	3	-
Electoral expenditure incurred over the applicable cap	1	1		
Unlawful donations (including prohibited donors and over the cap donations)	13	11	1	1
Unregistered third-party campaigner	25	19	4	2

## Emerging compliance issues

### Postal vote applications distributed by political parties

A number of complaints were received regarding postal vote applications (PVAs) distributed by political parties. The complainants expressed concern the PVAs resembled official NSW Electoral Commission communications. Under the Regulations, it is an offence to distribute material falsely appearing to be made by the NSW Electoral Commission. The PVAs reviewed included a reply-paid envelope addressed to a political party and a privacy statement apparently from the NSW Electoral Commission cautioning against providing false information. In the same paragraph it was noted the political party (referred to as "we") may also use the information on the PVAs for their own purposes, making it unclear who sent the postal vote application and who would receive it once returned by the elector.

This practice concerns the NSW Electoral Commission because electors may reasonably assume the information being requested on the PVA is provided only to the NSW Electoral Commission and be unaware the information is also being collected by a political party for its own purposes. At future elections the NSW Electoral Commission will explore with parties how they can clarify further that the information being collected will be used by the relevant political party or candidate, and is not an official communication from the NSW Electoral Commission. General awareness-raising activities for electors will also be considered for this area.



### **Ambiguity around the use of “independent” in electoral material**

Numerous complaints were received regarding the use of the word “independent” in electoral material. The complaints mainly involved material promoting endorsed candidates from political parties that are registered only for local government elections. Under the Local Government Regulation, it is unlawful to print, publish or distribute electoral material that contains information that is incorrect or misleading as to whether or not the candidate is a member of a political party. In most of the instances complained about, the word “independent” was being used to highlight only that the candidate was not affiliated with a ‘major party’ (that is, a party registered for state elections) instead of conveying that the candidate was not a member of any party. As an endorsed candidate of a local government party, however, using “independent” in these circumstances is not allowed under the Regulations. Compounding the confusion around this issue is the permitted use of the word “independent” in the name of a registered party. The word can be used, therefore, in electoral material promoting a party if “independent” is already part of its registered name. There are many parties registered for local government elections with the word “independent” in their name. The naming rules for parties are not set by the NSW Electoral Commission but further awareness-raising around this issue prior to future elections may be helpful in promoting greater understanding and compliance.

### **Assistance to electors when voting**

At the 2021 elections, some complaints were received from candidates, candidate volunteers and election staff regarding candidates assisting electors within the polling place to cast their votes, mostly being elderly electors and electors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Election staff also reported concerns about candidates in polling places encouraging electors they were assisting to vote for them and marking the ballot paper on behalf of the elector.

The legislation regulating local government elections does not prevent a candidate from being appointed by an elector to assist them to cast their vote. Where this conduct was repeatedly observed at these elections, however, election staff were instructed to seek verbal confirmation from the elector that they required assistance and consented to the candidate (or their representative) assisting them. It is important for electoral integrity, however, that voting by electors who require assistance is not subject to interference. In its recruitment of temporary staff for elections, the NSW Electoral Commission pays close attention to the need to have adequate staff to assist electors who require it, including staff who speak local community languages. The NSW Electoral Commission will keep this issue under review and gather further data at future elections to help design potential process improvements that support integrity.

# Multi-voter analysis

An analysis of the elector 'mark-offs' is conducted after every election. This is to ensure that any electors who appear to have voted more than once are identified and recorded. After the 2019 NSW State general election, the NSW Electoral Commission contacted apparent 'multi-voters'. If the NSW Electoral Commissioner has reasonable grounds to suspect that an elector has voted multiple times at an election, the elector may be declared a 'special elector' under the Electoral Act. While no similar power exists in relation to multi-voters at local government elections, apparent multi-voters are recorded and may be contacted by the NSW Electoral Commissioner to ask them to provide an explanation and to educate them about the offence of voting more than once. Further enforcement action may also be undertaken where appropriate.

# Non-voter process

After every election, those electors who are not recorded as having voted are sent an 'apparent failure to vote' notice to determine whether or not the elector actually did vote. If they advise they did not vote they are given an opportunity to provide an acceptable reason. The NSW Electoral Commission has an obligation under the *Local Government Act 1993* to issue penalty notices to electors who fail to vote in local government elections and who do not have a valid reason. The penalty for not voting in a local government election is \$55. The penalty notice gives recipients the options of:

- advising, in writing, their reason for not voting
- advising they did vote and providing details of where their vote was cast
- paying the penalty or
- applying for the matter to be heard by a court.

Electors who do not reply to the initial failure to vote notice, or who do not provide an acceptable reason for their failure to vote, are sent reminder notices. Matters which remain outstanding, or for which the response is determined to be unacceptable, are referred to Revenue NSW.

The revenue from non-voting fines is not retained by the NSW Electoral Commission but goes into the NSW Government's Consolidated Fund.

After the 2021 Local Government elections and following the initial exclusion of all electors who were able to be identified by the NSW Electoral Commission as having a valid reason for not voting, a total of 687,760 *Apparent failure to vote* notices were mailed to non-voters. As in past elections, it is likely that a significant proportion of these non-voters will also have valid reasons for not voting and will be excused.

Table 26 shows apparent failure to vote numbers from the 2016 and 2017 NSW Local Government election events (noting that the full complement of ordinary elections was split across the two years) and the 2019 NSW State election.

The NSW Electoral Commissioner determined that any eligible elector who applied to use iVote on election day (Saturday, 4 December 2021) but did not receive their voting credentials, and subsequently was unable to cast a vote, will be excused from paying any penalty.

Penalty notices sent to enrolled electors in Kempsey Shire Council, Shellharbour City Council Ward A and Singleton Council who were identified as failing to vote at the December 2021 elections have been withdrawn following the Supreme Court's voiding of these councils' election results.

Table 26: Apparent failure to vote notices issued for NSW elections

<b>Election</b>	<b>Number of electors on roll</b>	<b>Initial apparent failure to vote numbers</b>	<b>Number of non-voters excused</b>
2016 Local Government elections	2,352,658	376,189	164,989
2017 Local Government elections	2,790,150	402,776	179,577
2019 State election	5,271,775	384,879	150,065
2021 Local Government elections	5,162,390	687,760	Analysis not final

Initial, reminder and final reminder failure to vote notices are sent to non-voters. Once those non-voters have had an opportunity to respond, and when it is clear that no further responses are likely to be received, the outstanding matters are forwarded onto Revenue NSW for processing. This must happen no later than 12 months after the date of the election.

# Communications campaign and stakeholder engagement

# Communications and engagement

## Integrated communications strategy

Building engagement with all election stakeholders helps to support trust and confidence in democracy and election processes. The NSW Electoral Commission's engagement approach is to continuously improve information, communication, and awareness through advertising, with a digital focus, by building on the work implemented at each election. The aim is to make it easier for people to understand and participate in democracy and for political participants to understand and comply with their legal obligations.

The announcement of the deferral of the elections to December 2021 came just as the communications campaign had started, with all advertising and awareness material at that stage promoting a September election. This required a rapid recall and replan.

## Communications campaign approach

An integrated communications, advertising and stakeholder engagement approach was implemented to deliver awareness and engagement with the 2021 Local Government elections.

This approach was developed during a pandemic, following two postponements of the elections. It delivered clear messaging around the election itself, voting options and COVID safety measures across a variety of paid, owned, earned and shared channels.

### Communication goals

The goals of the communications approach were:

- stakeholders and electors are aware of the elections
- stakeholders and electors are aware of the voting options, including postal voting, at the elections
- stakeholders and electors are aware of the COVID safety measures in place for the elections
- the election process is easy to understand
- stakeholders and electors can find the information they need quickly and easily to participate in the elections
- people of NSW maintain trust and confidence in the democratic process.

### Key audiences

The overarching audience was residents of New South Wales above the age of 18 for voters and all political participants, including candidates, political parties and third-party campaigners. Target audiences included populations with barriers to participation in democracy including Aboriginal people, people with disability, culturally and linguistically diverse populations and young people.

## Communications channels

The following communication channels were used to reach and engage these key audiences.

Table 27: NSW Electoral Commission communication channels

Paid	Owned	Earned	Shared
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>television and finecast (broadcast/digital TV on demand)</li> <li>radio</li> <li>print</li> <li>digital – news and other websites</li> <li>social media</li> <li>outdoor advertising</li> <li>direct mail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSW Electoral Commission website</li> <li>NSW Electoral Commission social media channels – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube</li> <li>electronic direct mail</li> <li>events and webinars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>media engagement</li> <li>word-of-mouth</li> <li>stakeholder engagement and collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>social media content shared by third parties</li> </ul>

### A coordinated approach

The NSW Electoral Commission communicates with its key audiences as part of its day-to-day activity. This is particularly true in disclosure and election periods. The following programmes were delivered to NSW Electoral Commission key audiences concurrently with the 2021 Local Government voter awareness campaign:

- 2021 Local Government election workforce recruitment
- 2021 redistribution of state electoral district boundaries (public consultation phases and final determination)
- political donations awareness and education campaign.

### Communication activity

Statutory advertising was previously undertaken at a local level in the newspapers of each council's choice and paid for directly by the individual council. This is no longer a legislative requirement and statutory requirements can now be fulfilled by placement of notice of elections on the NSW Electoral Commission's website.

The NSW Electoral Commission published election ads on its website and in state-wide newspapers (Sydney Morning Herald, The Daily Telegraph and The Land) to inform the public and political participants about key dates in the election calendar.

All councils that engaged the NSW Electoral Commission to conduct their election were provided with advertising templates for their use in local newspapers. Councils were also supplied with 'media kits' including advertising assets, newsletter articles, social media posts, save-the-date templates, press release templates and poster templates for use within their local communities. Other communications support included regular electronic direct mail with key election updates and translated election information for use in culturally and linguistically diverse council areas.

A COVID safety campaign ran in parallel with the voter awareness campaign. The COVID campaign informed voters of the safety measures in place to ensure the election followed current health orders. The campaign ran in local print media supported by digital display advertising and catch-up TV.

## Voter awareness campaign

### Campaign approach

The 2021 NSW Local Government elections voter awareness campaign leveraged the creative concept and assets developed for the 2019 NSW State Election. The 2019 NSW State election *Get Vote Fit, Be Vote Ready* campaign received a positive reception from voters and the 2021 campaign leveraged this success to build further engagement with the voting public around the election.

The NSW Electoral Commission worked closely with the creative agency who initially developed the campaign to tailor it to the Local Government elections and the environment it was delivered in, apply learnings from the 2019 campaign and reach the 2021 campaign's objectives.

The NSW Electoral Commission continued to focus on areas across New South Wales with low voter turnout and/or additional barriers to voting with a highly targeted and digitally focussed campaign approach. TV, radio, outdoor and print advertising was maintained, but the focus was digital-first to drive tailored measurable communications.

### Messaging

Messaging was developed to drive awareness of the 2021 NSW Local Government elections, ensuring NSW electors were aware of when, where and how to vote. There was also an increased emphasis on awareness of voting options to support safe voting in the COVID environment.

The campaign messaging was delivered over three phases:

- Phase 1: Check your enrolment and save the date
- Phase 2: Know your voting options and vote early
- Phase 3: Election day is coming up, make sure you have planned your vote.

### Organic social media

A daily schedule of social media content was rolled out across the NSW Electoral Commission's social channels (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), amplifying messaging from the general awareness and COVID Safety campaigns, as well as more specific information about voting options, key dates, voter support and information for candidates, councils, political parties, third party campaigners and donors.

These channels were also used daily in the lead up to election day to answer questions about the elections.

### Media outreach

Proactive media outreach supported the election with a schedule of state-wide and localised media and radio releases promoting awareness of the election, how people could plan to vote on or before election day and key events in the election calendar, including the release of results.

### Responding to media enquiries

In addition to proactive media outreach, the NSW Electoral Commission responded to various incoming media enquiries, with topics changing in line with phases of the elections.

Table 28: Media enquiries received (via email)\* during the period 25 October to 4 December

Topic/theme	Number of enquiries
General questions about the election and voting	51
Nominations/Candidates	41
Voting places/Pre-poll/Polling booths	41
Request for electoral data	20
Electoral Material/How to vote information	17
Ballot papers/Preferences	9
Results/Counting	8
iVote	8
Website issues	5
Other (ballot draw, COVID measures, vaccination requirements, recruitment)	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>221</b>

Table 29: Media enquiries received (via email)\* during the period 5 December to 22 December

Topic/theme	Number of enquiries
Results/Counting/DoP	52
iVote	8
Polling booth	5
General/Voting/Covering multiple themes	3
Preferences	3
Request for electoral data	3
Media – photo at vote centre etc	2
Other (historical results, electoral material, candidates)	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>

\*Media enquiries received via telephone were not tracked.

During the period 25 October to 4 December 2021, 2,190 news articles or broadcasts mentioned the NSW Electoral Commission, with 176 mentions of the NSW Electoral Commissioner.



## Social, media and the elections

The NSW Electoral Commission actively engaged with the public through its official social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The NSW Electoral Commission currently has a social media audience of more than 15,000 followers on Facebook, 2,554 followers on Twitter and 2,322 followers on LinkedIn.

Members of the public used these social media channels to learn about the elections through published organic and reactive content, to ask questions and provide feedback.

While the NSW Electoral Commission is not resourced to in its call centre to manage social media as a customer service channel. All enquiries are managed by the Communications team. Most interactions are transactional in nature, helping voters find when, where and how to fulfil their obligations.

During the 2021 Local Government elections our social media accounts alerted the NSW Electoral Commission to operational issues happening in real-time. This enabled the Communications team to escalate issues with the relevant operational areas within the NSW Electoral Commission and resolve them swiftly.

On election day alone, the NSW Electoral Commission received approximately 180 direct messages and 500 comments on its Facebook page and approximately 600 tweets via Twitter.

Misinformation was a major theme managed via our social platforms during the 2021 Local Government elections. Ongoing monitoring and moderations of social media revealed consistent misinformation during this time.

Frequent misleading claims included:

- voters needing to be vaccinated in order to vote
- how-to-vote cards had been banned
- high levels of informality because of how-to-vote cards being banned.

Learnings from the 2021 Local government elections will form the basis for future social media strategy and resourcing plans to address the issues around misinformation and to clarify the role of the NSW Electoral Commission on proactive and reactive responses to social media.

### In-language campaign activity

The awareness campaign included a tailored component directed to key language groups in New South Wales. Government advertising campaigns greater than \$1m are required to include a spend of 7.5 per cent on CALD audiences. The NSW Electoral Commission exceeded this requirement in its communications to CALD electors for this election, with a spend of \$322,000 or 16.9 per cent of total media spend.

Advertising assets were translated in into seven languages, selected based on how frequently they are spoken in NSW, cross referenced with how well English is spoken by those groups. Based on these criteria, Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, Greek, Vietnamese, Italian and Korean were selected.

A media strategy was then developed to reach and engage those communities, using their most used media channels.

### Voter awareness campaign results

The voter awareness campaign was initially planned and booked for the September elections before the date was postponed. Once the date was changed to 4 December, all advertising had to be pulled and rebooked. This was done in the context of much more limited advertising environment due to the proximity to Christmas and affected the cost of rebooking with the planned frequency and reach. This was particularly the case for television advertising.

Table 30: Channels and results (campaign period 10 October to 4 December)

Channel	Result
TV	TV delivered good results given scarcity of availability in the lead up to Christmas reaching 37% of Sydney's audience, 29% of Northern NSW' audience and 35% of Southern NSW audience.
Finecast (broadcast/digital TV on demand)	Finecast delivered 1,293,069 impressions across NSW.
Radio	Radio used as last-minute awareness driver across nine key markets in regional NSW, delivering reach of up to 69.8%.
Print	Print publications were used as an awareness driver across NSW close to election day. Targeted in-language print advertising achieved an estimated reach of more than 639,000.
Outdoor	Despite volatility in the out of home (OOH) market since 2020, outdoor advertising reached 63% of the NSW population over 18 years of age.
Digital	Digital advertising delivered over 23 million impressions.
Social media	Paid social drove high reach and efficient results with more than 38 million impressions overall across Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, WeChat and TikTok. Youth targeting was a particular success, with TikTok media reaching more than 705,000 NSW residents aged 18-24. Targeted, in-language social media content achieved 2.1 million impressions.

### COVID safety campaign

The NSW Electoral Commission worked closely with the NSW Health in the lead-up to the 2021 NSW Local Government elections to develop a COVID-safe election plan. To raise awareness of this plan and the measures in place to help keep voters, staff and political participants safe, the following communications activities were implemented:

- publication of the COVID safety plan on the NSW Electoral Commission's [website](#)
- a digital and print media campaign promoting COVID safety at elections
- videos and animations supporting the plan
- organic social media activity across all channels.

The NSW Electoral Commission gratefully acknowledges the support received from partner agencies including NSW Health, NSW Department of Education and the Department of Customer Service in sharing and supporting the COVID safety messaging.

### COVID safety campaign results

Table 31: Channels and results (campaign period 10 October to 4 December)

Channel	Results
Print	Print publications were used to reach all regions across NSW in the lead up to election day.
Digital	Digital advertising delivered over 10 million impressions.
Social media	Facebook and Instagram delivered more than 9 million impressions overall.

### Election reminder service

Free election reminders via email and/or text message are available to electors enrolled in New South Wales who sign up to the election reminder service via the NSW Electoral Commission's website. The service enables subscribers to receive an email or SMS reminder (or both) of an upcoming election relevant to their enrolled address. The first reminder is sent one day after pre-poll (early voting) voting opens and a second reminder is sent two days before election day.

In July 2021, every NSW elector who had supplied their email address or mobile number upon enrolment to the electoral roll was sent a reminder to encourage them to check and update their enrolment details. A total of 2,108,596 emails and 723,773 SMS messages were sent as part of this reminder activity.

For the December 2021 Local Government elections, 485,636 email reminders and 465,312 SMS messages were sent to subscribed electors.

### Voter engagement and target audiences

#### Election 'event' website

A subsite of the NSW Electoral Commission's [website](#) was developed to provide a central location with critical information about the 2021 Local Government elections. The subsite content included:

- general information about the elections
- key dates for the elections
- checking enrolment
- candidate information
- early voting options
- voting on election day
- polling place locations
- counting schedules and locations
- COVID safety measures
- work opportunities
- election material registration and display
- pre-election metrics
- results.

This subsite was supported by the *For voters*, *For political participants* and *Funding and disclosure* 'evergreen' information on the website and the election-specific community education resources.

For the 2021 Local Government election, the *assistance for voters* content (which links to: in-language information, information for people living with disability and information about voting for people experiencing homelessness) saw increased page views of more than 38 per cent compared with the 2019 NSW State election, with the average time on page increasing almost 9 per cent.

Opportunities were identified to convey information in alternative formats, particularly videos and animations. This information was supplemented with video animations. A 'how-to-vote' animation provided general information about the elections, key dates and explained the various voting options available. This video had almost 19,000 views up to election day.

### Identify, mitigate and eliminate barriers to participation

The integrity of electoral democracy depends on participation by all. The NSW Electoral Commission recognises that some members of the community face additional barriers to participation. The NSW Electoral Commission works with these target communities to identify, mitigate and eliminate these barriers and remains committed to ensuring all citizens have fair and independent access to the election process.

Resources for these target audiences are created in consultation with the NSW Electoral Commission's reference groups and is informed by post-election research. The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Reference Group and Equal Access to Democracy (EAD) Disability Reference Group are made up of peak bodies and advocacy groups across New South Wales. These consultations form the basis of the planning for each election and the NSW Electoral Commission's Multicultural Action Plan and EAD Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP).

The reference groups provide guidance, information and feedback to the NSW Electoral Commission in relation to services for electors and to ensure that accessibility barriers to these services are identified and solutions to these barriers are reflected in the programs and services. This includes ensuring that a range of communication formats and channels are used to inform people about enrolment, elections and voting. Before each state-wide election the CALD and Equal Access to Democracy (Disability) reference groups are consulted about their member needs and briefed about any changes to legislation, regulations and voting that may need to be communicated to their members and networks.

### Culturally and linguistically diverse communities

#### Expanded CALD focus provided more translated information than previous elections

For the 2019 NSW State election, translated information about voting in Australia (covering enrolment, checking and updating details, and the election reminder service) was published on the NSW Electoral Commission's website in 24 community languages. For the 2021 Local Government elections, these materials were expanded to include information about voting at the 2021 NSW Local Government elections.

Content was created and translated on topics including:

- general information about the Local Government elections
- ways to vote
- eligibility criteria for different voting channels, including postal and iVote and the relevant dates
- COVID-19 safety measures at voting centres
- ballot papers
- funding and disclosure laws.

The languages identified cater for the largest number of voters with low English proficiency and cover 79 per cent of all language users in New South Wales. The language analysis is based on 2016 Census data; this will be reviewed with the 2021 Census data.

Total page views for the in-language content increased by more than 32 per cent compared with the views recorded for the 2019 NSW State election, and time on page increased by almost 10 per cent.

Table 32: Information for electors in 24 community languages

Cantonese	Vietnamese	Mandarin	Arabic	Greek	Italian
Korean	Spanish	Macedonian	Serbian	Turkish	Khmer
Croatian	Assyrian	Russian	Portuguese	Thai	Persian
Lao	Polish	Dari	Hindi	Tagalog	Maltese

### Videos in key community languages

Animated videos were developed in English and seven community languages (Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, Greek, Italian, Korean and Vietnamese) and with an Aboriginal Australian voiceover.

Topics included:

- general information about the elections plus voting options and key dates
- iVote registration, voting and verification processes and key dates
- political donations
- ballot papers.

### Other measures to support CALD electors for the 2021 Local Government elections

- Extensive and inclusive advertising campaigns with targeted in-language advertising on relevant platforms and in relevant publications (see Voter awareness campaign).
- At all elections the NSW Electoral Commission seeks to recruit an election workforce reflective of the communities they are working in, and actively seeks to recruit temporary staff with language skills reflecting the community they will serve.
- Election officials and all staff at voting venues wear stickers indicating the languages they speak.
- Posters displayed at all voting centres promote translated materials in 24 languages, with direct QR code link to the NSW Electoral Commission's website.
- Electors can access the National Translation and Interpreting Service (TIS National) at election venues, and via our call centres. TIS National is also promoted in NSW Electoral Commission voter awareness advertising, social media activity and in-language on the NSW Electoral Commission's website.

Translated resources were distributed by the NSW Electoral Commission's CALD Reference Group members to their networks. The NSW Electoral Commission also collaborated with Revenue NSW to help distribute information about the election (including work opportunities) through its Aboriginal outreach programs focused on six areas: Brewarrina, Walgett, Burke, Taree, Nowra and Mt Druitt.

## **Stakeholder communications kit**

All CALD Reference Group members were provided with the 2021 Local Government stakeholder kit. For these elections, the kit was web-based with links collating the resources and information to support the voter community. This community education resources web page, which also contained information for people living with disability, saw page views increase by more than 30 per cent compared with the 2019 NSW State election.

While comparison of the 2021 Local Government website analytics with the 2019 State election does not strictly compare like for like, the types of content displayed are similar. The macro environment, including the need for information relating to COVID-19 and the public's increased propensity to consume information via digital channels, should also be taken into account.

## **Multicultural Action Plan**

The NSW Electoral Commission's Multicultural Action Plan (MAP) expired at the end of 2020. As the plan was designed to support both the 2019 NSW State election and the 2020 NSW Local government elections, a decision was taken to extend the existing MAP to cover another calendar year to December 2021, to accommodate the postponement of the Local Government elections. A new plan will be developed in consultation with the CALD Reference Group for the 2023 NSW State election and the 2024 NSW Local government elections.

## **Political donation laws**

In tandem with the 2021 Local Government elections campaign, a campaign was developed to increase awareness of political donations laws in New South Wales. The campaign aimed to educate voters, political parties and existing donors of legislation changes that came into effect on 1 January 2020.

The content for this campaign has been translated in 24 community languages. Animated videos specifically engaged Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Italian, Korean and Vietnamese communities as part of the broader communications campaign.

## **People living with disability**

The NSW Electoral Commission seeks to deliver elections that meet the diverse access needs of voters across the State.

### **Videos**

The NSW Electoral Commission greatly increased the range of information available for the Local Government elections in video format, with a series of videos produced by community and reference group members. All videos were published in line with accessibility guidelines (captions, voiceover where applicable and transcripts for use with screen readers).

A new initiative for the 2021 Local Government elections was the production of an Auslan video series in collaboration with The Deaf Society (now Deaf Connect). The topics covered by the four videos include:

- general information about the Local Government elections
- ways to vote in-person (early and on election day)
- voting by iVote (online and telephone voting) and postal vote
- ballot papers.

The videos were promoted on the NSW Electoral Commission's social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) and also by the Deaf Society.

The NSW Electoral Commission collaborated with the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability to produce a video to help people vote at the local council elections.

Topics covered in the video include:

- having the right to vote
- how to vote
- where to vote and what to expect
- ballot papers.

The video has been viewed more than 1,200 times.

### **Easy-read guide**

The Council for Intellectual Disability produced an easy-read guide with messages that supported the video.

### **Auslan interpreters**

As for previous election events, Auslan interpreters were available to assist electors who are deaf. On weekdays, electors can connect to the NSW Electoral Commission's call centre via an Auslan interpreter through the Video Relay Service (part of the National Relay Service). The Video Relay Service is not available on weekends. To ensure access to information on early voting Saturday (27 November) and election day (Saturday, 4 December), the NSW Electoral Commission provides the opportunity to connect with an Auslan interpreter engaged via Deaf Services (now Deaf Connect) using Skye video functionality.

The NSW Electoral Commission appreciates the support of its reference group members and the advocacy groups who also supplied goods and services for the elections in particular: Vision Australia for the iVote review and feedback; Council for Intellectual Disability for production of the video and easy read guide; the Deaf Society for the production of the Auslan video series and the provision of Auslan interpreters.

### **Stakeholder communications 'kit'**

All EAD Disability Reference Group members were provided with the 2021 Local Government stakeholder kit to support the distribution of information about the elections with their members and stakeholders. For these elections, the kit was web-based with links collating the abovementioned resources and information to support the voter community.

### **Disability Inclusion Action Plan**

The NSW Electoral Commission's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) expired at the end of 2020. As the plan was designed to support both the 2019 NSW State election and the 2020 NSW Local government elections, a decision was taken to extend the existing DIAP to cover another calendar year to December 2021, to accommodate the postponement of the Local Government elections. A new plan will be developed in consultation with the EAD Disability Reference Group for the 2023 NSW State election and the 2024 NSW Local government elections.

# Services for political participants

## Webinar series

A series of candidate webinars were held in the lead up to the elections (for the September 2021 election date and then updated and repeated for the December elections). The webinars included a 'Q&A' format where attendees could ask questions live and receive responses. Webinar topics included:

- election funding and disclosure
- nomination and other information for candidates
- general information about the elections
- electoral material
- voting processes (pre-poll and on election day)
- candidate workers, scrutineers, counting and results.

All webinars were recorded and published on the NSW Electoral Commission's YouTube channel.

## Demonstration of online systems

### Nominating online

Registered political parties were invited to attend a demonstration (during July, September and October) of the *Nomination Online Management System* (NOMS). The demonstrations provided an opportunity to view the system and ask questions regarding the application process to assist them in their preparation and lodgement of nominations.

### Registering and disclosing online

Candidates, parties and third-party campaigners were invited to attend online demonstrations (during April, May, June and July) of *Funding and Disclosure Online*, to learn how to access the portal to register and disclose political donations and electoral expenditure electronically.

Following the elections, in February 2022, candidates and elected members were responsible for submitting disclosures of political donations, and were invited to attend demonstrations on how to make disclosures using *Funding and Disclosure Online*.

## Information resources

A series of 19 Election bulletins were issued throughout the election period covering various aspects of the election to ensure candidates and registered political parties were kept up to date with the progress of the election and their responsibilities and roles. The bulletins were distributed via email to subscribers and published on the NSW Electoral Commission website.

Fact sheets about the electoral funding obligations of electoral participants at these elections, including registering for the elections and electoral expenditure caps, were published on the NSW Electoral Commission's website.

Registered candidates, groups, and third-party campaigners were communicated with directly by email upon registering and throughout the lead up to the elections about various aspects of their electoral funding obligations, such as electoral expenditure and political donation caps, disclosures, campaign accounts, and the new *Funding and Disclosure Online* system.



# Customer service and relationship management

## Council liaison

Throughout 2019 the NSW Electoral Commission communicated on a regular basis with NSW councils to help them understand the timing and requirements of the elections (at that stage scheduled for September 2020). With those elections being postponed twice due to COVID-19, initially to September 2021 and subsequently to December 2021, regular communications continued to be essential. Various channels were used to communicate with councils – information bulletins, which were also published onto the NSW Electoral Commission’s website, direct email and a series of webinars covering various aspects of the election process.

## Communications support for councils

Statutory advertising was previously undertaken at a local level in the newspapers of each council’s choice and paid for directly by individual councils. This was the first election where this was no longer a legislative requirement and statutory requirements could be fulfilled by placement of notices on the NSW Electoral Commission website.

The NSW Electoral Commission published election advertisements on its website and in state-wide newspapers (SMH, The Daily Telegraph and The Land) and supplied councils with advertisements to place locally.

In addition, the NSW Electoral Commission provided councils with a campaign calendar of when and what to advertise and post on social media as part of a Councils Media Kit. The online Councils Media Kit contained advertising assets, newsletter articles, social media posts, save the date templates, press advertisement templates, in-language assets and poster templates for use within their local communities. These assets were supported by emails to activate use of assets and phone support for councils from the NSW Electoral Commission’s media team.

## Service agreements

All councils that engaged the NSW Electoral Commission to conduct their election were required to enter into an agreement with the NSW Electoral Commission, pursuant to section 296 of the Local Government Act. Although Fairfield City and Penrith City councils engaged a commercial election service provider, the electoral rolls and associated enrolment services were provided by the NSW Electoral Commission. These councils entered into an agreement with the NSW Electoral Commission for the provision of these services.

## Elector Enquiry Centre

For the first time in a major election event, the NSW Electoral Commission decided to outsource its Elector Enquiry Centre (EEC) to a commercial call centre provider.

The EEC was operational over the period of 25 October to 10 December 2021. During this period 80,332 calls were handled by the EEC agents, with the peak being election day (4 December) where 11,840 calls were handled. In addition, approximately 68,700 calls were diverted to the various NSW Electoral Commission support/helpdesks via the provider’s telephony platform for the same period. The number of agents employed increased in line with the increase in calls throughout the election campaign. At its peak, 109 EEC agents were active.

The major call types received were:

- iVote enquiries and applications, 41%
- postal vote enquiries and applications, 26%
- general enquiries, 16%
- enrolment enquiries, 8%

The NSW Electoral Commission also established an in-house call escalation team which was responsible for handling more complex or sensitive calls received by the EEC. This call escalation team also responded to enquiry emails received through the election. Approximately 13,000 enquiry emails were received with approximately 11,000 requiring responses across the election period. The call escalation team employed a total of 10 agents.

# Website

The website is key to the NSW Electoral Commission's customer-centred digital presence, to help voters, political participants and other election stakeholders understand and participate in the democratic processes in New South Wales.

A feature of the website for the 2021 Local Government elections was the ability to find election information based on an elector's enrolled address. This included links to candidate information and an interactive map showing the pre-poll and election day voting locations (with the accessibility ranking of each venue), and access to directions via Google.

## User behaviour

Total website page views doubled from the 2019 NSW State election (over 2 million page views) to the 2021 Local Government elections (almost 5 million) – when comparing election week website visits.

### Key metrics

- the 2021 NSW Local Government elections 'event' page received 1,262,400 views across election week (that is, the week leading up to, and including, election day)
- the website reached a milestone of over two million users during election week
- the iVote web pages made up four of the top 10 most viewed pages during election week
- the general trend in traffic movement was from candidate information pages to online voting
- users finding their electorate was steady through November 2021 in the lead-up to election day
- iVote FAQs featured high amongst the most viewed pages.
- bounce rates improved by 45.87 per cent (from the 2019 NSW State election) – this means that when people arrived on a particular web page, they generally stayed there.

## Choice of device used

User research was conducted by the NSW Electoral Commission at the commencement of its digital transformation programme in 2018. The statistics on devices used to access information about the 2021 NSW Local Government elections on the website confirm the research insights. That is, the choice of device is increasingly a mobile device.

Table 33: Devices used to access information about the 2021 NSW Local Government elections

Device	Percentage of total
Mobile phone	67.1%
Desktop PC	29.1%
Tablet	3.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Audience

The 25–34 age group remained the demographic with the highest number of website users, however the largest increase was 18–24 years, with a 175 per cent increase. Mobile device users increased 54 per cent from the 2019 NSW State election to the 2021 Local Government election. Conversely, tablet device users were down 49 per cent.

Table 34: NSW Electoral Commission website users by internet browser language setting (top five)

Language	Users
English	2,103,646
Chinese	13,309
Korean	4,160
Taiwanese (Chinese)	2,028
Hong Kong (Chinese)	1,223

## Search

The top search queries and number of clicks for the election week were as follows:

- ivote – 315,072
- ivote registration – 33,366
- nsw electoral commission – 29,844
- i vote – 29,839
- ivote apply – 29,419
- vote online – 23,782
- online voting nsw – 22,680
- elections nsw – 20,936
- ivote nsw – 19,276
- ivote nsw council elections – 17,960.

## Acquisition

Fifty per cent of users found the NSW Electoral Commission's website through organic search (from unpaid search sources, such as Google, Yahoo or Bing for example). Of this, 22 per cent came directly to the website, which suggests positive sentiment for brand recall and awareness.

Table 35: The top-ranking referral pages\*

Source	Users
m.facebook.com	126,084
nsw.gov.au	81,880
lm.facebook.com	36,884

Source	Users
cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au	35,052
aec.gov.au	30,135
l.facebook.com	24,287
blacktown.nsw.gov.au	20,124
abc.net.au	19,554
wollongong.nsw.gov.au	18,827

\*Indicates where users are coming from when they arrive at the NSW Electoral Commission's website

The metrics shown in Table 36 detail the performance of the NSW Electoral Commission's social media channels.

- Facebook was significantly higher in volume than Twitter and YouTube
- the highest-quality users came from Twitter with 3:49 average session duration and 3.57 pages per session
- YouTube also provided highly engaged users, however the number of sessions was not statistically significant.

Table 36: Performance of social media channels during the 2021 NSW Local Government election period

Social Network	Sessions	Page views	Average session duration	Pages/session
Facebook	224,685	740,717	0:02:25	3.3
Snapchat	10,106	10,696	0:00:07	1.06
Twitter	7,136	25,474	0:03:49	3.57
LinkedIn	2,251	4,656	0:01:27	2.07
TikTok	1,906	2,930	0:00:25	1.54
reddit	1,643	6,088	0:02:40	3.71
Instagram	1,371	3,809	0:01:55	2.78
Instagram Stories	788	2,678	0:01:54	3.4
YouTube	619	3,287	0:06:15	5.31
WeChat	186	777	0:04:29	4.18

Stats taken for the 'election cycle' - three months before election day

## **NSW Electoral Commission's website performance**

On Monday, 22 November, the first day of pre-poll, website performance degraded to a point where NSW Electoral Commission staff determined it was necessary to switch to an alternative, backup site.

Switching to the backup site ensured that the public continued to have online access to essential information in relation to the election, while staff remained focussed on continuing a technical investigation of the issue and supporting election operations. The normal public facing website was restored on 26 November with assisted publishing processes in place. The underlying technical issue was resolved, and full access to normal publishing processes was restored on the evening of Thursday, 2 December 2021.

The NSW Electoral Commission had undertaken performance testing of the site earlier in 2021 which had simulated a number of expected scenarios at different stages of the election. Several technical issues were identified through this testing but too late to make extensive changes, with temporary workarounds implemented instead.

While the technical issues that occurred during these elections have been resolved, the NSW Electoral Commission's fundamental lack of capacity to invest in ongoing systems maintenance and longer-term planning remains an issue. A direct example is that the renewal of the NSW Electoral Commission's annual agreement covering maintenance for its website relies each year on the NSW Electoral Commission reallocating election program funding. During non-election years, this is a challenge that limits capacity for appropriate planning.

Despite the issues with the NSW Electoral Commission's website, page load times were consistently low during the election week and 23 per cent faster than the 2019 NSW State election – attributing much of this to a spike the day before the 2019 election. All user experience major metrics were significantly positive regarding site performance and speed.

Despite the positive performance, the 2021 Local Government election event page experienced average load times that were down 57 per cent compared to the rest of the site. This performance issue has been flagged for testing before the 2023 NSW State election.

## **Daily pre-election metrics**

The NSW Electoral Commission published pre-election metrics on its website, updated daily showing daily and cumulative totals. This was a website feature trialled at these elections for the first time. The metrics included the number of votes cast during the early voting period, postal vote applications received, postal vote certificates returned, and votes cast using iVote.

# Election evaluation and customer research

To inform the future work of the NSW Electoral Commission, an independent research provider was engaged to measure election participants' satisfaction with election products and services and the overall conduct of the elections. The following surveys were conducted, using qualitative and quantitative customer research methods:

- a Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) survey of electors "core" survey, n=1,200
- a CATI survey of iVote users (participants opted in to be surveyed), n=1,000
- an online survey of iVote users not included in the above CATI survey (participants opted in to be surveyed), n= 2,597
- qualitative focus groups with electors living with disability, which included an online community (34 participants living with disability) and semi-structured telephone interviews (n=5) with electors who are blind, low-vision or self-identified as having reading difficulties
- a CATI in-language survey of electors (Arabic-speaking n=50, Cantonese-speaking n=50, Mandarin-speaking n=50)
- an online survey of candidates and registered party officers.

In the interests of public health, early voting and election day face-to-face (intercept) interviews were not conducted at these elections.

Council general managers and temporary election staff were also surveyed on a range of qualitative and quantitative metrics to evaluate their satisfaction with the election products and services offered and satisfaction with the NSW Electoral Commission's overall conduct of the elections. These audience surveys were conducted by the NSW Electoral Commission, separate to the independent research program.

The findings from all surveys provide insight into the experiences and satisfaction of election stakeholders, report on areas of strength or development for the NSW Electoral Commission, identify trends and provide a valuable evidence base to inform election services into the future.

The independent research report is available on the NSW Electoral Commission's website.

## Key findings from research – overall satisfaction metrics

### Electors (core) survey participants

- Satisfaction with the overall voting experience at 89 per cent was the highest performing metric (up from 76 per cent for the 2017 Local Government elections).
- 84 per cent of participants in the core elector survey reported they were confident in election results (lower than the 2017 Local Government elections, at 89 per cent)
- The key metric related to fairness and impartiality (82 per cent) was similar to the 2017 elections (81 per cent).
- 77 per cent of survey participants reported that they trusted the voting process (no historical comparisons available, this is the first election survey in which this question has been asked).

### iVote survey participants

- 90 per cent of iVote survey participants reported that they were satisfied with the overall voting process, which was the highest performing metric for the 2021 Local Government election, and an increase on the result from the 2019 NSW State election iVote survey of 74 per cent.
- The majority of iVote survey participants (85 per cent) were confident that their vote was recorded accurately, which was the same as the survey result from the 2019 NSW State election iVote survey.
- Satisfaction that the elections were conducted fairly and impartially was 74 per cent for the 2021 Local Government election, up from the score of 69 per cent for the 2019 NSW State election.

### Qualitative research with people living with disability

- Among survey participants living with disability, it was observed that perceptions of fairness, trust and satisfaction with the NSW Electoral Commission's conduct of the elections were correlated to the survey participant's knowledge of the voting process.

### Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) survey participants

- Significantly fewer Cantonese-speaking participants reported that they were satisfied that the election was conducted fairly and impartially (44 per cent) compared with Arabic-speaking (66 per cent) and Mandarin-speaking (82 per cent) participants. Similarly, significantly fewer Cantonese participants reported satisfaction with the overall voting experience (63 per cent) compared with Arabic-speaking participants (86 per cent) and Mandarin-speaking participants (90 per cent).

There was no difference in the translated community education resources and election-related information provided to each of these three language groups by the NSW Electoral Commission.

### Candidates and party registered officers

- Of the three key metrics measured in the candidates' survey, two metrics scored significantly lower in 2021 compared with 2017. In 2021, the level of overall satisfaction with the Local Government elections (41 per cent) among candidate participants had significantly decreased since 2017 (59 per cent).
- Significantly fewer participants reported that they were satisfied that the election was conducted fairly and impartially (48 per cent) compared with 2017 (74 per cent).
- More than one in two participants (56 per cent) reported trust in the voting process, however, no historical comparisons were available for this metric.

For the candidate survey participants who were dissatisfied, the most commonly reported reasons were related to processes (difficulties with online processes, and the time taken to conduct the vote count and declare the results) and COVID-19 measures (100-metre rule, handing out how-to-vote cards).

The NSW Electoral Commission also surveyed the temporary election workforce and the general managers of the councils that engaged the NSW Electoral Commission to conduct their elections.



### Temporary election staff

The survey was emailed by the NSW Electoral Commission to more than 29,000 election staff following the election. The survey response rate was approximately 35 per cent.

- 94 per cent of election staff who responded to the survey reported they would work for the NSW Electoral Commission at future elections.

Of the election officials who responded to the survey:

- 98 per cent stated the NSW Electoral Commission conducted the elections fairly and impartially.

Of the polling place managers and deputy polling place managers who responded to the survey:

- 99 per cent stated the NSW Electoral Commission conducted the elections fairly and impartially.

### Council general managers

The survey was emailed by the NSW Electoral Commission to the general managers of the 122 councils that engaged the NSW to conduct their elections, with 72 respondents.

- 89 per cent stated the NSW Electoral Commission conducted the elections fairly and impartially
- 79 per cent reported that they greatly trusted the election process
- 78 per cent reported being very satisfied or satisfied with the NSW Electoral Commission's overall conduct of the elections
- 78 per cent of respondents reported being very satisfied or satisfied with their overall experience of the 2021 Local Council elections.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Recount requests for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections

Thirty (30) recount requests were received for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections. Of these, 28 were not granted and two (for Walgett and Blue Mountains Ward 3) were received after declaration of the relevant poll. Separate to these requests, no directions were given by the NSW Electoral Commission for a recount to be conducted pursuant to section 353(1)(b) of the Regulation.

The most common ground for seeking a recount related to the closeness of the count in particular contests. It is a long-established practice in New South Wales elections that a close result is not, of itself, a ground on which a recount should be conducted. What is also required is evidence of some irregularity in the counting process that casts doubt on the accuracy of the count itself.

Other matters raised in recount requests related to misunderstandings about the count process itself, in particular the difference between the initial (indicative) count on election night and the subsequent formal count.

Some candidates also raised concerns regarding the potential impact on votes cast of the COVID-19 direction relating to handing out how-to-vote cards and the problems experienced with the iVote system. Neither of these issues, however, related to the accuracy of the count itself.

Table 37: Recount requests for the 2021 NSW Local Government election

Recount request number	Date of request	Applicable council/ward
1	Monday, 20 December	Blue Mountains – Ward 2
2	Monday, 20 December	Lane Cove – East ward
3	Monday, 20 December	Bayside – Ward 2
4	Monday 20 December	Weddin
5	Monday, 20 December	Cumberland – Wentworthville Ward
6	Tuesday, 21 December	Hay
7	Tuesday 21 December	Kiama
8	Tuesday, 21 December	Dubbo- Wellington Ward
9	Tuesday, 21 December	Inner West – Marrickville Ward
10	Tuesday, 21 December	Narrabri
11	Tuesday, 21 December	Dubbo – Wellington Ward
12	Tuesday, 21 December	Coonamble
13	Tuesday, 21 December	Randwick – West ward
14	Tuesday, 21 December	Inner West – Leichhardt

Recount request number	Date of request	Applicable council/ward
15	Tuesday, 21 December	Ballina Mayor
16	Tuesday, 21 December	Coonamble
17	Tuesday, 21 December	Coonamble
18	Tuesday, 21 December	Woollahra - Cooper Ward
19	Wednesday, 22 December	Randwick - Central Ward
20	Wednesday, 22 December	Byron
21	Wednesday, 22 December	Walgett
22	Wednesday, 22 December	Burwood
23	Wednesday, 22 December	Dungog - A Ward
24	Wednesday, 22 December	Shoalhaven - Ward 1
25	Wednesday, 22 December	Shellharbour - A Ward
26	Wednesday, 22 December	Shoalhaven - Ward 2
27	Wednesday, 22 December	Uralla - B Ward
28	Wednesday, 22 December	Shellharbour - B ward
29	Wednesday, 22 December	Blue Mountains - Ward 3
30	Thursday, 23 December	North Sydney - Cammeraygal Ward

## Appendix B: Councils, wards and contests for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections conducted by the NSW Electoral Commission

Council	Undivided/wards	Councillor election status	Mayoral election	Referendum	Poll
City of Albury	Undivided	Election			
Armidale Regional	Undivided	Election		Yes	
Ballina		Election	Yes		
Ballina	A Ward	Election			
Ballina	B Ward	Election			
Ballina	C Ward	Election			
Bathurst Regional	Undivided	Election			
Bayside	Ward 1	Election			
Bayside	Ward 2	Election			
Bayside	Ward 3	Election			
Bayside	Ward 4	Election			
Bayside	Ward 5	Election			
Bega Valley	Undivided	Election		Yes	
Bellingen	Undivided	Election			
Berrigan	Undivided	Election			

Council	Undivided/wards	Councillor election status	Mayoral election	Referendum	Poll
City of Blacktown	Ward 1	Election			
City of Blacktown	Ward 2	Election			
City of Blacktown	Ward 3	Election			
City of Blacktown	Ward 4	Election			
City of Blacktown	Ward 5	Election			
Bland	Undivided	Election			
Blayney	Undivided	Election			
City of Blue Mountains	Ward 1	Election			
City of Blue Mountains	Ward 2	Election			
City of Blue Mountains	Ward 3	Election			
City of Blue Mountains	Ward 4	Election			
Bogan	Undivided	Election			
Bourke	Undivided	Uncontested			
Brewarrina	Undivided	Election			
City of Broken Hill	Undivided	Election	Yes		
Burwood	Undivided	Election	Yes		
Byron	Undivided	Election			

Council	Undivided/wards	Councillor election status	Mayoral election	Referendum	Poll
Cabonne	Undivided	Election			
Camden	Central Ward	Election			
Camden	North Ward	Election			
Camden	South Ward	Election			
City of Campbelltown	Undivided	Election			
Canada Bay	Undivided	Election	Yes		
Canterbury-Bankstown	Bankstown Ward	Election			
Canterbury-Bankstown	Bass Hill Ward	Election			
Canterbury-Bankstown	Canterbury Ward	Election			
Canterbury-Bankstown	Revesby Ward	Election			
Canterbury-Bankstown	Roselands Ward	Election			
Carrathool	Ward A	Election			
Carrathool	Ward B	Uncontested			
City of Cessnock		Election	Yes		
City of Cessnock	A Ward	Election			
City of Cessnock	B Ward	Election			
City of Cessnock	C Ward	Election			

Council	Undivided/wards	Councillor election status	Mayoral election	Referendum	Poll
City of Cessnock	D Ward	Election			
Clarence Valley	Undivided	Election			
Cobar	Undivided	Uncontested			
City of Coffs Harbour	Undivided	Election	Yes		
Coolamon	Undivided	Election			
Coonamble	Undivided	Election			
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional	Undivided	Election			
Cowra	Undivided	Election			
Cumberland	Granville Ward	Election			
Cumberland	Greystanes Ward	Election			
Cumberland	Regents Park Ward	Election			
Cumberland	South Granville Ward	Election			
Cumberland	Wentworthville Ward	Election			
Dubbo Regional		Election		Yes	
Dubbo Regional	Dubbo Central Ward	Election			
Dubbo Regional	Dubbo East Ward	Election			
Dubbo Regional	Dubbo North Ward	Election			

Council	Undivided/wards	Councillor election status	Mayoral election	Referendum	Poll
Dubbo Regional	Dubbo South Ward	Election			
Dubbo Regional	Wellington Ward	Election			
Dungog		Uncontested	Yes		
Dungog	A Ward	Election			
Dungog	B Ward	Election			
Dungog	C Ward	Election			
Edward River	Undivided	Election			
Eurobodalla	Undivided	Election	Yes		
Federation	Undivided	Election			
Forbes	Undivided	Election			
Georges River	Blakehurst Ward	Election			
Georges River	Hurstville Ward	Election			
Georges River	Kogarah Bay Ward	Election			
Georges River	Mortdale Ward	Election			
Georges River	Peakhurst Ward	Election			
Gilgandra	Undivided	Election			
Glen Innes Severn Shire	Undivided	Election			



Council	Undivided/wards	Councillor election status	Mayoral election	Referendum	Poll
Goulburn Mulwaree	Undivided	Election			
Greater Hume Shire	East Ward	Uncontested			
Greater Hume Shire	North Ward	Election			
Greater Hume Shire	West Ward	Election			
City of Griffith	Undivided	Election	Yes	Yes (2 referenda questions)	
Gunnedah	Undivided	Election			
Gwydir	Undivided	Election			
City of Hawkesbury	Undivided	Election			
Hay	Undivided	Election			
Hilltops	Undivided	Election			
Hornsby		Election	Yes		
Hornsby	Ward A	Election			
Hornsby	Ward B	Election			
Hornsby	Ward C	Election			
Hunter's Hill		Election	Yes		
Hunter's Hill	North Ward	Election			

Council	Undivided/wards	Councillor election status	Mayoral election	Referendum	Poll
Hunter's Hill	South Ward	Election			
Inner West		Election			Yes
Inner West	Ashfield – Djarrawunang (Magpie) Ward	Election			
Inner West	Balmain – Baludarri (Leather Jacket) Ward	Election			
Inner West	Leichhardt – Gulgadya (Grass Tree) Ward	Election			
Inner West	Marrickville – Midjuburi (Lillypilly) Ward	Election			
Inner West	Stanmore – Damun (Port Jackson Fig) Ward	Election			
Inverell	Undivided	Election			
Junee	Undivided	Election			
Kempsey	Undivided	Election	Yes		
Kiama	Undivided	Election			
Ku-ring-gai	Comenarra Ward	Election			
Ku-ring-gai	Gordon Ward	Election			
Ku-ring-gai	Roseville Ward	Election			
Ku-ring-gai	St Ives Ward	Election			
Ku-ring-gai	Wahroonga Ward	Election			
Kyogle	A Ward	Uncontested			

Council	Undivided/wards	Councillor election status	Mayoral election	Referendum	Poll
Kyogle	B Ward	Election			
Kyogle	C Ward	Election			
Lachlan	A Ward	Uncontested			
Lachlan	B Ward	Uncontested			
Lachlan	C Ward	Uncontested			
Lachlan	D Ward	Uncontested			
Lachlan	E Ward	Election			
City of Lake Macquarie		Election	Yes		
City of Lake Macquarie	East Ward	Election			
City of Lake Macquarie	North Ward	Election			
City of Lake Macquarie	West Ward	Election			
Lane Cove	Central Ward	Election			
Lane Cove	East Ward	Election			
Lane Cove	West Ward	Election			
Leeton	Undivided	Election			
City of Lismore	Undivided	Election	Yes		
City of Lithgow	Undivided	Election			

Council	Undivided/wards	Councillor election status	Mayoral election	Referendum	Poll
City of Liverpool		Election	Yes		
City of Liverpool	North Ward	Election			
City of Liverpool	South Ward	Election			
Liverpool Plains	Undivided	Election			
Lockhart	A Ward	Election			
Lockhart	B Ward	Election			
Lockhart	C Ward	Uncontested			
City of Maitland		Election	Yes		
City of Maitland	Central Ward	Election			
City of Maitland	East Ward	Election			
City of Maitland	North Ward	Election			
City of Maitland	West Ward	Election			
Mid-Coast	Undivided	Election			
Mid-Western Regional	Undivided	Election			
Moree Plains	Undivided	Election			
Mosman	Undivided	Election	Yes		
Murray River		Election		Yes	

Council	Undivided/wards	Councillor election status	Mayoral election	Referendum	Poll
Murray River	Greater Murray Ward	Uncontested			
Murray River	Greater Wakool Ward	Uncontested			
Murray River	Moama Ward	Uncontested			
Murrumbidgee	Jerilderie Ward	Election			
Murrumbidgee	Murrumbidgee Ward	Election			
Murrumbidgee	Murrumbidgee East Ward	Election			
Muswellbrook	Undivided	Election			
Nambucca Valley	Undivided	Election	Yes		
Narrabri	Undivided	Election			
Narrandera	Undivided	Election			
Narromine	Undivided	Uncontested			
City of Newcastle	Ward 1	Election			
City of Newcastle	Ward 2	Election			
City of Newcastle	Ward 3	Election			
City of Newcastle	Ward 4	Election			
North Sydney	Cammeraygal Ward	Election			
North Sydney	St Leonards Ward	Election			

Council	Undivided/wards	Councillor election status	Mayoral election	Referendum	Poll
Northern Beaches	Curl Curl Ward	Election			
Northern Beaches	Frenchs Forest Ward	Election			
Northern Beaches	Manly Ward	Election			
Northern Beaches	Narrabeen Ward	Election			
Northern Beaches	Pittwater Ward	Election			
Oberon	Undivided	Election			
City of Orange	Undivided	Election	Yes		
Parkes	Undivided	Election			
City of Parramatta	Dundas Ward	Election			
City of Parramatta	Epping Ward	Election			
City of Parramatta	North Rocks Ward	Election			
City of Parramatta	Parramatta Ward	Election			
City of Parramatta	Rosehill Ward	Election			
Port Macquarie-Hastings	Undivided	Election	Yes		
Port Stephens		Election	Yes		
Port Stephens	Central Ward	Election			
Port Stephens	East Ward	Election			

Council	Undivided/wards	Councillor election status	Mayoral election	Referendum	Poll
Port Stephens	West Ward	Election			
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional	Undivided	Election			
City of Randwick	Central Ward	Election			
City of Randwick	East Ward	Election			
City of Randwick	North Ward	Election			
City of Randwick	South Ward	Election			
City of Randwick	West Ward	Election			
Richmond Valley	Undivided	Election	Yes		
City of Ryde		Election		Yes	
City of Ryde	Central Ward	Election			
City of Ryde	East Ward	Election			
City of Ryde	West Ward	Election			
City of Shellharbour		Election	Yes		
City of Shellharbour	Ward A	Election			
City of Shellharbour	Ward B	Election			
City of Shellharbour	Ward C	Election			
City of Shellharbour	Ward D	Uncontested			

Council	Undivided/wards	Councillor election status	Mayoral election	Referendum	Poll
City of Shoalhaven		Election	Yes		
City of Shoalhaven	Ward 1	Election			
City of Shoalhaven	Ward 2	Election			
City of Shoalhaven	Ward 3	Election			
Singleton	Undivided	Election	Yes		
Snowy Monaro Regional	Undivided	Election			
Snowy Valleys	Undivided	Election			
Strathfield	Undivided	Election			
Sutherland Shire	A Ward	Election			
Sutherland Shire	B Ward	Election			
Sutherland Shire	C Ward	Election			
Sutherland Shire	D Ward	Election			
Sutherland Shire	E Ward	Election			
City of Sydney	Undivided	Election	Yes		
Tamworth Regional	Undivided	Election			
Temora	Undivided	Election			
Tenterfield	Ward A	Uncontested			



Council	Undivided/wards	Councillor election status	Mayoral election	Referendum	Poll
Tenterfield	Ward B	Uncontested			
Tenterfield	Ward C	Uncontested			
Tenterfield	Ward D	Election			
Tenterfield	Ward E	Uncontested			
The Hills Shire		Election	Yes		
The Hills Shire	Central Ward	Election			
The Hills Shire	East Ward	Election			
The Hills Shire	North Ward	Election			
The Hills Shire	West Ward	Election			
Tweed	Undivided	Election			
Upper Hunter Shire	Undivided	Election			
Upper Lachlan Shire	Undivided	Election			
Uralla		Election	Yes		
Uralla	Ward A	Election			
Uralla	Ward B	Election			
City of Wagga Wagga	Undivided	Election		Yes	
Walcha		Election		Yes	

Council	Undivided/wards	Councillor election status	Mayoral election	Referendum	Poll
Walcha	A Ward	Uncontested			
Walcha	B Ward	Election			
Walcha	C Ward	Uncontested			
Walcha	D Ward	Election			
Walgett	Undivided	Election			
Warren	A Ward	Election			
Warren	B Ward	Election			
Warren	C Ward	Uncontested			
Warren	D Ward	Election			
Warrumbungle Shire	Undivided	Election			
Waverley	Bondi Ward	Election			
Waverley	Hunter Ward	Election			
Waverley	Lawson Ward	Election			
Waverley	Waverley Ward	Election			
Weddin	Undivided	Election			
Wentworth	Undivided	Election			
City of Willoughby		Election	Yes		

Council	Undivided/wards	Councillor election status	Mayoral election	Referendum	Poll
City of Willoughby	Middle Harbour Ward	Election			
City of Willoughby	Naremburn Ward	Election			
City of Willoughby	Sailors Bay Ward	Election			
City of Willoughby	West Ward	Election			
Wollondilly		Election	Yes		
Wollondilly	East Ward	Election			
Wollondilly	North Ward	Election			
City of Wollongong		Election	Yes		
City of Wollongong	Ward 1	Election			
City of Wollongong	Ward 2	Election			
City of Wollongong	Ward 3	Election			
Woollahra	Bellevue Hill Ward	Election			
Woollahra	Cooper Ward	Election			
Woollahra	Double Bay Ward	Election			
Woollahra	Paddington Ward	Election			
Woollahra	Vaucluse Ward	Election			
Yass Valley	Undivided	Election			

**Appendix C: Formal votes for contests by area by voting channel for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections**

Council	Ward	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	NAMAV	Postal	Total formal votes
City of Albury	Albury	14,551	8,528	1,147	2,827	1	1,324	28,378
Armidale Regional	Armidale	5,623	7,050	504	1,555	0	491	15,223
Ballina	Ballina A	2,614	3,735	465	763	0	370	7,947
Ballina	Ballina B	4,151	2,790	593	1,212	0	341	9,087
Ballina	Ballina C	4,448	1,758	495	1,099	0	437	8,237
Bathurst Regional	Bathurst	8,331	11,674	841	2,904	0	954	24,704
Bayside	Bayside 1	8,947	3,919	768	3,026	0	719	17,379
Bayside	Bayside 2	8,828	2,994	856	3,877	0	613	17,168
Bayside	Bayside 3	7,976	3,212	522	2,865	0	637	15,212
Bayside	Bayside 4	9,402	2,832	539	2,975	0	771	16,519
Bayside	Bayside 5	9,213	1,781	703	2,542	0	751	14,990
Bega Valley	Bega Valley	9,178	8,863	704	1,413	2	1,275	21,435
Bellingen	Bellingen	4,707	1,999	280	722	0	562	8,270
Berrigan	Berrigan	2,841	1,267	100	301	0	211	4,720
City of Blacktown	Blacktown 1	19,819	9,169	1,610	11,624	1	1,789	44,012
City of Blacktown	Blacktown 2	19,167	5,298	1,036	7,529	10	1,814	34,854

Council	Ward	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	NAMAV	Postal	Total formal votes
City of Blacktown	Blacktown 3	15,777	8,314	1,176	6,679	6	1,729	33,681
City of Blacktown	Blacktown 4	17,460	7,662	1,343	7,549	3	1,334	35,351
City of Blacktown	Blacktown 5	18,334	6,790	1,485	8,048	3	1,594	36,254
Bland	Bland	1,496	979	61	495	0	180	3,211
Blayney	Blayney	1,822	2,063	143	385	1	146	4,560
City of Blue Mountains	Blue Mountains 1	5,390	3,562	585	1,261	0	637	11,435
City of Blue Mountains	Blue Mountains 2	6,528	3,084	654	1,506	0	721	12,493
City of Blue Mountains	Blue Mountains 3	5,550	4,347	400	1,632	0	638	12,567
City of Blue Mountains	Blue Mountains 4	6,884	2,904	335	1,537	0	678	12,338
Bogan	Bogan	720	410	49	185	0	103	1,467
Brewarrina	Brewarrina	362	67	17	55	0	49	550
City of Broken Hill	Broken Hill	4,050	4,933	177	954	0	281	10,395
Burwood	Burwood	7,447	4,669	714	3,256	3	1,161	17,250
Byron	Byron	8,926	5,193	862	1,887	0	867	17,735
Cabonne	Cabonne	4,547	1,250	148	1,569	0	322	7,836
Camden	Camden Central	9,513	4,783	1,035	4,695	0	709	20,735
Camden	Camden North	10,675	4,102	1,509	5,865	6	818	22,975

Council	Ward	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	NAMAV	Postal	Total formal votes
Camden	Camden South	8,219	4,542	816	3,717	1	721	18,016
City of Campbelltown	Campbelltown	44,638	22,612	3,603	14,657	4	3,823	89,337
Canada Bay	Canada Bay	24,071	9,158	1,782	9,772	0	2,689	47,472
Canterbury-Bankstown	Canterbury-Bankstown Bankstown	14,994	9,038	1,301	7,339	8	1,382	34,062
Canterbury-Bankstown	Canterbury-Bankstown Bass Hill	17,339	5,948	1,165	6,998	3	1,700	33,153
Canterbury-Bankstown	Canterbury-Bankstown Canterbury	20,149	5,982	1,254	7,998	3	1,890	37,276
Canterbury-Bankstown	Canterbury-Bankstown Revesby	18,087	10,036	1,350	6,972	14	1,987	38,446
Canterbury-Bankstown	Canterbury-Bankstown Roselands	16,592	7,342	1,146	6,833	3	1,637	33,553
Carrathool	Carrathool A	252	306	22	74	0	40	694
City of Cessnock	Cessnock A	3,833	2,926	380	1,652	0	385	9,176
City of Cessnock	Cessnock B	2,922	3,046	255	1,338	0	332	7,893
City of Cessnock	Cessnock C	3,843	3,112	423	1,783	0	391	9,552
City of Cessnock	Cessnock D	3,104	3,341	405	1,806	0	341	8,997
Clarence Valley	Clarence Valley	15,739	8,499	1,321	3,813	0	1,289	30,661

Council	Ward	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	NAMAV	Postal	Total formal votes
City of Coffs Harbour	Coffs Harbour	21,386	13,716	1,451	5,135	3	1,896	43,587
Coolamon	Coolamon	1,403	718	90	261	0	104	2,576
Coonamble	Coonamble	488	1,067	25	373	0	143	2,096
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional	Cootamundra-Gundagai	2,918	2,906	179	659	0	260	6,922
Cowra	Cowra	2,748	3,856	242	583	3	332	7,764
Cumberland	Cumberland Granville	9,072	4,307	818	3,966	0	1,162	19,325
Cumberland	Cumberland Greystanes	9,375	5,606	646	3,905	0	1,247	20,779
Cumberland	Cumberland Regents Park	8,013	5,714	710	4,429	0	883	19,749
Cumberland	Cumberland South Granville	9,132	3,429	735	3,292	0	809	17,397
Cumberland	Cumberland Wentworthville	10,302	3,228	823	4,675	0	1,183	20,211
Dubbo Regional	Dubbo Dubbo Central	1,879	2,364	211	713	0	153	5,320
Dubbo Regional	Dubbo Dubbo East	2,204	1,938	118	786	0	185	5,231
Dubbo Regional	Dubbo Dubbo North	2,341	2,504	247	1,015	0	184	6,291
Dubbo Regional	Dubbo Dubbo South	2,381	2,826	217	1,174	0	278	6,876
Dubbo Regional	Dubbo Wellington	1,997	2,427	243	598	0	259	5,524

Council	Ward	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	NAMAV	Postal	Total formal votes
Dungog	Dungog A	523	1,111	46	228	0	79	1,987
Dungog	Dungog B	1,296	233	62	413	0	103	2,107
Dungog	Dungog C	1,206	349	44	341	0	101	2,041
Edward River	Edward River	2,001	2,030	136	270	0	122	4,559
Eurobodalla	Eurobodalla	10,295	10,004	680	2,645	1	1,250	24,875
Federation	Federation	3,815	2,420	217	589	0	361	7,402
Forbes	Forbes	2,599	2,042	136	729	1	121	5,628
Georges River	Georges River Blakehurst	8,960	2,780	507	3,101	0	794	16,142
Georges River	Georges River Hurstville	6,437	4,097	435	3,183	2	619	14,773
Georges River	Georges River Kogarah Bay	8,613	2,733	530	3,209	0	712	15,797
Georges River	Georges River Mortdale	7,141	3,283	462	2,856	0	710	14,452
Georges River	Georges River Peakhurst	9,031	3,003	431	2,977	0	844	16,286
Gilgandra	Gilgandra	688	1,317	75	270	0	142	2,492
Glen Innes Severn Shire	Glen Innes Severn	1,478	3,118	295	331	0	274	5,496
Goulburn Mulwaree	Goulburn Mulwaree	7,660	5,710	852	2,632	1	539	17,394
Greater Hume Shire	Greater Hume North	1,116	640	42	147	0	103	2,048



Council	Ward	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	NAMAV	Postal	Total formal votes
Greater Hume Shire	Greater Hume West	1,090	473	122	176	0	128	1,989
City of Griffith	Griffith	5,828	4,466	381	1,624	1	256	12,556
Gunnedah	Gunnedah	2,919	2,911	262	907	0	165	7,164
Gwydir	Gwydir	1,280	916	90	457	0	197	2,940
City of Hawkesbury	Hawkesbury	20,286	9,382	1,349	6,483	0	1,988	39,488
Hay	Hay	1,050	312	57	177	0	151	1,747
Hilltops	Hilltops	4,262	4,739	282	1,274	0	464	11,021
Hornsby	Hornsby A	15,731	5,939	929	4,595	0	1,540	28,734
Hornsby	Hornsby B	15,540	4,474	896	5,767	0	1,596	28,273
Hornsby	Hornsby C	15,343	4,843	785	5,329	3	1,761	28,064
Hunter's Hill	Hunters Hill North	2,067	904	142	753	0	306	4,172
Hunter's Hill	Hunters Hill South	1,533	1,576	137	591	0	225	4,062
Inner West	Inner West Ashfield - Djarrawunang (Magpie)	10,288	5,267	1,107	3,657	4	987	21,310
Inner West	Inner West Balmain - Baludarri (Leather Jacket)	10,229	6,241	824	2,997	3	946	21,240
Inner West	Inner West Leichhardt - Gulgadya (Grass Tree)	9,870	5,961	813	3,271	2	866	20,783

Council	Ward	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	NAMAV	Postal	Total formal votes
Inner West	Inner West Marrickville – Midjuburi (Lillypilly)	10,644	4,223	1,061	3,642	3	774	20,347
Inner West	Inner West Stanmore – Damun (Port Jackson Fig)	10,729	3,553	1,245	3,993	0	835	20,355
Inverell	Inverell	3,341	4,602	287	1,104	2	551	9,887
Junee	Junee	1,247	1,383	105	400	0	127	3,262
Kempsey	Kempsey	7,497	5,963	399	1,743	0	602	16,204
Kiama	Kiama	6,096	5,722	496	1,986	0	716	15,016
Ku-ring-gai	Ku-ring-gai Comenarra	8,102	2,057	490	2,344	0	811	13,804
Ku-ring-gai	Ku-ring-gai Gordon	7,614	2,072	545	2,689	0	800	13,720
Ku-ring-gai	Ku-ring-gai Roseville	8,615	1,087	511	2,597	0	975	13,785
Ku-ring-gai	Ku-ring-gai St Ives	7,608	2,568	499	2,405	0	860	13,940
Ku-ring-gai	Ku-ring-gai Wahroonga	7,256	2,812	468	2,023	0	954	13,513
Kyogle	Kyogle B	420	1,005	101	136	0	91	1,753
Kyogle	Kyogle C	876	341	67	225	0	157	1,666
Lachlan	Lachlan E	291	243	20	50	0	45	649
City of Lake Macquarie	Lake Macquarie East	20,896	11,005	1,136	6,080	1	2,475	41,593
City of Lake Macquarie	Lake Macquarie North	22,305	8,354	1,366	7,803	20	2,468	42,316

Council	Ward	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	NAMAV	Postal	Total formal votes
City of Lake Macquarie	Lake Macquarie West	22,372	12,172	1,376	6,433	1	2,289	44,643
Lane Cove	Lane Cove Central	3,709	1,886	287	1,064	0	313	7,259
Lane Cove	Lane Cove East	3,463	1,508	316	1,312	0	375	6,974
Lane Cove	Lane Cove West	3,653	1,543	441	1,383	0	342	7,362
Leeton	Leeton	3,217	2,036	123	598	0	131	6,105
City of Lismore	Lismore	10,998	8,701	1,408	3,729	1	1,111	25,948
City of Lithgow	Lithgow	5,525	5,238	387	1,380	3	528	13,061
City of Liverpool	Liverpool North	25,090	10,741	2,285	10,787	1	2,441	51,345
City of Liverpool	Liverpool South	25,593	14,223	2,255	13,118	1	3,089	58,279
Liverpool Plains	Liverpool Plains	2,122	1,410	130	581	0	217	4,460
Lockhart	Lockhart A	267	205	9	54	0	64	599
Lockhart	Lockhart B	419	66	12	74	0	44	615
City of Maitland	Maitland Central	5,175	4,517	562	2,088	1	740	13,083
City of Maitland	Maitland East	4,602	4,357	496	2,264	0	678	12,397
City of Maitland	Maitland North	6,312	3,878	647	3,042	1	881	14,761
City of Maitland	Maitland West	4,195	5,185	619	2,063	1	657	12,720
Mid-Coast	Mid-Coast	25,522	24,501	1,619	6,360	6	3,688	61,696

Council	Ward	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	NAMAV	Postal	Total formal votes
Mid-Western Regional	Mid-Western	5,155	7,310	470	1,548	3	537	15,023
Moree Plains	Moree Plains	2,652	1,601	128	1,113	0	295	5,789
Mosman	Mosman	7,503	4,913	665	2,429	1	686	16,197
Murrumbidgee	Murrumbidgee Jerilderie	418	111	15	96	0	46	686
Murrumbidgee	Murrumbidgee Murrumbidgee	443	106	21	60	0	19	649
Murrumbidgee	Murrumbidgee Murrumbidgee East	414	67	12	151	0	54	698
Muswellbrook	Muswellbrook	2,800	3,739	341	1,653	0	223	8,756
Nambucca Valley	Nambucca Valley	4,891	4,945	422	1,192	0	593	12,043
Narrabri	Narrabri	2,637	2,902	219	1,010	0	274	7,042
Narrandera	Narrandera	1,270	1,566	80	351	0	131	3,398
City of Newcastle	Newcastle 1	11,380	6,089	1,045	3,702	0	1,212	23,428
City of Newcastle	Newcastle 2	13,512	6,214	1,053	4,050	0	1,260	26,089
City of Newcastle	Newcastle 3	12,303	5,729	988	3,851	0	1,597	24,468
City of Newcastle	Newcastle 4	11,423	6,470	927	4,096	0	1,401	24,317
North Sydney	North Sydney Cammeraygal	8,998	4,359	961	3,748	0	1,022	19,088

Council	Ward	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	NAMAV	Postal	Total formal votes
North Sydney	North Sydney St Leonards	9,336	3,672	717	3,857	2	957	18,541
Northern Beaches	Northern Beaches Curl Curl	15,390	6,285	1,197	5,292	1	1,577	29,742
Northern Beaches	Northern Beaches Frenchs Forest	18,378	3,843	993	5,295	2	2,114	30,625
Northern Beaches	Northern Beaches Manly	14,963	7,017	1,146	4,623	2	1,230	28,981
Northern Beaches	Northern Beaches Narrabeen	14,783	7,430	952	4,918	0	2,041	30,124
Northern Beaches	Northern Beaches Pittwater	11,739	10,212	931	3,998	2	2,760	29,642
Oberon	Oberon	1,082	1,564	87	290	0	192	3,215
City of Orange	Orange	9,285	9,091	674	4,023	1	666	23,740
Parkes	Parkes	4,353	2,274	226	932	3	239	8,027
City of Parramatta	Parramatta Dundas	11,314	2,687	854	5,625	0	1,596	22,076
City of Parramatta	Parramatta Epping	10,620	5,654	836	4,848	0	1,503	23,461
City of Parramatta	Parramatta North Rocks	11,685	3,577	661	5,070	1	1,531	22,525
City of Parramatta	Parramatta Parramatta	10,521	3,247	651	4,461	0	1,560	20,440
City of Parramatta	Parramatta Rosehill	10,845	3,637	1,167	5,603	0	1,031	22,283
Port Macquarie-Hastings	Port Macquarie-Hastings	21,047	21,418	1,552	6,212	2	2,286	52,517

Council	Ward	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	NAMAV	Postal	Total formal votes
Port Stephens	Port Stephens Central	8,501	3,192	608	3,100	0	888	16,289
Port Stephens	Port Stephens East	5,780	6,144	323	1,790	0	776	14,813
Port Stephens	Port Stephens West	7,271	4,042	633	2,678	0	801	15,425
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional	Queanbeyan-Palerang	17,198	10,673	949	3,484	0	1,509	33,813
City of Randwick	Randwick Central	6,120	3,829	474	2,488	0	929	13,840
City of Randwick	Randwick East	6,633	2,480	662	2,360	0	666	12,801
City of Randwick	Randwick North	6,687	2,903	650	2,231	0	650	13,121
City of Randwick	Randwick South	6,483	4,636	584	2,018	0	747	14,468
City of Randwick	Randwick West	6,789	2,941	714	2,373	2	790	13,609
Richmond Valley	Richmond Valley	4,962	5,870	658	1,345	0	394	13,229
City of Ryde	Ryde Central	11,130	3,339	1,004	4,706	0	1,647	21,826
City of Ryde	Ryde East	11,729	3,220	885	4,489	0	2,000	22,323
City of Ryde	Ryde West	10,095	3,560	797	3,898	0	2,020	20,370
City of Shellharbour	Shellharbour A	4,882	4,331	587	2,746	0	592	13,138
City of Shellharbour	Shellharbour B	4,344	3,380	405	1,916	0	482	10,527
City of Shellharbour	Shellharbour C	4,184	3,894	454	1,644	0	441	10,617

Council	Ward	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	NAMAV	Postal	Total formal votes
City of Shoalhaven	Shoalhaven 1	10,083	7,010	720	2,579	2	1,330	21,724
City of Shoalhaven	Shoalhaven 2	9,544	7,298	681	2,738	2	1,600	21,863
City of Shoalhaven	Shoalhaven 3	8,441	9,109	565	2,344	0	1,570	22,029
Singleton	Singleton	4,939	4,677	337	2,386	0	406	12,745
Snowy Monaro Regional	Snowy Monaro	4,338	5,385	516	792	1	714	11,746
Snowy Valleys	Snowy Valleys	3,345	3,636	270	608	0	451	8,310
Strathfield	Strathfield	7,975	5,123	842	4,336	0	1,224	19,500
Sutherland Shire	Sutherland A	13,926	7,468	952	4,415	0	1,250	28,011
Sutherland Shire	Sutherland B	14,770	6,258	1,037	4,963	3	1,554	28,585
Sutherland Shire	Sutherland C	15,162	5,531	817	4,916	3	1,451	27,880
Sutherland Shire	Sutherland D	14,091	7,616	908	4,625	2	1,301	28,543
Sutherland Shire	Sutherland E	15,560	6,248	896	4,341	0	1,268	28,313
City of Sydney	Sydney	46,209	17,382	4,216	39,217	0	10,338	117,362
Tamworth Regional	Tamworth	16,036	12,848	904	4,130	1	1,399	35,318
Temora	Temora	1,790	1,652	94	353	0	157	4,046
Tenterfield	Tenterfield D	214	404	50	27	0	52	747
The Hills Shire	The Hills Central	12,273	5,035	844	6,783	0	1,440	26,375

Council	Ward	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	NAMAV	Postal	Total formal votes
The Hills Shire	The Hills East	13,089	3,741	830	5,559	0	1,375	24,594
The Hills Shire	The Hills North	14,708	2,505	1,216	6,954	1	1,641	27,025
The Hills Shire	The Hills West	12,998	4,207	791	6,253	0	1,258	25,507
Tweed	Tweed	22,795	18,336	2,052	3,947	2	2,888	50,020
Upper Hunter Shire	Upper Hunter	3,679	2,930	213	1,195	0	283	8,300
Upper Lachlan Shire	Upper Lachlan	2,673	1,445	192	645	1	263	5,219
Uralla	Uralla A	658	848	50	194	0	87	1,837
Uralla	Uralla B	1,107	390	51	198	0	72	1,818
City of Wagga Wagga	Wagga Wagga	18,286	11,614	976	3,935	0	1,074	35,885
Walcha	Walcha B	200	125	15	120	0	28	488
Walcha	Walcha D	257	132	16	46	0	16	467
Walgett	Walgett	1,226	511	132	415	0	223	2,507
Warren	Warren A	93	128	5	63	0	43	332
Warren	Warren B	76	160	6	75	0	30	347
Warren	Warren D	102	179	10	25	0	19	335
Warrumbungle Shire	Warrumbungle	2,671	1,165	212	1,111	0	371	5,530
Waverley	Waverley Bondi	3,802	1,336	430	1,259	0	325	7,152



Council	Ward	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	NAMAV	Postal	Total formal votes
Waverley	Waverley Hunter	4,094	1,203	288	1,587	0	942	8,114
Waverley	Waverley Lawson	4,163	2,190	454	1,360	0	603	8,770
Waverley	Waverley Waverley	3,385	2,423	457	1,210	0	577	8,052
Weddin	Weddin	1,255	641	57	324	0	103	2,380
Wentworth	Wentworth	1,850	815	111	325	0	217	3,318
City of Willoughby	Willoughby Middle Harbour	4,686	1,837	299	1,599	1	963	9,385
City of Willoughby	Willoughby Naremburn	4,590	1,135	365	1,705	0	838	8,633
City of Willoughby	Willoughby Sailors Bay	5,346	1,369	330	1,531	0	926	9,502
City of Willoughby	Willoughby West	4,215	2,010	461	1,939	0	800	9,425
Wollondilly	Wollondilly East	7,348	3,323	1,072	2,335	0	1,055	15,133
Wollondilly	Wollondilly North	7,993	2,166	866	2,610	0	1,020	14,655
City of Wollongong	Wollongong 1	21,341	11,504	1,366	6,303	0	2,216	42,730
City of Wollongong	Wollongong 2	21,111	8,735	1,409	7,683	0	2,135	41,073
City of Wollongong	Wollongong 3	19,439	11,312	1,365	6,530	0	2,060	40,706
Woollahra	Woollahra Bellevue Hill	2,889	913	206	1,091	0	420	5,519
Woollahra	Woollahra Cooper	3,108	1,098	248	1,039	0	399	5,892

Council	Ward	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	NAMAV	Postal	Total formal votes
Woollahra	Woollahra Double Bay	2,860	1,128	242	1,123	0	363	5,716
Woollahra	Woollahra Paddington	3,242	882	265	1,164	0	281	5,834
Woollahra	Woollahra Vaucluse	3,685	528	171	1,170	0	443	5,997
Yass Valley	Yass Valley	4,409	2,599	215	1,753	1	475	9,452

**Appendix D: Formal votes in mayoral contests by council by voting channel for the 2021 NSW Local Government elections**

Council	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	Postal	NAMAV	Total formal votes
Ballina	12,093	8,749	1,749	3,132	1,190	0	26,913
Bellingen	4,784	2,027	288	724	551	0	8,374
City of Broken Hill	4,208	5,205	186	972	241	0	10,812
Burwood	7,869	4,820	718	3,270	1,118	2	17,797
Byron	9,179	5,327	878	1,908	873	0	18,165
Canada Bay	24,800	9,491	1,811	9,815	2,625	0	48,542
City of Cessnock	14,026	12,847	1,572	6,615	1,437	0	36,497
City of Coffs Harbour	22,351	14,165	1,507	5,202	1,927	3	45,155
Eurobodalla	10,640	10,315	694	2,664	1,213	0	25,526
City of Griffith	6,825	5,010	426	1,642	276	0	14,179
Hornsby	47,063	15,343	2,699	15,723	4,825	3	85,656
Hunter's Hill	3,665	2,529	288	1,350	513	11	8,356
Kempsey	8,320	6,456	439	1,764	606	0	17,585
City of Lake Macquarie	66,677	32,063	4,034	20,390	7,150	22	130,336
City of Lismore	11,257	8,937	1,431	3,750	1,098	1	26,474
City of Liverpool	53,427	27,037	5,079	24,136	5,495	3	115,177
City of Maitland	20,816	18,402	2,463	9,535	2,961	4	54,181

Council	Ordinary	Pre-poll Ordinary	Enrolment	iVote	Postal	NAMAV	Total formal votes
Mosman	7,633	5,013	673	2,442	663	1	16,425
Nambucca Valley	5,124	5,115	436	1,212	595	0	12,482
City of Newcastle	49,641	25,069	4,308	15,794	5,463	0	100,275
City of Orange	9,553	9,397	689	4,044	671	1	24,355
Port Macquarie-Hastings	22,051	22,324	1,601	6,267	2,254	2	54,499
Port Stephens	22,376	13,765	1,641	7,619	2,404	2	47,807
Richmond Valley	5,035	5,971	664	1,346	389	0	13,405
City of Shellharbour	18,272	15,607	2,022	8,468	1,904	0	46,273
City of Shoalhaven	28,771	24,023	2,018	7,704	4,510	4	67,030
Singleton	5,534	4,988	362	2,449	421	1	13,755
City of Sydney	47,214	17,750	4,241	39,371	9,935	0	118,511
The Hills Shire	54,365	15,702	3,950	25,645	5,721	1	105,384
Uralla	1,839	1,278	107	395	162	0	3,781
City of Willoughby	19,509	6,533	1,575	6,823	3,501	1	37,942
Wollondilly	16,410	5,812	2,042	5,001	2,090	0	31,355
City of Wollongong	63,501	32,308	4,379	20,614	6,432	6	127,240

**Appendix E: Pre-poll and election day venue counts by council**

<b>Council</b>	<b>Polling places</b>	<b>Pre-polling places</b>
City of Albury	15	2
Armidale Regional	9	2
Ballina	14	1
Bathurst Regional	17	2
Bayside	46	6
Bega Valley	17	4
Bellingen	7	1
Berrigan	4	1
City of Blacktown	77	8
Bland	5	1
Blayney	5	2
City of Blue Mountains	24	3
Bogan	1	1
Brewarrina	3	1
City of Broken Hill	6	1
Burwood	8	2
Byron	11	2
Cabonne	16	2
Camden	26	4
City of Campbelltown	42	4
Canada Bay	21	4
Canterbury-Bankstown	79	8
Carrathool	1	1
City of Cessnock	22	3
Clarence Valley	28	2
City of Coffs Harbour	23	2
Coolamon	4	1

<b>Council</b>	<b>Polling places</b>	<b>Pre-polling places</b>
Coonamble	2	1
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional	9	2
Cowra	7	1
Cumberland	48	6
Dubbo Regional	15	3
Dungog	5	1
Edward River	5	1
Eurobodalla	17	3
Federation	6	2
Forbes	4	1
Georges River	41	3
Gilgandra	2	1
Glen Innes Severn Shire	5	1
Goulburn Mulwaree	11	1
Greater Hume Shire	6	4
City of Griffith	8	2
Gunnedah	5	1
Gwydir	5	3
City of Hawkesbury	26	2
Hay	1	1
Hilltops	11	4
Hornsby	47	5
Hunter's Hill	6	1
Inner West	56	6
Inverell	8	1
Junee	2	1
Kempsey	15	2
Kiama	8	1

<b>Council</b>	<b>Polling places</b>	<b>Pre-polling places</b>
Ku-ring-gai	31	4
Kyogle	6	2
Lachlan	2	1
City of Lake Macquarie	68	7
Lane Cove	11	1
Leeton	7	1
City of Lismore	22	2
City of Lithgow	14	1
City of Liverpool	48	5
Liverpool Plains	7	1
Lockhart	4	2
City of Maitland	23	3
Mid-Coast	48	5
Mid-Western Regional	9	3
Moree Plains	10	1
Mosman	9	2
Murray River	10	4
Murrumbidgee	3	3
Muswellbrook	4	2
Nambucca Valley	10	2
Narrabri	7	2
Narrandera	3	1
City of Newcastle	49	5
North Sydney	16	2
Northern Beaches	60	7
Oberon	3	2
City of Orange	14	3
Parkes	9	1

<b>Council</b>	<b>Polling places</b>	<b>Pre-polling places</b>
City of Parramatta	58	6
Port Macquarie-Hastings	30	5
Port Stephens	25	2
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional	15	4
City of Randwick	30	4
Richmond Valley	9	2
City of Ryde	34	3
City of Shellharbour	16	3
City of Shoalhaven	35	4
Singleton	11	3
Snowy Monaro Regional	13	5
Snowy Valleys	8	2
Strathfield	12	2
Sutherland Shire	67	7
City of Sydney	41	6
Tamworth Regional	25	5
Temora	3	1
Tenterfield	1	1
The Hills Shire	50	3
Tweed	29	5
Upper Hunter Shire	9	4
Upper Lachlan Shire	10	2
Uralla	6	2
City of Wagga Wagga	20	2
Walcha	2	1
Walgett	5	2
Warren	1	1
Warrumbungle Shire	7	2



<b>Council</b>	<b>Polling places</b>	<b>Pre-polling places</b>
Waverley	18	2
Weddin	4	1
Wentworth	4	1
City of Willoughby	19	2
Wollondilly	20	2
City of Wollongong	64	6
Woollahra	16	2
Yass Valley	8	1

Some venues are duplicated across councils where the venue is a multi-council venue. Pre-poll venues include the returning office if it functioned as a pre-poll venue. Not all pre-poll venues were open for the full two-week pre-poll period.

**Appendix F: Venue accessibility by council**

<b>Council</b>	<b>No. of fully accessible venues</b>	<b>No. of assisted access venues</b>	<b>No. of non-accessible venues</b>	<b>Total number of venues</b>	<b>Percentage fully accessible</b>	<b>Percentage assisted access</b>	<b>Percentage non-accessible</b>
City of Albury	5	12	0	17	29%	71%	0%
Armidale Regional	4	8	0	12	33%	67%	0%
Ballina	8	5	3	16	50%	31%	19%
Bathurst Regional	3	12	5	20	15%	60%	25%
Bayside	17	26	9	52	33%	50%	17%
Bega Valley	6	16	0	22	27%	73%	0%
Bellingen	3	5	1	9	33%	56%	11%
Berrigan	0	5	1	6	0%	83%	17%
City of Blacktown	27	53	6	86	31%	62%	7%
Bland	1	5	1	7	14%	71%	14%
Blayney	3	4	1	8	38%	50%	13%
City of Blue Mountains	10	16	1	27	37%	59%	4%
Bogan	0	3	0	3	0%	100%	0%
Brewarrina	0	5	0	5	0%	100%	0%
City of Broken Hill	1	6	0	7	14%	86%	0%

<b>Council</b>	<b>No. of fully accessible venues</b>	<b>No. of assisted access venues</b>	<b>No. of non-accessible venues</b>	<b>Total number of venues</b>	<b>Percentage fully accessible</b>	<b>Percentage assisted access</b>	<b>Percentage non-accessible</b>
Burwood	3	6	1	10	30%	60%	10%
Byron	7	6	0	13	54%	46%	0%
Cabonne	2	13	3	18	11%	72%	17%
Camden	14	14	2	30	47%	47%	7%
City of Campbelltown	13	30	3	46	28%	65%	7%
Canada Bay	5	17	3	25	20%	68%	12%
Canterbury-Bankstown	20	56	12	88	23%	64%	14%
Carrathool	2	1	0	3	67%	33%	0%
City of Cessnock	3	18	4	25	12%	72%	16%
Clarence Valley	10	20	0	30	33%	67%	0%
City of Coffs Harbour	8	15	2	25	32%	60%	8%
Coolamon	1	5	0	6	17%	83%	0%
Coonamble	1	3	0	4	25%	75%	0%
Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional	3	5	3	11	27%	45%	27%
Cowra	0	8	0	8	0%	100%	0%
Cumberland	16	30	9	55	29%	55%	16%

<b>Council</b>	<b>No. of fully accessible venues</b>	<b>No. of assisted access venues</b>	<b>No. of non-accessible venues</b>	<b>Total number of venues</b>	<b>Percentage fully accessible</b>	<b>Percentage assisted access</b>	<b>Percentage non-accessible</b>
Dubbo Regional	6	12	0	18	33%	67%	0%
Dungog	3	4	0	7	43%	57%	0%
Edward River	3	4	0	7	43%	57%	0%
Eurobodalla	9	12	0	21	43%	57%	0%
Federation	3	6	0	9	33%	67%	0%
Forbes	2	3	1	6	33%	50%	17%
Georges River	15	28	2	45	33%	62%	4%
Gilgandra	1	2	0	3	33%	67%	0%
Glen Innes Severn Shire	2	5	0	7	29%	71%	0%
Goulburn Mulwaree	3	7	2	12	25%	58%	17%
Greater Hume Shire	7	3	0	10	70%	30%	0%
City of Griffith	3	8	0	11	27%	73%	0%
Gunnedah	0	5	1	6	0%	83%	17%
Gwydir	1	7	0	8	13%	88%	0%
City of Hawkesbury	10	15	3	28	36%	54%	11%
Hay	1	2	0	3	33%	67%	0%

<b>Council</b>	<b>No. of fully accessible venues</b>	<b>No. of assisted access venues</b>	<b>No. of non-accessible venues</b>	<b>Total number of venues</b>	<b>Percentage fully accessible</b>	<b>Percentage assisted access</b>	<b>Percentage non-accessible</b>
Hilltops	3	9	3	15	20%	60%	20%
Hornsby	18	30	4	52	35%	58%	8%
Hunter's Hill	5	1	1	7	71%	14%	14%
Inner West	17	33	12	62	27%	53%	19%
Inverell	3	6	0	9	33%	67%	0%
Junee	1	3	0	4	25%	75%	0%
Kempsey	2	15	1	18	11%	83%	6%
Kiama	2	7	1	10	20%	70%	10%
Ku-ring-gai	14	16	5	35	40%	46%	14%
Kyogle	4	4	0	8	50%	50%	0%
Lachlan	1	3	0	4	25%	75%	0%
City of Lake Macquarie	24	46	6	76	32%	61%	8%
Lane Cove	8	5	0	13	62%	38%	0%
Leeton	1	7	1	9	11%	78%	11%
City of Lismore	7	15	2	24	29%	63%	8%
City of Lithgow	3	10	2	15	20%	67%	13%

<b>Council</b>	<b>No. of fully accessible venues</b>	<b>No. of assisted access venues</b>	<b>No. of non-accessible venues</b>	<b>Total number of venues</b>	<b>Percentage fully accessible</b>	<b>Percentage assisted access</b>	<b>Percentage non-accessible</b>
City of Liverpool	25	21	7	53	47%	40%	13%
Liverpool Plains	0	8	1	9	0%	89%	11%
Lockhart	2	4	0	6	33%	67%	0%
City of Maitland	6	17	3	26	23%	65%	12%
Mid-Coast	14	30	9	53	26%	57%	17%
Mid-Western Regional	2	9	2	13	15%	69%	15%
Moree Plains	0	9	2	11	0%	82%	18%
Mosman	4	7	1	12	33%	58%	8%
Murray River	8	5	1	14	57%	36%	7%
Murrumbidgee	0	6	1	7	0%	86%	14%
Muswellbrook	3	3	1	7	43%	43%	14%
Nambucca Valley	2	9	1	12	17%	75%	8%
Narrabri	1	9	0	10	10%	90%	0%
Narrandera	1	4	0	5	20%	80%	0%
City of Newcastle	15	35	4	54	28%	65%	7%
North Sydney	7	11	1	19	37%	58%	5%

<b>Council</b>	<b>No. of fully accessible venues</b>	<b>No. of assisted access venues</b>	<b>No. of non-accessible venues</b>	<b>Total number of venues</b>	<b>Percentage fully accessible</b>	<b>Percentage assisted access</b>	<b>Percentage non-accessible</b>
Northern Beaches	29	34	4	67	43%	51%	6%
Oberon	1	4	1	6	17%	67%	17%
City of Orange	4	12	1	17	24%	71%	6%
Parkes	4	6	1	11	36%	55%	9%
City of Parramatta	13	41	10	64	20%	64%	16%
Port Macquarie-Hastings	10	19	6	35	29%	54%	17%
Port Stephens	5	20	2	27	19%	74%	7%
Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional	6	14	0	20	30%	70%	0%
City of Randwick	11	15	8	34	32%	44%	24%
Richmond Valley	6	5	1	12	50%	42%	8%
City of Ryde	9	26	2	37	24%	70%	5%
City of Shellharbour	6	13	0	19	32%	68%	0%
City of Shoalhaven	6	33	0	39	15%	85%	0%
Singleton	1	13	1	15	7%	87%	7%
Snowy Monaro Regional	1	18	0	19	5%	95%	0%

<b>Council</b>	<b>No. of fully accessible venues</b>	<b>No. of assisted access venues</b>	<b>No. of non-accessible venues</b>	<b>Total number of venues</b>	<b>Percentage fully accessible</b>	<b>Percentage assisted access</b>	<b>Percentage non-accessible</b>
Snowy Valleys	1	9	1	11	9%	82%	9%
Strathfield	4	9	1	14	29%	64%	7%
Sutherland Shire	25	43	7	75	33%	57%	9%
City of Sydney	8	29	11	48	17%	60%	23%
Tamworth Regional	7	21	2	30	23%	70%	7%
Temora	3	2	0	5	60%	40%	0%
Tenterfield	3	0	0	3	100%	0%	0%
The Hills Shire	11	38	4	53	21%	72%	8%
Tweed	9	22	3	34	26%	65%	9%
Upper Hunter Shire	4	10	0	14	29%	71%	0%
Upper Lachlan Shire	3	7	2	12	25%	58%	17%
Uralla	2	6	1	9	22%	67%	11%
City of Wagga Wagga	4	16	2	22	18%	73%	9%
Walcha	1	3	0	4	25%	75%	0%
Walgett	0	7	1	8	0%	88%	13%
Warren	2	1	0	3	67%	33%	0%



<b>Council</b>	<b>No. of fully accessible venues</b>	<b>No. of assisted access venues</b>	<b>No. of non-accessible venues</b>	<b>Total number of venues</b>	<b>Percentage fully accessible</b>	<b>Percentage assisted access</b>	<b>Percentage non-accessible</b>
Warrumbungle Shire	0	9	1	10	0%	90%	10%
Waverley	8	7	6	21	38%	33%	29%
Weddin	0	5	1	6	0%	83%	17%
Wentworth	4	2	0	6	67%	33%	0%
City of Willoughby	5	13	3	21	24%	62%	14%
Wollondilly	9	10	3	22	41%	45%	14%
City of Wollongong	14	51	5	70	20%	73%	7%
Woollahra	3	8	7	18	17%	44%	39%
Yass Valley	2	8	0	10	20%	80%	0%

**Appendix G: Languages spoken by election officials**

Council	Number of languages other than English spoken by election staff	Top 5 languages other than English spoken by election staff
Albury	8	Spanish, Australian Sign Language, Cantonese, German, Japanese
Armidale	7	Croatian, Dutch, French, Hindi, Indonesian
Ballina	7	German, Dari, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese
Bathurst	10	Hindi, Korean, French, Galice, Italian
Bayside	43	Dari, Cantonese, Hindi, Bengali, Arabic
Bega Valley	6	French, Polish, German, Hebrew, Italian
Berrigan	2	German, Greek
Blacktown	68	Hindi, Filipino, Punjabi, Tamil, Gujarati
Bland	1	French
Blue Mountains	18	Spanish, German, Italian, Filipino, Hindi
Broken Hill	3	Croatian, Filipino, French
Burwood	22	Cantonese, Dari, Vietnamese, Hindi, Arabic
Byron	9	German, Bislama, Indonesian, Italian, Latvian
Cabonne	5	Ko, Cantonese, Dari, Filipino, Hindi
Camden	37	Hindi, Bengali, Arabic, Filipino, Spanish
Campbelltown	50	Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Filipino, Urdu

Council	Number of languages other than English spoken by election staff	Top 5 languages other than English spoken by election staff
Canada Bay	36	Cantonese, Hindi, Dari, Italian, Tamil
Canterbury-Bankstown	60	Vietnamese, Arabic, Cantonese, Hindi, Dari
Carrathool	1	Vietnamese
Cessnock	8	French, German, Hindi, Kirundi, Russian
Clarence Valley	5	Spanish, Filipino, French, Italian, Polish
Coffs Harbour	15	Punjabi, Hindi, German, Italian, Spanish
Coolamon	1	Dutch
Cowra	3	Filipino, Hindi, Punjabi
Cumberland	58	Hindi, Arabic, Tamil, Cantonese, Dari
Dubbo	10	Hindi, Telugu, Bengali, French, German
Dungog	1	Spanish
Edward River	1	Australian Sign Language
Eurobodalla	7	German, French, Afrikaans, Danish, Dari
Federation	2	Greek, Spanish
Georges River	37	Cantonese, Dari, Arabic, Greek, Hindi
Goulburn Mulwaree	8	German, French, Japanese, Malay, Polish
Greater Hume	1	Bengali

Council	Number of languages other than English spoken by election staff	Top 5 languages other than English spoken by election staff
Griffith	6	Italian, Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali, Filipino
Gunnedah	3	Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu
Gwydir	1	Australian Sign Language
Hawkesbury	19	Hindi, Bengali, Croatian, Filipino, French
Hilltops	1	German
Hornsby	44	Dari, Cantonese, Hindi, Filipino, Tamil
Hunters Hill	13	Cantonese, Italian, Hindi, Arabic, Bengali
Inner West	48	Dari, Cantonese, Italian, French, Spanish
Junee	3	Dari, Gujarati, Hindi
Kempsey	4	Czech, Filipino, French, German
Kiama	8	Greek, Macedonian, Croatian, Dutch, German
Ku-ring-gai	35	Dari, Cantonese, Hindi, Tamil, French
Kyogle	3	Filipino, Hebrew, Indonesian
Lake Macquarie	22	Hindi, Filipino, German, Tamil, Greek
Lane Cove	24	Dari, Cantonese, Hindi, French, Italian
Leeton	4	Hindi, Italian, Punjabi, Australian Sign Language
Lismore	7	French, German, Italian, Finnish, Russian

Council	Number of languages other than English spoken by election staff	Top 5 languages other than English spoken by election staff
Lithgow	11	Urdu, French, Hindi, Punjabi, German
Liverpool	53	Vietnamese, Hindi, Arabic, Cantonese, Dari
Lockhart	1	Dutch
Maitland	11	French, Italian, Arabic, Australian Sign Language, Cantonese
Mid-Coast	8	French, German, Japanese, Afrikaans, Arabic
Mid-Western	6	Hindi, Bengali, Cantonese, Dari, Italian
Moree Plains	4	Austral, Cantonese, Dari, Maltese
Mosman	19	Dari, Cantonese, French, Spanish, Hindi
Murray River	5	Hindi, Hungarian, Punjabi, Tok Pisin, Urdu
Muswellbrook	4	Hebrew, Hindi, Malayalam, Russian
Nambucca Valley	3	Spanish, Hindi, Swedish
Narrabri	3	Filipino, French, German
Narrandera	1	Japanese
Newcastle	36	Hindi, Japanese, Macedonian, French, German
North Sydney	26	Dari, Hindi, Cantonese, French, Spanish
Northern Beaches	39	French, Dari, Cantonese, Filipino, Hindi
Oberon	2	German, Persian

Council	Number of languages other than English spoken by election staff	Top 5 languages other than English spoken by election staff
Orange	6	Hindi, Italian, Dari, Nepali, Punjabi
Parkes	3	French, Spanish, Tswana
Parramatta	49	Hindi, Cantonese, Dari, Tamil, Punjabi
Port Macquarie-Hastings	9	French, Hindi, Punjabi, Finnish, German
Port Stephens	9	German, Australian Sign Language, English, French, Hindi
Queanbeyan-Palerang	20	German, French, Cantonese, Indonesian, Spanish
Randwick	39	Cantonese, Dari, French, Indonesian, Hindi
Richmond Valley	2	French, German
Ryde	31	Dari, Cantonese, Hindi, Filipino, Indonesian
Shellharbour	19	Spanish, Macedonian, Croatian, Filipino, Arabic
Shoalhaven	11	German, Greek, Spanish, Belarusian, Dutch
Singleton	3	Dutch, Italian, Maltese
Snowy Monaro	7	Polish, French, German, Lao, Spanish
Snowy Valleys	1	Italian
Strathfield	30	Hindi, Tamil, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Dari
Sutherland	41	Cantonese, Dari, Hindi, Greek, Italian
Sydney	46	Dari, Cantonese, Spanish, Hindi, French

Council	Number of languages other than English spoken by election staff	Top 5 languages other than English spoken by election staff
Tamworth	9	Afrikaans, Spanish, Australian Sign Language, Bosnian, Cantonese
The Hills	43	Hindi, Tamil, Cantonese, Dari, Punjabi
Tweed	15	French, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Spanish
Upper Hunter	2	Ko, Spanish
Upper Lachlan	1	German
Uralla	4	Dari, Filipino, French, Swahili
Wagga Wagga	12	Arabic, Dari, French, Hindi, Danish
Walcha	3	French, German, Sallands
Walgett	1	Indigenous languages
Warren	3	Croatian, German, Serbian
Warrumbungle	1	Filipino
Waverley	31	French, Greek, Italian, Spanish, German
Weddin	1	Italian
Wentworth	4	Akan, Hindi, Macedonian, Urdu
Willoughby	26	Dari, Cantonese, Hindi, Thai, German
Wollondilly	16	Arabic, Italian, Spanish, French, Hindi
Wollongong	36	Italian, Macedonian, Spanish, French, Serbian

Council	Number of languages other than English spoken by election staff	Top 5 languages other than English spoken by election staff
Woollahra	24	French, Spanish, German, Portuguese, Dari
Yass Valley	8	Dari, Cantonese, German, Hindi, Punjabi

This table includes election day polling place staff who spoke a language in addition to English. Pre-poll and returning office staff are not included in this table. These numbers are not unique staff counts. Some staff members spoke more than one language other than English and are counted in each language category.



## Appendix H: Election staff employed who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, live with disability or speak a language in addition to English

Council	Living with disability	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	Language other than English
Albury	10	2	11
Armidale	5	6	11
Ballina	8	4	7
Bathurst	9	5	16
Bayside	7	10	283
Bega Valley	9	2	18
Bellingen	2	2	0
Berrigan	0	0	2
Blacktown	35	42	692
Bland	2	7	1
Blayney	0	3	0
Blue Mountains	9	14	33
Bogan	0	2	0
Brewarrina	0	7	0
Broken Hill	7	10	6
Burwood	0	0	60
Byron	4	2	13
Cabonne	4	3	4
Camden	7	12	157
Campbelltown	15	15	296
Canada Bay	4	0	130
Canterbury-Bankstown	22	14	656
Carrathool	0	0	2
Cessnock	8	38	6
Clarence Valley	0	11	6
Coffs Harbour	13	12	30

<b>Council</b>	<b>Living with disability</b>	<b>Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander</b>	<b>Language other than English</b>
Coolamon	5	0	4
Coonamble	2	7	0
Cootamundra-Gundagai	0	5	0
Cowra	14	6	5
Cumberland	12	4	506
Dubbo	2	13	16
Dungog	1	0	1
Edward River	3	3	1
Eurobodalla	6	4	11
Federation	0	3	3
Forbes	0	8	0
Georges River	10	8	280
Gilgandra	3	5	0
Glen Innes Severn	0	0	0
Goulburn Mulwaree	3	3	18
Greater Hume	1	0	0
Griffith	1	12	16
Gunnedah	6	9	4
Gwydir	0	1	1
Hawkesbury	10	12	25
Hay	0	2	0
Hilltops	3	2	1
Hornsby	11	11	309
Hunters Hill	2	1	42
Inner West	25	11	254
Inverell	5	14	0
Junee	0	0	2
Kempsey	5	7	4

<b>Council</b>	<b>Living with disability</b>	<b>Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander</b>	<b>Language other than English</b>
Kiama	4	1	11
Ku-ring-gai	12	2	157
Kyogle	0	4	3
Lachlan	0	3	0
Lake Macquarie	34	35	51
Lane Cove	4	0	54
Leeton	1	3	6
Lismore	1	14	14
Lithgow	11	18	22
Liverpool	14	12	507
Liverpool Plains	4	4	0
Lockhart	1	0	1
Maitland	11	21	15
Mid-Coast	13	19	15
Mid-Western	2	11	5
Moree Plains	1	6	3
Mosman	3	1	41
Murray River	2	2	4
Murrumbidgee	0	2	0
Muswellbrook	5	11	6
Nambucca Valley	4	4	4
Narrabri	1	1	3
Narrandera	1	2	2
Newcastle	17	15	67
North Sydney	6	1	104
Northern Beaches	10	10	143
Oberon	0	0	2
Orange	5	12	11

<b>Council</b>	<b>Living with disability</b>	<b>Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander</b>	<b>Language other than English</b>
Parkes	0	16	3
Parramatta	24	11	428
Port Macquarie-Hastings	10	8	11
Port Stephens	18	19	15
Queanbeyan-Palerang	10	3	34
Randwick	16	5	147
Richmond Valley	5	3	2
Ryde	10	11	209
Shellharbour	8	13	39
Shoalhaven	12	16	20
Singleton	5	6	6
Snowy Monaro	1	3	8
Snowy Valleys	0	2	1
Strathfield	5	2	151
Sutherland	12	14	144
Sydney	23	10	222
Tamworth	12	30	10
Temora	0	1	0
Tenterfield	0	0	0
The Hills	6	12	352
Tweed	13	16	28
Upper Hunter	0	3	2
Upper Lachlan	3	2	2
Uralla	0	3	4
Wagga Wagga	5	11	14
Walcha	0	0	1
Walgett	0	5	1
Warren	0	3	1

<b>Council</b>	<b>Living with disability</b>	<b>Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander</b>	<b>Language other than English</b>
Warrumbungle	1	3	1
Waverley	6	1	94
Weddin	3	1	1
Wentworth	8	5	4
Willoughby	6	5	109
Wollondilly	5	4	24
Wollongong	30	26	142
Woollahra	6	2	60
Yass Valley	0	0	13

# Appendix I: 2021 Local Government elections state-wide advertising campaign

## Statutory advertising

Left: Candidate Nominations: Published 7 October – Daily Telegraph, The Land and Sydney Morning Herald.

Middle: Early Voting and election information: Published 11 November – Daily Telegraph, The Land and Sydney Morning Herald.

Right: Election reminder: Published week of election- Daily Telegraph, The Land and Sydney Morning Herald.

**2021 NSW Local Government Elections**  
Saturday 4 December 2021

**Thinking of nominating as a candidate for your local council?**

If you're considering running for a council position in the 2021 NSW Local Government elections, you should read this information. It provides general guidance about the process of nominating, and your obligations and responsibilities. It also provides information about the process of nominating, and your obligations and responsibilities. It also provides information about the process of nominating, and your obligations and responsibilities.

**Who can nominate?**

Anyone who is an Australian citizen who is 18 years or older and lives in NSW is eligible to be nominated for a council position. You must also be a resident of the local government area you are nominating for.

**How to nominate:**

There are two ways to nominate: online or by post. Online nominations are available from Monday 22 November to Friday 3 December. Postal nominations are available from Monday 22 November to Friday 3 December.

**What you need to do:**

- Complete a nomination form and deposit it with the Electoral Commission.
- Provide a signed nomination form to the Electoral Commission.
- Provide a signed nomination form to the Electoral Commission.

**More information:**

- Visit [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au)
- Call the candidate helpline on 1300 135 736

John Schmidt, NSW Electoral Commissioner

**2021 NSW Local Government Elections**  
Saturday 4 December 2021

If you are an Australian citizen who is 18 years or older and lives in NSW you are likely to be enrolled to vote at NSW Local Government elections. Every person whose name is on a council's residential roll for a NSW Local Government election must vote in that council's election in December. You can check if and where you are enrolled to vote on the NSW Electoral Commission's website: [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au).

**Early voting options**

**Subject to eligibility, check your eligibility at [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au).**

**Voting by post**

You may be eligible to vote by post. COVID-19-specific eligibility criteria may apply to your circumstances. You can apply online for a postal vote from Tuesday 26 October. Find out more about postal voting at [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au) or by calling 1300 135 736.

**Voting online**

Eligible voters may be able to apply to use the NSW Electoral Commission's technology-assisted voting platform, iVote, at these elections. Eligible voters can register online at [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au) or by calling 1300 24 86 83.

**Voting early in person**

Pre-poll (early) voting begins on Monday 22 November and ends on Friday 3 December.

Early voting in person is available to all voters at these elections to help us stay COVID-safe.

Not all pre-poll venues are open for the entire pre-poll voting period. For specific operating dates, times and the locations of pre-poll venues, visit [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au).

**Voting on election day**

polling (voting) places will open from 8am – 6pm on Saturday 4 December. On a Local Government election day, voting in person is available only at polling places set up for your council area and/or ward (if your council area has wards). Visit [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au) and enter your address to find out where you can vote.

**Voting is compulsory**

Everyone whose name is on a residential roll for a NSW Local Government election must vote in that council's election.

You can check if and where you are enrolled to vote on the NSW Electoral Commission's website here.

There are penalties for not voting.

**Information on candidates**

Each candidate has a "Candidate Information Sheet" that will be available at [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au)

**Registered electoral material**

Electoral material (how-to-vote cards) registered by the NSW Electoral Commission for distribution on election day are available for inspection on the NSW Electoral Commission website [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au) from Monday, 22 November to 6pm, Saturday 4 December 2021.

**Information: [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au) or call 1300 135 736**

If you are deaf, hard of hearing and/or have a speech impairment, please contact us through the National Relay Service (NRS). Choose your access option and ask for 1300 135 736.

If you need an interpreter, please call TIS National on 131 450 and ask them to call the NSW Electoral Commission on 1300 135 736.

John Schmidt, NSW Electoral Commissioner

**2021 NSW Local Government Elections**  
Saturday 4 December 2021

If you are enrolled to vote in NSW, you must vote in the NSW Local Government elections by 6pm on Saturday 4 December 2021. You may also be able to enrol and vote in person at the same time, providing you bring suitable identification with you showing your current address in NSW. You can check if and where you are enrolled to vote at [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au).

**Early voting options**

**Vote early in person**

Pre-poll (early) voting is still open and ends on Friday 3 December 2021. Early voting in person is available to all voters at these elections. For specific operating dates, times and the locations of pre-poll venues, visit [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au).

**Voting by post**

Applications for voting by post have now closed.

If you have already received a postal voting pack you should return your completed ballot papers, in the two envelopes provided, as soon as possible.

If your postal voting pack was not delivered before 5pm, 26 November 2021, you will also be eligible to apply to vote online instead (these elections only). Find out more about other voting options at [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au) or by calling 1300 135 736.

**Subject to eligibility, check your eligibility at [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au)**

**Voting online**

Eligible voters can use the NSW Electoral Commission's technology-assisted voting platform, iVote, at these elections.

Eligible voters can register online at [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au) or by calling 1300 24 86 83.

**Registration for iVote closes at 4pm, Saturday 4 December.** If you have not registered by that time, you cannot use iVote.

**Voting using iVote closes at 6pm, Saturday 4 December.**

**Subject to eligibility, check your eligibility at [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au)**

**Voting on election day**

polling (voting) places will open from 8am – 6pm on Saturday 4 December. On election day, voting in person is available only at polling places set up for your council area and/or ward (if your council area has wards). Visit [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au) and enter your address to find out where you can vote.

**Voting is compulsory**

Everyone whose name is on a residential roll for a NSW local government election must vote in that council's election.

You can check if and where you are enrolled to vote on the NSW Electoral Commission's website.

There are penalties for not voting.

**Voting is also compulsory for all voters included on the City of Sydney non-residential roll.** Voting is not compulsory for voters included on the non-residential roll for other councils.

**About voting in person at these elections**

- You do not need to be vaccinated to vote at a polling place
- You must wear a face mask inside a polling place, and are strongly encouraged to wear one when waiting outside
- Please maintain physical distancing
- Please check in and out of your polling place with the Service NSW app
- Bring your own pen, we have pens available if you don't have one

**Information about candidates**

Each candidate has a Candidate Information Sheet available at [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au)

**Registered electoral material**

Electoral material (how-to-vote cards) registered with and approved by the Electoral Commission for distribution on election day are available for inspection on the NSW Electoral Commission website [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au) until 6.30pm, Saturday 4 December 2021.

To reduce the risk of infection from COVID-19, how-to-vote cards cannot be handed out on public property within 100 metres of a polling place at these elections.

**Information: [elections.nsw.gov.au](http://elections.nsw.gov.au) or call 1300 135 736**

If you are deaf, hard of hearing and/or have a speech impairment, please contact us through the National Relay Service (NRS). Choose your access option and ask for 1300 135 736.

If you need an interpreter, please call TIS National on 131 450 and ask them to call the NSW Electoral Commission on 1300 135 736.

Balmuccia Shire Council, Central Darling Shire Council, Central Coast Council and Wingecarribee Council are not having an election.

Perinth and Fairfield councils are conducting their own elections. Enquiries should be directed to these councils.

John Schmidt, NSW Electoral Commissioner

Main campaign – press advertising artwork

Left: Get vote ready: Information about elections (early campaign message regarding enrolment).

Right: Get ready to vote (Major masthead: Daily Telegraph/ SMH)

Bottom: Today is elections day: 4 December 2021

NSW Electoral Commission

COVID-19 measures will apply. Make sure you check the latest NSW Health advice.

**GET READY TO VOTE**

NSW local council elections day  
4 December

**Make sure you are enrolled**

Saturday, 4 December is NSW local council elections day. Voting is compulsory. Check or update your enrolment details and find all you need to know at [elections.nsw.gov.au](https://elections.nsw.gov.au) or call 1300 135 736. Penalties may apply if you do not vote.

NSW Electoral Commission

COVID-19 measures will apply. Always check the latest NSW Health Advice.

**GET READY TO VOTE**

SATURDAY DECEMBER 4  
NSW LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

#BeVoteReady

**VOTING IS COMPULSORY**

NSW local council elections are on Saturday December 4. Check your options for voting early or on the day at [elections.nsw.gov.au](https://elections.nsw.gov.au) or call 1300 135 736.

**NEED ASSISTANCE?**  
If you are deaf, hard of hearing and/or have a speech impairment, please contact us through the National Relay Service. If you need an interpreter, please call TIS National on 131 450 and ask them to call us on 1300 135 736.

NSW Electoral Commission

COVID-19 measures will apply. Always check the latest NSW Health Advice.

**GET READY TO VOTE**

TODAY IS  
NSW local council elections day

#BeVoteReady

**VOTING IS COMPULSORY**

NSW local council elections are today. Check your enrolment and voting options, or find your nearest voting centre at [elections.nsw.gov.au](https://elections.nsw.gov.au) or call 1300 135 736.

**NEED ASSISTANCE?**  
If you are deaf, hard of hearing and/or have a speech impairment, please contact us through the National Relay Service. If you need an interpreter, please call TIS National on 131 450 and ask them to call us on 1300 135 736.

Digital moving banners advertising artwork

Voting is compulsory: election reminder



Out of home (outdoor) – large banner ad artwork

Vote Early: Live 8 November until 21 November





Advertising for culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Paid social media advertising artwork

Left: Korean- Election reminder and early voting: 11 October.

Right: Greek- In Language – Be vote ready: 11 October



Press advertisement artwork

Left: Arabic -- Enrol to vote and election reminder Burst 1.

Right: Greek -- Election reminder and election information Burst 2.



### COVID advertising artwork

Left: Press advertisement: Covid Safe voting

Right: Social – video assets, Voting COVID safe (15 seconds)

The advertisement features the NSW Electoral Commission logo at the top left and a circular 'WE'RE COVID SAFE' logo at the top right. The main headline reads 'Vote COVID-safe' in large blue font, followed by 'NSW local council elections' in orange. Below this, the date 'Saturday 4 December' is displayed. A large blue icon of a face mask is positioned to the left of a text block that provides instructions for in-person voting: 'If you're voting in person at the NSW Local Council elections, help us stay COVID-safe. Wear a mask; bring your own pen or use one of the single use pens available; check in using the Service NSW app; maintain physical distance and hand-sanitise when arriving and departing.' A blue link 'Find out more about our COVID-safety measures' is provided below the text. At the bottom left, there is a QR code and the text 'Visit [elections.nsw.gov.au](https://elections.nsw.gov.au) Scan the QR Code or call 1300 135 736'. A 'Need assistance?' section follows, with contact information for the National Relay Service and TIS National. A small disclaimer at the very bottom states 'COVID-19 measures will apply. Make sure you check the latest NSW Health advice.'

The video assets are presented as a vertical sequence of four circular icons on a light blue background, each with a green checkmark below it. The first icon shows two stylized human figures with a speech bubble between them. The second icon is a green surgical mask. The third icon is a smartphone displaying a QR code. The fourth icon is a white ballot paper with a blue shield containing a white cross, symbolizing safety and health.

Social

**Boosted or paid ad assets**

Facebook: Carousel ad: Employment at elections – expressions of interest open – 25 October until 30 November



Recruitment: work with us 2 July 2021



### Facebook and Instagram ad assets

Informational election reminder 22 November



### TikTok

Informational election reminder



### YouTube

Informational election reminder



## Organic Facebook and Twitter

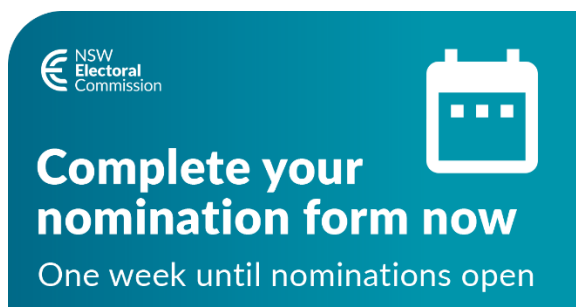
Recruitment reminder: September 2021



Pre-poll reminders: November 2021



Candidate Nominations: October 2021



Find my electorate: November 2021



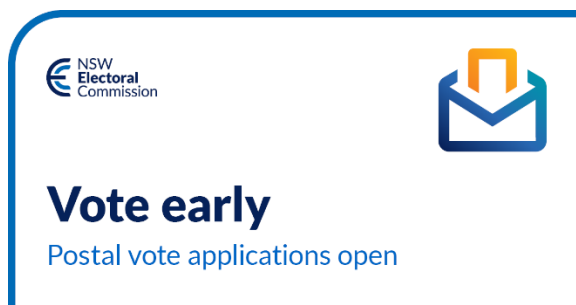
Check my enrolment: October 2021



Assistance in your language: November/December 2021



Postal voting open: October 2021



Auslan interpreters available: November/December 2021



# Glossary

Term	Description
Absolute majority	A candidate for the position of Mayor must have an absolute majority of formal votes in order to be elected. An absolute majority is 50% + 1 of formal votes.
ATL (Above the Line)	Councillor ballot papers where there are groups and Group Voting Squares (GVS) have a thick black line dividing the ballot paper. Group voting squares appear Above The Line (ATL) on the ballot paper. An ATL vote is a vote where the elector has placed their preference(s) in a group voting square Above The Line.
Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)	The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) conducts Federal elections and assists the NSW Electoral Commission to maintain the electoral roll in NSW.
Authorised roll	A roll of electors eligible to vote at the election. This roll is produced after the close of roll. It must contain the surname, given name or names, date of birth, gender and residence of each elector. Residence details for silent electors, eligible overseas electors and itinerant electors are omitted from authorised rolls.
Ballot paper draw	The process of determining which order the candidates (and groups if applicable) will appear on the ballot paper. The draw is conducted by the Returning Officer on nomination day.
BTL (Below the Line)	Councillor ballot papers where there are groups and Group Voting Squares (GVS) have a thick black line dividing the ballot paper. Candidates in those groups appear Below The Line (BTL) on the ballot paper. A BTL vote is a vote where the elector has placed their preferences against candidates Below The Line.
Candidate	A person who is nominated for election as Mayor and/or Councillor.
Candidate helpdesk	Available for candidates and their staff seeking assistance on matters such as nominations, registration of electoral material and counting and results.
Candidate roll	A candidate may apply to be provided with a copy of the roll for the local government area/ward that they are contesting.
Candidate Information Sheet (CIS)	The Candidate Information Sheet is part of the nomination form and must be completed by all candidates. The CIS must then be made available in a folder in the RO office, all polling places, pre-poll voting offices and declared institutions for inspection by electors on request.
Centralised Count Centre (CCC)	The Centralised Count Centres were used for the check count Councillor ballot papers for Sydney Metro and Newcastle region local government areas.
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)	A NSW electoral council area is identified as being culturally and linguistically diverse if it has a significant population of electors who speak a language other than English at home.

Term	Description
Check count	A 'check' or 'second' count of all first preference votes from all polling places, postal, pre-poll and DIs conducted after election day. The results of the check count are considered to be the final count of first preference votes.
Close of roll	The date when the rolls for the election are closed to allow for printing of authorised rolls. This is the day of the issue of the writs for an election.
Council area	A council area is one of 128 geographical areas in NSW as at 9 September 2016. Also referred to as a Local Government Area (LGA).
Councillor	Every council area has a number of elected Councillor positions. The successful candidate/s in a Councillor election will become a Councillor for that council area.
Declaration of the poll	An official declaration made by the Returning Officer that sets out the result of each election held for that council area.
Declaration vote	A vote cast by an elector when the ballot papers are enclosed in an envelope containing a printed declaration signed by the elector. It includes postal, declared institution, enrolment, Name not on roll (NNOR) and Name marked as voted (NAMAV) votes.
Declaration Vote Issuing Officer	An election official whose job is to issue declaration votes at a polling place.
Declared institution	A hospital, aged care facility, retirement village or similar facility appointed by the NSW Electoral Commissioner and visited by election officials to take votes from residents who are unable to attend a polling place on election day.
Distribution of Preferences	The process of determining the successful candidate in an election, by distributing ballot papers (either of an excluded candidate or the surplus ballot papers of an elected candidate) to the remaining candidates according to the preferences indicated on the ballot paper.
Election night	After 6pm on election day, when the polling places are closed.
Election Official (EO)	A person appointed as an election official by the Returning Officer to support the conduct of the election.
Election period	The period from the close of rolls until 6pm on election day during which time electoral material must satisfy certain requirements.
Elector	A person entitled to vote at an election.
Electoral Commissioner	The Electoral Commissioner is appointed by the Governor and has the responsibility of administering the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> and regulation as they relate to the conduct of the local government elections. The Electoral Commissioner's responsibilities apply only to those councils who have arranged for the Electoral Commissioner to administer their elections.
Electoral material	Any how-to-vote card, poster or advertisement containing electoral matter (whether in tangible or electronic form).

Term	Description
Electoral matter	Anything that is intended, calculated or likely to affect an election or elector including the name or a party or candidate, or the picture of a candidate or drawing of the candidate's likeness.
Electoral offences	An offence committed under the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> and regulations for the purposes of local government elections.
Enrolled address	The address of the elector as appearing on the authorised roll.
Enrolment vote	Eligible persons not on the electoral roll for any area or transferring from an area, can, subject to producing a NSW driver licence or NSW photo card as identification, enrol at the time of casting their vote.
Elector Enquiry Centre	A dedicated centre to support electors.
Formal vote	A ballot paper which has been marked in accordance with the voting directions on the ballot paper and counts towards the result of an election.
General Manager	The General Manager (GM) of the council.
General Postal Voters (GPV)	Electors who satisfy certain legislative provisions can receive their postal votes automatically without further application.
Group	Under certain circumstances, candidates for Councillor may request to form groups with other candidates on the ballot paper. This allows for candidates to appear in a single column on the ballot paper as a group. They must complete the appropriate forms at the time of nomination.
Group Voting Squares (GVS)	Candidates who have formed groups may request a Group Voting Square (GVS) on the ballot paper for ATL voting.
How-to- vote card	A leaflet that encourages an elector to vote for a particular candidate, party or group, often including a representation of a ballot paper.
Informal	A ballot paper that has not been completed according to the directions for voting on the ballot paper.
Information Officer	An election official in a polling place whose job it is to assist electors by checking elector's enrolment status; making notes of elector's inability to vote; and provide other information and assistance to electors.
Local Government Area (LGA)	A Local Government Area (LGA) is one of 128 geographical areas in NSW as at 9 September 2016. Also referred to as a council area.
Mayor	Every council has a Mayor. Some Mayors are elected from and by the elected Councillors. Some Mayors are elected by the electors in that council area – this is known as a popularly elected Mayor.
Name Already Marked As Voted (NAMAV)	An elector who attends to vote but finds their name has already been marked on the authorised roll as having voted can be issued a NAMAV vote.
Name Not On Roll (NNOR)	Electors who claim to be enrolled but are not on the authorised roll can claim a Name Not On Roll vote.



Term	Description
Multi-council polling place	Polling places located on or near the boundary between two or more council areas may issue votes for more than one council area.
Nomination	The process by which a person applies to become a candidate for election.
Nomination day	The date of the nomination day for an ordinary election is the date of the fifth Wednesday before the day of the election (in relation to an attendance election) or the last day of voting (in relation to a postal election), or such other date as the Electoral Commissioner determines in a particular case.
Non-Residential roll	The non-residential roll is collated and certified by the General Manager of the council. It includes non-residential owners and occupiers and rate paying lessees who have applied to be on the roll for the council election. This roll lapses after each election.
Optional preferential	The candidate who receives the largest number of first preference votes is elected if that number constitutes 50% + 1 of the total formal votes in the count. This is called an 'absolute majority'.
Office Assistant (OA)	Office Assistants are election officials employed to assist the Returning Officer conduct the election including postal and pre-poll votes; visiting declared institutions; packing polling place materials and general administration.
Ordinary Issuing Officer	An election official whose job is to issue votes to electors at a polling place.
Ordinary vote	A vote cast in the usual manner (ie not a declaration vote) in a polling place on election day.
Party/candidate worker	A person who assists candidates by handing out how-to-vote cards. Unlike scrutineers, a party worker has no official status.
Photo card	New South Wales Photo Identification Card issued by Roads and Maritime Services.
Poll	Council polls are run to capture voter opinion on a particular issue (eg public works etc.) The result of a council poll is not binding on the council.
Polling place	A building such as a school or community hall that has been designated as a place to which voters go on election day to cast their votes.
Polling Place Manager	The election official responsible for managing a polling place on election day.
Postal vote	Eligible electors who are unable to attend a polling place during voting hours on election day may apply to vote by post.
Postal Vote Application (PVA)	Electors wishing to postal vote complete a Postal Vote Application (PVA) form.
Postal Vote Certificate (PVC)	Electors who have successfully applied for a postal vote are sent ballot papers and a Postal Vote Certificate (PVC) envelope which they must complete and sign and send back to the Returning Office with the ballot papers enclosed.

Term	Description
Preferences	The numbers written by the elector in the square next to a candidate's name or in a Group Voting Square on the ballot paper.
Pre-poll ordinary vote	Type of vote issued to a pre-poll voter voting within their enrolled council area and no declaration envelope required.
Pre-poll voting	Eligible electors can vote before election day at the office of a Returning Officer or other pre-poll voting office.
Pre-poll voting office	A location appointed (other than, or in addition to the Returning Office) where electors may cast a pre-poll vote prior to election day.
Proportional representation	A system of voting designed to elect representatives in proportion to the amount of support each has in the electoral district.
PRCC	Proportional Representation Computer Count system used for batching, data entry and calculation of distribution of preferences which determines successful candidates in an election.
Quota	The number of votes required by a candidate to be elected to be a Councillor at a Local Government election. It is calculated by adding one to the result of the total number of formal votes divided by the number of vacancies plus one then rounding up any decimals for example: Number of formal votes $\div$ Candidates to be elected + 1) + 1.
Recount	A second count of votes in an election.
Referendum	Constitutional referendums are held to increase or decrease the number of Councillors; create or abolish wards; change the way in which the Mayor is elected (ie popularly or Councillor elected); change the method of electing Councillors in a council with wards. The result of a constitutional referendum is binding on the council.
Registered electoral material	Electoral material including how-to-vote cards registered by the Electoral Commissioner for distribution on election day.
Registered Political Party (RPPs)	A political party registered in NSW and included on the Register of Parties which is maintained by the Electoral Commission.
Residential roll	Includes all electors enrolled on the state electoral rolls for the council area. This roll is prepared by NSW Electoral Commission.
Returning Officer	An official appointed by the Electoral Commissioner to conduct an election for one or more council areas.
ROSO	Returning Officer Support Officer (ROSO) are located in the NSW Electoral Commission head office and support the Returning Officer with information and guidance to ensure Returning Officer follows policies and procedures.
Scrutineer	A person appointed by a candidate to witness electoral procedures on behalf of the candidate.
Scrutiny	The check of declaration envelopes to ensure compliance before the vote is admitted to the count, and the process of checking ballot papers for formality.

Term	Description
Security seals	Plastic, numbered security seals that must be used to secure ballot boxes and bags of used ballot papers at polling places, pre-poll voting offices and in the RO office. A record of the number of each security seal used must be kept by ROs and election official staff.
Senior Office Assistant	They assist the Returning Officer and manage a range of key tasks during an election including staffing and venues management; secure receipt and return of election material; pre-poll and counting and results.
Silent elector	An elector whose address is omitted from the authorised roll for reasons of personal safety.
Table loading	Table loading describes the number of votes an ordinary vote issuing officer can issue in a day of operation. For example, if the table loading is 400, the number of issuing tables is determined for a venue by dividing the number of projected votes by the table loading amount; that is, a venue projected to take 1,500 votes would have four ordinary vote issuing officers.
Uncontested election	An election is uncontested if by close of nominations, the number of nominations for a position is equal to or less than the number to be elected.
Ward	Some council areas are divided into smaller areas that are called wards. Each ward elects a number of Councillors to represent that ward.
Work Health and Safety (WHS) principles	The principles of work health and safety to be followed by all staff working at elections.