

Equal Access to Democracy News

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9. Introduction

Welcome to the second edition of Equal Access to Democracy News. As part of the commitments in the New South Wales Electoral Commission's (NSWEC) Equal Access to Democracy Plan, we will endeavour to provide NSW peaks, consumer advocacy, and industry organisations with key election information in the lead up to the 2008 Local Government Elections.

We want to ensure that the information provided to peaks, consumer advocacy, and industry organisations will be useful to your clients. We encourage you to disseminate this newsletter through your established community networks and organisational newsletters. We appreciate feedback to enable us to be more effective in communicating with stakeholders.

10. Enrolment

The Local Government Elections will be held on Saturday 13 September 2008. To be eligible to vote, you must be correctly enrolled. If you've changed address you'll need to update your enrolment. Or if you've turned 18 or become an Australian citizen, you'll need to enrol to vote for the first time. Remember, voting is compulsory and all enrolment forms must be received by 6.00 pm Monday 4 August 2008.

To check your enrolment or for an enrolment form visit www.elections.nsw.gov.au or call 1300 135 736. Enrolment forms are also available from any Australia Post office.

You may also be entitled to vote for a council outside your residential area. If you are an owner, occupier or rate paying lessee of rateable land in a ward or area other than the one in which you live you can obtain an enrolment claim form from your council. If a claim for enrolment was made for a previous council election, and you wish to claim enrolment for this election, you must re-apply. Enrolment forms for the non resident electoral roll must be returned to the council for which the claim is made, by 6.00 pm Monday 4 August 2008.

Enquiries about the non residential rolls should be directed to your relevant council.

11. Braille ballot papers

Braille ballot papers will be made available for the 2008 Local Government Elections. To vote using a Braille ballot paper, you must advise us by 5.00 pm, Wednesday 13 August 2008. You should direct your request for a Braille ballot paper to Mr Simon Waterhouse on (02) 9290 5999. You cannot vote using a Braille ballot paper unless prior arrangements have been made. An advertising campaign advising of the availability of Braille ballot papers will commence on the Radio for the Print Handicapped from 21 July 2008.

You will be able to cast a vote using a Braille ballot paper as a pre-poll, postal or ordinary voter. Postal vote ballot papers will be forwarded directly to your nominated postal address. Pre-poll vote ballot papers will be made available at your nominated

pre-poll centre. Ordinary Braille ballot papers will be made available at your nominated polling place on election day.

To receive a Braille ballot paper, you must provide the following information:

- Surname, given name and date of birth
- Residential address
- Method of voting (ie pre-poll, postal, or ordinary)
- Advice of polling place attending (if applicable)
- Advice of pre-poll location attending (if applicable)
- If you are voting by post, you must make an oral declaration to the effect that you are unable to read an ordinary ballot paper, but will be able to understand a ballot paper in Braille format
- Address to send postal ballot paper (if applicable)
- Contact telephone number

12. Alternate materials

A generic local government elections information brochure and how to cast a valid vote guide is available on our website at www.elections.nsw.gov.au in PDF, RTF, Large print RTF, audio and Easy English formats.

Braille versions of the local government elections information brochure and how to cast a valid vote guide are available on request. Printed copies of all publications are also available. To request these formats please phone 02 9290 5999.

13. NSWEC advertising campaign

We are currently finalising arrangements for our advertising campaign. The advertising campaign is an important part of ensuring that you are informed about the upcoming elections. The campaign is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Maximising the number of enrolled electors who vote.
- Encouraging electors who have turned 18 years of age or will be 18 at the date of the election to enrol.
- Reminding those who have recently moved address to update their enrolment details.
- Publicising voting arrangements to all electors including people with disabilities.
- Minimising informal voting.

We will advertise in all major NSW press and radio in the lead up to the election. The campaign will start in late July 2008 and will continue until September 2008.

14. Train the trainer package

A train the trainer package for the 2008 Local Government Elections will be trialled with the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association and the New South Wales Council for Intellectual Disability.

The train the trainer package consists of a PowerPoint presentation and accompanying presentation notes. The package has been designed so that peaks, consumer advocacy, and industry organisations can present key electoral information to their clients on behalf of the NSWEC.

If you are interested in trialling a train the trainer package, please contact Mr Simon Waterhouse on (02) 9290 5986.

15. Change to regulations

The *Local Government (General) Amendment (Elections) Regulation 2008* was published in the NSW Government Gazette on 27 June 2008. Among other matters, the Regulation was amended to enable electors with a disability to apply for a pre-poll vote. Previously, electors with a disability could only vote at Local Government Elections as a postal or ordinary voter.

The change was requested by peak, consumer advocacy, and industry organisations following the 2007 State Election. The change also reflects a commitment made in our Equal Access to Democracy Plan for the 2008 Local Government Elections.

Important election dates and times

Election day	8am to 6pm, Saturday, 13 September 2008
Close of rolls	6.00 pm, Monday 4 August 2008
Braille ballot papers	Braille ballot paper applications commence: 9.00 am, Monday 21 July 2008 Braille ballot paper applications close: 5.00 pm, Wednesday 13 August 2008
Candidate nominations	From Monday 4 August 2008 to 12.00 noon Wednesday 13 August 2008
Candidate details	A full list of candidates for each council will be listed at www.elections.nsw.gov.au after noon, Wednesday 13 August 2008
Pre-poll voting	From Monday, 1 September 2008 to Friday, 12 September 2008
Visit declared institutions	From Monday 8 September 2008 to Wednesday 10 September 2008
Postal voting	Postal vote applications close: 5.00 pm, 8 September 2008 Return of postal votes must be received by: 6.00 pm, Monday, 15 September 2008



Colin Barry
Electoral Commissioner