



Local Government Election 2017
Candidate Information Pack

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Overview - MidCoast Council Local Government Area

- MidCoast Council was formed by NSW Government proclamation on Thursday 12 May 2016 through the merger of the former Great Lakes, Greater Taree and Gloucester Shire Councils.
- The MidCoast Council area is predominantly rural, with some residential, industrial and commercial land use.
- The Council area encompasses a total land area of over 10,000 square kilometres, of which a large proportion is National Park, State Forest and nature reserves, including beaches, coastline, forests, waterways and mountains.
- Much of the rural area is used for timber production and agriculture, with dairy and beef production being the main agricultural pursuits. Coal mining and oyster farming are also important industries. In more recent years there have been an increasing number of viticulture industries.
- The original inhabitants of the MidCoast Council area were the Biripi and Worimi Aboriginal people.

The area:

- covers 10,060 square kilometres
- has 190 kms of coastline
- has 3,590 kms of road and 487 bridges
- a population of 91,647 people
- employed residents 36,212
- average household size 2.28
- 7.6% of the population need help in their day-to-day lives due to disability
- 4.44% of the population (4,069) are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- the median age is 49
- unemployment 8.7%

Community Profile <http://profile.id.com.au/midcoast>

The Community Profile provides demographic analysis for the Council and its suburbs based on results from the 2011, 2006, 2001, 1996 and 1991 Censuses.

Economic Profile <http://economy.id.com.au/midcoast>

The Council's economic profile presents economic information that describes the area's role within the broader economy, explore options for economic development and promote the area's strengths.

Qualities of a successful Councillor

Being ethical, open and honest are key characteristics of successful councillors.

In addition, you'll need:

- to be keen to learn
- communication skills to talk to people in your community and consider different views
- time management and organisational skills
- problem solving skills
- teamwork skills

It's important to talk to your family and friends about whether you can realistically fit being a councillor into your life, along with any other work and personal priorities.

You'll need the time to read council business papers, attend meetings and represent the council at some events.

To get a feel for what a councillor does, you might like attend a council meeting before the election, talk to a past councillor or people in your community about local issues.

If you're elected, you'll receive support to understand your role and be successful. Both council and the NSW Government will provide an annual training and development program for you. Council will also provide an initial induction program.

Election Information

Election Calendar – a copy is attached

The New South Wales Electoral Commission (NSWEC) has been engaged to conduct the election and the method of voting is proportional representation (similar to Senate voting) whereby a candidate gains a quota of the formal votes.

Prospective candidates and groups looking to contest the 2017 Election should familiarise themselves with the process for becoming a candidate at

http://www.votensw.info/nsw_local_council_elections_2017/candidates_and_groups

How do I stand for election?

To be eligible to stand for election you must:

- be at least 18 years old and an Australian citizen;
- live or own property in the council's area;
- be on the electoral roll for the council's area;
- not be disqualified from standing for office, for example, if you have committed certain offences.

A proposal nominating you as a candidate needs to be submitted by either:

- at least two eligible people enrolled for the same area you are being nominated for, or
- a registered officer of a registered political party.

You must complete some forms and officially lodge them by noon on the day on which nominations close and pay a deposit. The NSW Electoral Commission provides further information on how to nominate correctly, and how to plan and organise your campaign including rules about publishing and distributing campaign material such as posters.

You must also lodge information about political donations you may receive to help run your electoral campaign with the NSW Electoral Commission.

Elected Member Structure

The Council is made up of eleven (11) Councillors, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor who are elected to the positions by the elected Councillors. The Mayor holds office for two years and the Deputy Mayor is elected annually.

The local government area is undivided and therefore has no wards as per the Proclamation of 12 May 2016. Councillors need to be aware they will be representing members of the public from across the MidCoast region, regardless of where they live.

Local Government Elections are held every four (4) years. However the new Council term will be for three years, with the next elections to be held in September 2020.

Council and Committees Meetings

Ordinary Meetings of Council are currently held on the fourth Wednesday of the month, commencing at 2.00pm. The meeting agenda is distributed electronically on the Friday prior to the meeting day in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice. The council has the ability to alter the meeting day and start times.

Council may establish some Advisory Committees which are responsible for reporting to Council on strategic and specialised matters. The composition of Advisory Committees usually includes Councillors, community members and agency representatives.

Fees, Facilities and Expenses

Mayor/Councillor Fees

The Local Government Remuneration Tribunal determines the annual maximum and minimum amount of fees to be paid to mayors and councillors for each category of council. The MidCoast Council's category is "Regional Rural" and the applicable fees for 2017/18 are in the range of \$8,750 - \$19,310 for all 11 councillors with an additional fee for the Mayor in the range of \$18,630 - \$42,120. The fee is paid monthly in arrears. The fee is treated as income for tax purposes.

Facilities and Expenses

The Local Government Act 1993 requires Council to adopt a policy that allows for Councillors to receive adequate and reasonable expenses and facilities to enable them to carry out their civic duties as elected representatives of their local communities.

Council will meet some expenses and provide other tools to help you carry out your role. Expenses can include training, conferences, travel and telephone. Other tools may include a device on which you can undertake council business. Councils can also provide support to help councillors who have a disability or other special needs. The Councillor Facilities & Expenses Policy outlines relevant detail.

A Councillor Handbook has been prepared by the Office of Local Government, in conjunction with Local Government NSW as a guide to becoming a councillor in NSW.

The roles of the mayor, councillors and the General Manager, their responsibilities and relationships are outlined in Section 2. This Handbook is a valuable resource.

www.olg.nsw.gov.au/news/16-39-2016-edition-councillor-handbook

Role of an elected member

- a) As a member of the governing body of Council:
- To provide a civic leadership role in guiding the development of the community strategic plan for the area and to be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Council's delivery program;
 - To direct and control the affairs of the Council in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act and other applicable legislation;
 - To participate in the optimum allocation of the Council's resources for the benefit of the area;
 - To play a key role in the creation and review of the Council's policies and objectives and criteria relating to the exercise of the Council's regulatory functions; and
 - To review the performance of the Council and its delivery of services, and the delivery program, management plans and revenue policies of the Council.
- b) As an elected person:
- To represent the interests of the residents and ratepayers;
 - To provide leadership and guidance to the community;
 - To facilitate communication between the community and council.

Role of the Mayor

- To exercise, in cases of necessity, the policy-making functions of the governing body of the Council between meetings of the Council;
- To exercise such other functions of the Council as the Council determines;
- To preside at meetings of the Council; and
- To carry out the civic and ceremonial functions of the mayoral office.

Conduct

All council officials are required to conduct themselves in accordance with standards of behaviour set out in the MidCoast Council Code of Conduct

<http://www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/Council/Policies-Library>

Council officials are expected to:

- conduct themselves in a manner that will not bring the council into disrepute
- act lawfully, honestly and exercise due care
- treat others with respect and not harass or discriminate against them, or support others who do so
- consider issues consistently, promptly and fairly
- ensure development decisions are properly made and deal fairly with all parties involved
- disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interests including, in the case of councillors, from reportable political donations
- use and secure information appropriately and not disclose confidential information
- use council resources ethically, effectively and efficiently.

Oath or Affirmation

Councillors (including mayors) are now required to take an oath or affirmation of office.

Oaths or affirmations of office must be taken by each councillor at or before the first meeting of the council after being elected.

Oath

I [name of councillor] swear that I will undertake the duties of the office of councillor in the best interests of the people of the MidCoast Council Local Government Area and MidCoast Council and that I will faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in me under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act to the best of my ability and judgment.

Affirmation

I [name of councillor] solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm that I will undertake the duties of the office of councillor in the best interests of the people of the MidCoast Council Local Government Area and MidCoast Council and that I will faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in me under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act to the best of my ability and judgment.

Disclosures

Political donations and electoral expenditure must be disclosed to the NSW Electoral Commission after each financial year.

All Councillors and designated staff must complete and lodge with the general manager, a return disclosing his or her pecuniary interests. That return contains personal information including name, address and signature, as well as information about property and shareholdings, gifts received, debts owed, other sources of income, and positions held in a trade union or business or professional organisation.

Gifts

It is acknowledged that Council officials may at times be offered gifts, hospitality or benefits during the course of their duties; however, it is important to understand that the offering of such items may give the impression that Council has been unduly influenced in its decision making process, or is providing preferential treatment to individuals or organisations, giving rise to an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest.

Council officials must avoid situations in which the appearance may be created that any person or organisation, through the provision of hospitality and other gifts or benefits of any kind, is securing or attempting to secure a favour from that Council official and Council.

Wherever possible, Council officials are encouraged not to accept gifts, hospitality or other benefits of any kind.

Council's Code of Conduct outlines the standards of conduct expected of all Council officials. This Policy aims to ensure that Council performs its public functions fairly and impartially in accordance with the Code. Guidance is also outlined in Council's Gifts and Benefits Policy

Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest occurs when the private interests of a public official come into conflict with their duty to act in the public interest. Conflicts of interest are particularly relevant where the public official has a decision-making role. The need to manage conflicts of interest is based on two propositions. One is that people in public positions must avoid situations in which private interests can affect their public duties. The other is that situations where there is the appearance of a conflict must also be avoided, if only because protestations of innocence and integrity may be impossible to judge.

Conflicts of interest are not wrong in themselves and can happen without anyone being at fault. However, it is vital that they are disclosed and managed effectively so that public officials perform their duties in a fair and unbiased way. Personal interests that can give rise to conflicts may be pecuniary, involving an actual or potential financial gain, or non-pecuniary without any financial element. In some circumstances the failure to disclose a conflict of interest in accordance with public sector policy may constitute corrupt conduct as defined in the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*.

Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework

IP&R is central to all that Council does and the process is designed to:

- Articulate the community's vision, outcomes and priorities
- Allocate resources to achieve the vision, striking a considered balance between aspirations and affordability
- Monitor and report progress

The core components are:

Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027

This document contains the communities', strategic direction, long and medium term priorities and resourcing implications with a horizon of 10+ years. Staff, Councillors and community work together to prepare this and are aiming for adoption of this key document in early 2018. Characterised by NSW Government quadruple bottom line reporting the plan references, Environmental focus, economic responsibility, social commitment and civic leadership

Delivery Program

This is a four-year program, aligned to the Community Strategic Plan which is developed by staff and adopted by Council following an exhibition period. Council will adopt a three year delivery program in June 2018.

Operational Plan

The Delivery Program is supported by an annual Operational Plan. The plan is supported by a detailed budget and a statement of revenue policy, which sets the rating structure and the fees and charges for that year

Resourcing Strategies

- Long Term Financial Plan – long term financial position
- Asset Management Strategy - approach to managing assets to deliver chosen service levels
- Workforce Plan – outlining workforce requirements to deliver organisational objectives now and in the future

Annual Report

One of the key points of accountability between a council and its community. The Local Government Act outlines what must be reported.

Strategic Planning



Organisation Structure

The Principal Officer of the Council is the Interim General Manager. The Interim General Manager is generally responsible for the efficient and effective operation of the Council's organisation and for ensuring the implementation, without undue delay, of decisions of the Council.

The Interim General Manager is responsible for:

- Assisting the Council in connection with the development and implementation of the community strategic plan and the Council's delivery program and operational plan and the preparation of its annual report and state of the environment report;
- The day-to-day management of the Council;
- The exercise of any functions that are delegated to him by the Council;
- The appointment of staff in accordance with an organisation structure and resources approved by the Council;
- The direction and dismissal of staff; and
- The implementation of Council's Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan.

The Interim General Manager also has other functions as may be conferred or imposed by or under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act.

As well as the Local Government Act, Council has powers under a number of other Acts including, but not limited to:

Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013	Noxious Weeds Act 1993
Children (Protection and Parental Responsibility) Act 1997	Privacy & Personal Information Protection Act 1998
Coastal Protection Act 1979	Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997
Community Land Development Act 1989	Public Health Act 2010
Companion Animals Act 1998	Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994
Contaminated Land Management Act 1997	Recreational Vehicles Act 1983
Conveyancing Act 1919	Roads Act 1993
Crown Lands Act 1989	Road Transport Act 2013
Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979	Rural Fires Act 1997
Fines Act 1996	State Emergency & Rescue Management Act 1989
Fire Brigades Act 1989	State Emergency Service Act 1989
Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Act 1957	Strata Schemes Development Act 2015
Food Act 2003	Strata Schemes Management Act 2015
Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009	Swimming Pools Act 1992
Heritage Act 1977	Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995
Impounding Act 1993	Valuation of Land Act 1916
Library Act 1939	Unclaimed Money Act 1995

MidCoast Council Directorates

The Interim General Manager is assisted in the exercise of these functions through the four (4) directorates. These are Engineering & Infrastructure, Planning & Natural Systems, Community Spaces & Services and Corporate & Business Systems. Each of these directorates is led by a Director and divided into a number of sections, which is led by a Manager.

Engineering & Infrastructure

- Transport Assets
- Projects & Engineering
- Operations North
- Operations South

Community Spaces & Services

- Community Engagement & Communications
- Community Services
- Community Spaces, Recreation & Trades
- Growth, Tourism and Economic Development
- Libraries

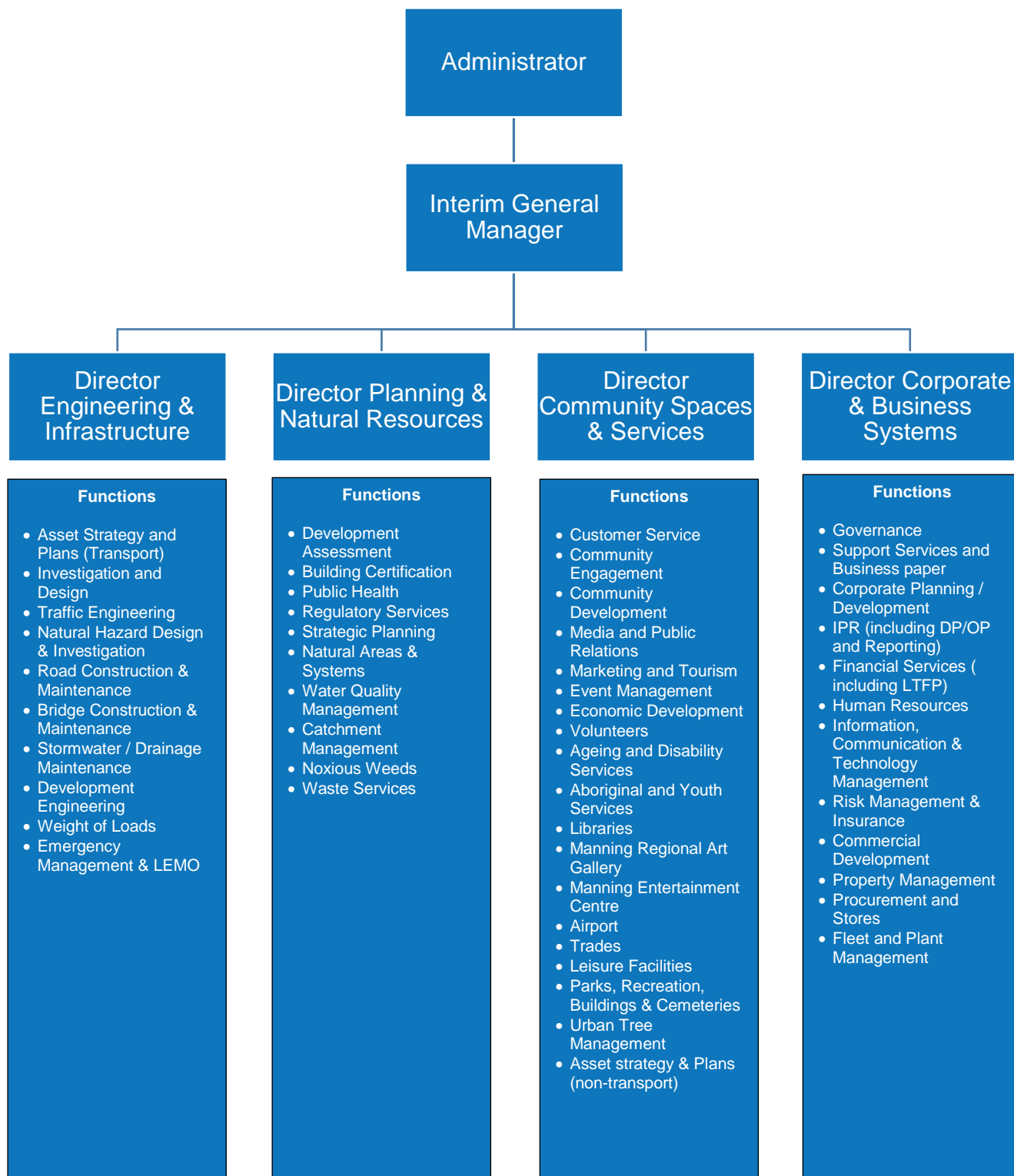
Planning & Natural Systems

- Development Assessment
- Strategic Planning
- Building Services
- Natural Systems
- Waste, Health & Regulatory Services

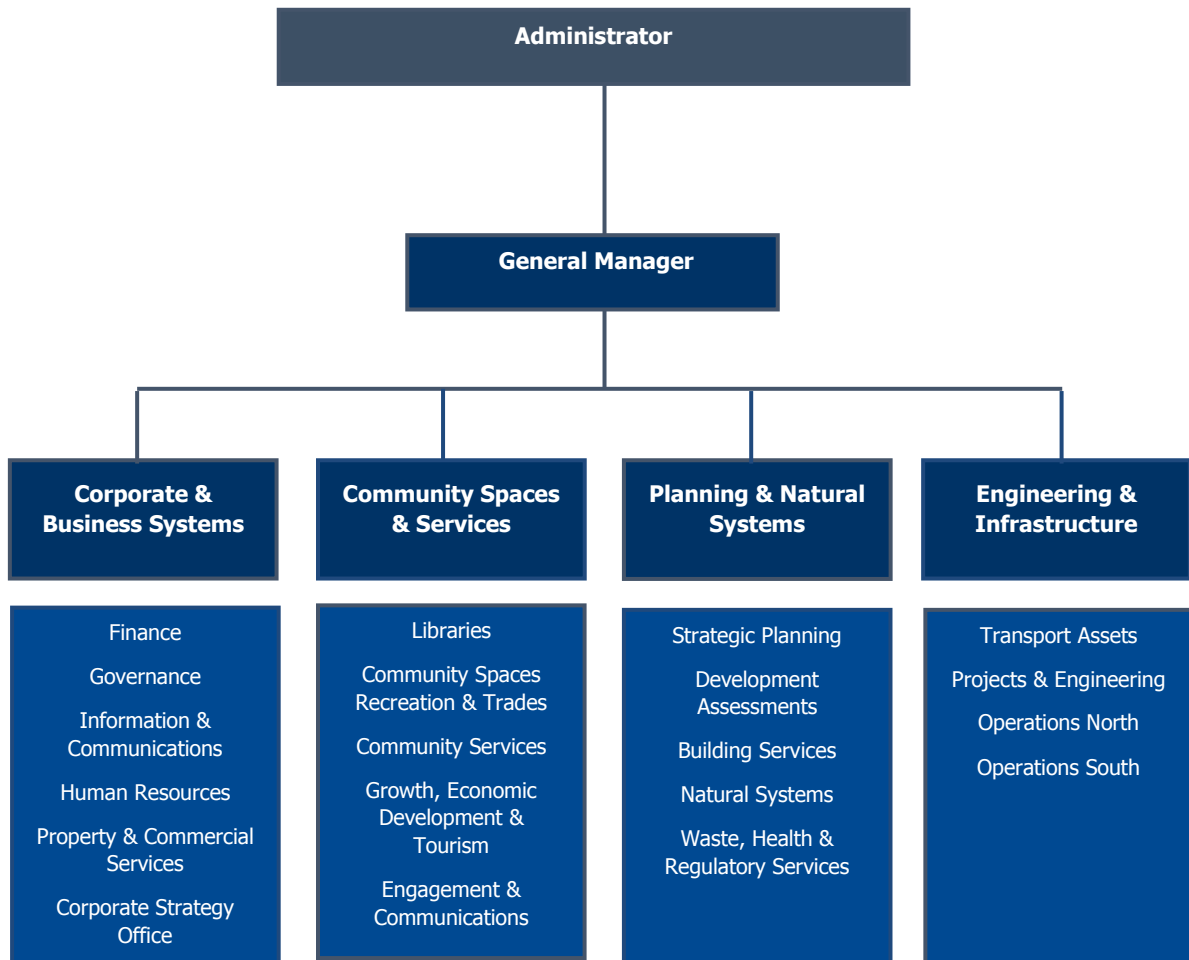
Corporate & Business Systems

- Finance
- Governance
- Information & Communications
- Human Resources
- Property & Commercial Services

The functions under each Directorate are shown below:



The management areas (Sections) under each Directorate are shown below:



Resources

MidCoast Council Website www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au

MidCoast policies <http://www.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/Council/Policies-Library>

Office of Local Government www.olg.nsw.gov.au

Local Government NSW www.lgnsw.org.au - the peak industry association that represents the interests of NSW councils.

New South Wales Electoral Commission

[http://www.votensw.info/nsw local council elections 2017](http://www.votensw.info/nsw_local_council_elections_2017)

NSW Local Government Act 1993 <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/1993/30>

Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) www.icac.nsw.gov.au

NSW Ombudsman www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) www.alga.asn.au

ELECTION CALENDAR

Local Government Elections Saturday 9 September 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SUNDAY
25 JUNE	26 JUNE	27 JUNE	28 JUNE	29 JUNE	30 JUNE	1 JULY
						Start of Local Government Expenditure Period
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
2 JULY	3 JULY	4 JULY	5 JULY	6 JULY	7 JULY	8 JULY
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
9 JULY	10 JULY	11 JULY	12 JULY	13 JULY	14 JULY	15 JULY
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
16 JULY	17 JULY	18 JULY	19 JULY	20 JULY	21 JULY	22 JULY
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
23 JULY	24 JULY	25 JULY	26 JULY	27 JULY	28 JULY	29 JULY
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30 JULY	31 JULY	1 AUGUST	2 AUGUST	3 AUGUST	4 AUGUST	5 AUGUST
	6pm – Close of rolls (for nominations and roll printing) Nominations open					
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
6 AUGUST	7 AUGUST	8 AUGUST	9 AUGUST	10 AUGUST	11 AUGUST	12 AUGUST
			12 noon – Close of nominations 12 noon – Close of registration for candidates and groups Registration of Electoral Material commences			
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
13 AUGUST	14 AUGUST	15 AUGUST	16 AUGUST	17 AUGUST	18 AUGUST	19 AUGUST
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
20 AUGUST	21 AUGUST	22 AUGUST	23 AUGUST	24 AUGUST	25 AUGUST	26 AUGUST
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27 AUGUST	28 AUGUST	29 AUGUST	30 AUGUST	31 AUGUST	1 SEPTEMBER	2 SEPTEMBER
	Pre-poll voting opens				5pm – Registration of Electoral Material closes Close of registration for third-party campaigners	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
3 SEPTEMBER	4 SEPTEMBER	5 SEPTEMBER	6 SEPTEMBER	7 SEPTEMBER	8 SEPTEMBER	9 SEPTEMBER
	5pm – Postal vote applications closes DI voting commences				6pm – Pre-poll voting closes DI voting closes	Election Day Polling places open 8am to 6pm End of Local Government Expenditure Period
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
10 SEPTEMBER	11 SEPTEMBER	12 SEPTEMBER	13 SEPTEMBER	14 SEPTEMBER	15 SEPTEMBER	16 SEPTEMBER
	6pm – Return of postal votes closes					

The official agent for each candidate and party agent for each party must lodge a disclosure with the NSWEC by 22 September 2018, and for major political donors by 20 October 2018. Financial records relating to the disclosure must be retained for three years.