



## 2017 Local Government Elections Frequently Asked Questions

### Elections for Edward River Council

#### **When will elections for new councils be held?**

Elections for the 20 new councils created in 2016, including Edward River Council, will be held on Saturday, 9 September 2017.

#### **How long will councillors for new councils be elected for?**

Successful candidates at this year's local council elections will be elected for three years. The next local council elections for all new and existing councils will be held in 2020.

#### **Who will administer these elections for new councils?**

The NSW Electoral Commission will conduct these elections for new councils. It ensures elections are conducted in an independent, fair and impartial way.

#### **Where can I get more information about local council elections?**

For more information about registration, nomination, voting and other election processes go to the NSW Electoral Commission website at [www.votensw.info](http://www.votensw.info) or [www.office.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.office.elections.nsw.gov.au).

### Leading the way – Becoming a councillor

#### **How do I know if I'm eligible to be a councillor?**

If you're entitled to vote at elections for councils in NSW, then the chances are you will be able to nominate as a candidate. However, before nominating, you must check that you are on the electoral roll for the council area you are nominating for and make sure you are not disqualified from standing for office.

You can check this by visiting [www.votensw.info](http://www.votensw.info) or [www.office.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.office.elections.nsw.gov.au). Some of the reasons that may disqualify you from standing for office include if you are currently serving a prison sentence, have been convicted of certain election-related criminal offences, or are prohibited from managing companies.

#### **How do I nominate as a candidate?**

Nomination forms and candidate information kits are available at [www.votensw.info](http://www.votensw.info) or [www.office.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.office.elections.nsw.gov.au).

Nomination forms must be formally lodged with the Returning Officer, who is an official appointed by the NSW Electoral Commissioner to conduct elections for one or more council areas.

### **What is the deadline for nominating as a candidate?**

Nominations for candidates for councils open on Monday 31 July and close at 12noon on Wednesday 9 August 2017.

### **Do you need special qualifications to become a councillor?**

Although you must meet certain eligibility requirements to nominate as a candidate, there are no special qualifications other than a desire to serve your community and contribute to local decision making in a supportive, positive and inclusive way.

### **What are important qualities for councillors to have?**

Energy and a 'can do' desire to make a difference are important qualities for councillors. You will be inclusive, approachable and willing to work across communities and make decisions that benefit and provide opportunity for the whole local government area.

Councils may be local in focus, but they're strategic in outlook. As a councillor, you'll also be willing to balance good local outcomes with sound decision making to bring about long-lasting community benefits for current and future generations.

Important qualities of a successful councillor are:

- **Team player** who enjoys working with others to make a difference.
- **Problem solver** who is willing to make courageous decisions in the interests of the community.
- **Organised** and able to keep track of different meetings, events, information and timelines.
- **Good listener** who is interested in understanding the views of all community members.
- **Ethical**, open and accountable.
- **Respectful** of community members, council staff and other councillors.

### **What are the benefits of being a councillor?**

Local councils are at the heart of many cities, regions and towns. They help shape places and provide the direction and planning that communities need to succeed and grow.

Being a councillor is rewarding and gives everyday people the opportunity to guide and influence the long term vision and direction of the local community. The benefits include:

- Making decisions that benefit and provide opportunity for people in your community;
- Supporting the long-term vision and direction for your community; and
- Learning new skills and being supported by personalised professional development and leadership programs.

### **What challenges might a councillor face?**

While the benefits of being a councillor are many, it is also a role that requires time, commitment and energy. Some of the challenges councillors may face include:

- Continuing the journey started by councils, and making courageous decisions that may be unpopular with some people but bring benefits to the whole community;

- Balancing good local governance with strategic decision making to bring about lasting benefits for the whole community and not just the area you live in or represent; and
- Working respectfully and constructively as a team with people who may have differing views, experiences and motivations to you.

### **Where can I find more information about the 2017 elections for new local councils and becoming a councillor?**

You can find information about becoming a councillor by visiting Edward River Council's website at [www.edwardriver.nsw.gov.au/election](http://www.edwardriver.nsw.gov.au/election) or by contacting any of the organisations listed below:

#### **Office of Local Government**

General enquiries about being a councillor  
Phone: 02 4428 4100  
Email: [olg@olg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:olg@olg.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.olg.nsw.gov.au](http://www.olg.nsw.gov.au)

#### **Local Government NSW**

Peak body for local councils  
Phone: 02 9242 4000  
Email: [lgsw@lgsw.org.au](mailto:lgsw@lgsw.org.au)  
[www.lgsw.org.au](http://www.lgsw.org.au)

#### **NSW Electoral Commission**

General enquiries about nominating and voting at local council elections  
Phone: 02 9290 5999 / 1300 135 736  
Email: [enquiries@elections.nsw.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@elections.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.office.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.office.elections.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.votensw.info](http://www.votensw.info)

## Voting at local council elections

### **Is it compulsory to vote at local council elections?**

Yes, it is compulsory for Australian citizens aged 18 years and over to be on the electoral roll for the address at which they live and to vote at local council elections.

To exercise the right to have your say, you need to be registered to vote and ensure that you vote on Saturday 9 September 2017 for your preferred local council candidate.

To find out if you're on the NSW electoral roll, and where you can go to vote, visit the NSW Election Commission website at [www.votensw.info](http://www.votensw.info) or [www.office.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.office.elections.nsw.gov.au).

### **Why is it important that I vote?**

As a resident or property owner in the Edward River region, you are entitled to vote and have your say about the future of the Edward River community.

Edward River Council helps connect people to flexible local services, provides everyday infrastructure like parks, roads, bridges and playgrounds, and uncovers the issues that communities really care about. council elections also give you the opportunity to show how much you care about the area you live in and who you should think should lead it!

### **Where can I vote?**

Council elections for our council will be held on Saturday 9 September 2017. Polling places will be open from 8am to 6pm. For a list of all polling places in the Edward River Council area, visit Council's website at [www.edwardriver.nsw.gov.au/election](http://www.edwardriver.nsw.gov.au/election) or [www.votensw.info](http://www.votensw.info) or [www.office.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.office.elections.nsw.gov.au).

### **What if I can't get to a polling place on Saturday 9 September 2017?**

People that are unable to reach or vote at a polling place in their local council area or ward on 9 September 2017 may be eligible to vote by other ways, such as postal or pre-poll voting.

For more election information—and to access relevant postal and pre-polling application forms, key dates and lodgement portals—visit [www.votensw.info](http://www.votensw.info) or [www.office.elections.nsw.gov.au](http://www.office.elections.nsw.gov.au), or call the NSW Electoral Commission on 1300 135 736.