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2016 NSW

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ENROLMENT

1. When do the Rolls for the Council Elections close?

The Rolls close at 6.00pm, Monday, 1 August, 2016. Completed “residential” enrolment forms for this election had to be with the Australian Electoral Commission by that deadline. “Non-residential” Rolls close with the Council General Manager at the same time.

2. Am I on the electoral roll and / or for what address?

Electors may visit the Australian Electoral Commission website www.aec.gov.au to check their enrolment situation.

3. You may have a person calling to check either their own enrolment and / or that of another person.

In all instances you must apply the following protocol. A voter may check their enrolment on line by going to www.aec.gov.au and go to ‘check my enrolment’ and follow the prompts or they may call 13 23 26 to ask for help. They will be required to provide the following information:

- the address you think you are enrolled for
- your complete name
- date of birth
- current address.

4. Who maintains the Rolls?

The electoral rolls are maintained by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). For elections like the NSW Local Government Elections, the NSW Electoral Commission obtains the roll information from the AEC and makes it available to Councils.

5. Where can I enrol?

Enrolment forms are available from Australian Election Company, 1800 224 420, Post Office and of course the Australian Electoral Commission offices which are located at various centres and can be contacted on Tel 132326. Just a reminder that the rolls for these elections close Monday, 6.00pm, 1 August 2016.

6. How do I change my enrolment details?

To change your details, you need to fill in an enrolment form with your new details. However, the rolls for the NSW Local Government Elections close at 6.00pm, 1 August 2016.

Enrolment forms are available from:

- any Post Office (pre-paid envelopes are provided)
- Australian Electoral Commission offices
- And they will be available in our Polling Places on Election Day.

Enrolment forms can be faxed or e-mailed to the Australian Electoral Commission.

I cannot take your enrolment details, or change them, over the phone. You need to fill in the enrolment form and post, fax, email or hand deliver it to the Australian Electoral Commission.

7. Can I fax/email you my enrolment form?

Yes. Enrolment forms can be faxed/mailed to the Australian Electoral Commission. To obtain the fax number or address for mailing purposes, contact the Australian Electoral Commission on 132326. You can also download an enrolment form from the AEC website.

8. Not on roll at all

I am unable to locate you on the Roll. The Roll for these Elections will close on 1 August 2016.

If you believe that your name should be on the Roll as you had completed an enrolment form and delivered it to the Australian Electoral Commission by 6.00pm, 1 August 2016, you may be entitled to cast a provisional vote at your local Polling Place for the address for which you believe you should be enrolled. I am unable to assist you further with this enquiry.

You might want to further discuss your enrolment circumstances with the Australian Electoral Commission Tel 132326.

9. I will become a citizen after the close of rolls but before Polling Day will I be entitled to enrol and vote?

Under a special provision, you could enrol and cast a provisional vote provided you are able to provide the required personal identification, etc. The rolls closed at 6.00pm, 1 August 2016 .

10. I have recently changed my address from where I was previously enrolled. Where do I vote? What should I do?

- The rolls for these elections closed on 1 August 2016.
- Did you advise your change of address to the Australian Electoral Commission on an enrolment form?
- What address do you reside at in your Local Government Area?
- Check the roll.
- If enrolled in the Local Government Area advise the enquirer the Ward or Council Name and the location of the Polling Place closest to their residence.
- If not enrolled in the Local Government area, advise the enquirer to contact the Australian Electoral Commission to further check their enrolment details.

11. My mother / father / aunt / uncle is elderly, they do not want to vote? Can we take them off the roll?

You will need to talk to the people at the Australian Electoral Commission telephone No 13 23 26.

You should also advise that voting is compulsory and that there is no age limit for voting. However also advise that a sympathetic view can be taken in terms of an elderly or infirm person not voting. You could note their personal particulars details if they are unlikely to vote in the elections. (For the non-voting file). Use AEF341.

VOTING

12. When is the Election?

The Election is on Saturday, 10 September 2016.

13. Where can you vote in the September Elections?

Provided you are enrolled for your current home address, the easiest way to vote is to cast your vote at your local Polling Place. Essentially you need to vote at a Polling Place in your enrolled Ward or Local Government Area. There is only limited "Other Ward" voting in Polling Places in this election. Usually such Polling Places are those located proximal to Ward boundaries. The list of Polling Places will be published in local newspapers in the week leading up to Election Day. I can give you information about your local Polling Place. **Refer to List of Polling Places.**

VOTING FOR THE ILL OR INFIRM

14. My mother / father is not well and will not be able to go to a Polling Place. How can you assist us?

If your mother / father is able to sign or make a mark they can vote by postal declaration vote. If they are not registered with the Australian Electoral Commission as Registered General Postal Voters, we need to receive a signed application from them to enable ballot material to be sent through the mail. Applications may be made until 5.00pm 5 September 2016.

15. Can I also have a postal vote because I am unable to leave my parent(s) for any period of time?

Carers are able to apply for a Postal Declaration Vote.

16. Will you come to my home so that Mum and I can vote. I care for my aged / invalid Mum?

No, this is not possible for these elections, but you and your Mother could each apply for a Postal Declaration Vote.

17. In Hospital

Certain institutions including Nursing Homes, etc. will be appointed as Declared Institutions. A schedule of Declared Institutions will be available from the Returning Officer or Local Council Office. These will commence in your Council from Monday, 5 September 2016. If the Hospital is included, the polling will be available at the scheduled day / time. If the Hospital is a Polling Place, there likely will be mobile polling to patients who are unable to attend the static polling facility.

Apart from a Declared Institution, you have other voting options. They are:

- i. You can vote prior to the day at various Pre Poll Offices or the Returning Officer's office during Council business hours. These locations will be advertised and also on the local Council website and the Australian Election Company website www.austelect.com.
- ii. Obtain a postal vote application from the local Council or local Returning Officer or Australian Election Company.
- iii. Postal Vote applications can be downloaded from the Australian Election Company website www.austelect.com.

18. My mother / father is in a nursing home. Will they be able to vote?

Where is the Nursing Home? Certain Nursing Homes in each Local Government Area may be designated as "Declared Institutions" and polling teams visit the residents to facilitate the taking of their votes. Candidate's Scrutineers are entitled to be present during Declared Institution polling activities. If they are enrolled for another Local Government Area, they will need to vote in respect of that council area. We can send a postal application that will need to be submitted to the relevant Council Returning Officer.

19. Can I vote on behalf of another person?

There is no provision for proxy voting in Local Government elections. However, if an elector requires assistance, they are able to choose the person who assists them, whether they vote at a Polling Place or are having a postal vote. Again, if the person cannot sign, they must make a mark and it must be appropriately witnessed.

20. I have Power-of-Authority for a person. Can I vote on their behalf?

No.

There is no provision for proxy voting in the NSW Local Government elections.

21. My relative is elderly and / or physically incapacitated. How can she / he vote?

By having a postal declaration vote. Alternatively if they can be driven to a Polling Place and request the ballot papers be brought out to the car by Polling Staff. To arrange this, see the Polling Place Manager of the Polling Place.

22. My relative is elderly and / or physically incapacitated. How can she / he vote?

If an elector cannot read or write or has a disability and is unable to vote without assistance, they may choose a person to help complete their ballot paper whether they are voting at a Polling Place or having a postal vote.

They may also request the ballot papers be brought out to the car by Polling Staff. To arrange this, see the Polling Place Manager of the Polling Place.

If they cannot attend a Polling Place they can vote by post.

23. My mother / father / aunt / uncle is elderly, they do not want to vote? Can we take them off the roll?

You will need to talk to the people at the Australian Electoral Commission telephone 13 23 26.

You should also advise that voting is compulsory and that there is no age limit for voting. However also advise that a sympathetic view can be taken in terms of an elderly or infirm person not voting. You could note their personal particulars details if they are unlikely to vote in the elections. Use AEF341 (For the non-voting file).

POSTAL & PRE POLL VOTING

24. Electors entitled to a pre poll or postal vote.

You are entitled to apply for a pre poll or postal declaration vote if, during the hours of polling (8.00am to 6.00pm) on Polling Day you are an elector who:

- Will not be within the Ward or Area for which the Election is held.
- will not be within 8 kilometres, by the nearest practicable route, from a Polling Place
- will be working or travelling under conditions that prevent voting at a Polling Place;
- because of illness, disability or advanced pregnancy or caring for an ill, disabled or pregnant person, will be prevented from voting at a Polling Place
- because of religious beliefs will be prevented from voting at a Polling Place for all or most of the voting hours on Polling Day
- is in prison or will be under detention on Polling Day (POSTAL VOTING)
- will throughout the hours of Polling Day be prevented from attending a polling booth because of work commitments
- is a silent elector
- because of your belief that attending a polling place on election day will place the safety of you or your family at risk, will be prevented from attending at a polling place to vote.

25. I am going overseas, when can I vote?

When are you going on your trip? Depending upon your timing you may vote **at a Pre Poll Office or at the office of your local Returning Officer.**

You may also apply for a postal declaration vote. These can be submitted to reach the Returning Officer from Monday, 1 August 2016 until 5.00pm, Monday, 5 September 2016. Postal vote material should be available from 17 August 2016. If you have an address overseas we can send the ballot material to the overseas address. However your returned postal vote needs to be received by the relevant Returning Officer by 6.00pm, Monday, 12 September 2016 ,

26. I am going interstate, when and how can you help me with voting arrangements?

When are you going interstate? You may vote by post or at a Pre Poll Office or the office of the local Returning Officer. Pre Poll voting is available from Monday, 29 August 2016 until 6.00pm Friday, 9 September 2016. Days / Hours of operation will be advertised in local papers.

You can also vote by postal declaration vote. If you have an address interstate we can forward the ballot material to that address or any address you nominate.

27. I will be outside my Local Government area for the weekend the voting is on. What should I do about the voting?

You can only vote within your Local Government area (either your own Ward or own whole of Shire area, if there are no Wards) on Election Day as an ordinary voter. You can however cast a Pre Poll vote at locations / times advertised from Monday, 29 August 2016 until 6.00pm, 9 September 2016. Alternatively, you can apply for a postal declaration vote and the ballot material will be sent to your nominated address. You have until Monday, 5 September 2016 at 5.00pm to lodge your postal vote application with the Returning Officer and your postal declaration vote must be made before 6.00pm on Election Day and be received by the Returning Officer by 6.00pm, Monday, 12 September 2016.

28. How do I go about applying for a postal vote?

If you want to lodge a postal vote, you can obtain a postal declaration vote application form from your local Council, Returning Officer or you could download from www.austelect.com or I can post or fax you one.

The ballot papers will be posted to you after we have received your completed application. The ballot papers won't be available before approx 17 August 2016.

You must complete your postal vote prior to the close of the poll. It must be received by the Returning Officer, 6.00pm, Monday, 12 September 2016.

NB: Ensure there is enough time for processing the application and dispatching the ballot papers to the elector. The deadline for submission of postal vote applications is 5.00pm, Monday, 5 September 2016.

30. If I cannot get to a Polling Place on Election Day how can I vote?

If you cannot get to a Polling Place on Polling Day you can vote in one of the following ways:

- i. You can vote prior to the day at the Pre Poll Office of the local Returning Officer or at another Pre Poll Office. These will be listed on the local Council website or www.austelect.com and advertised in the local press.
 - ii. Obtain a postal vote application form from your local Returning Officer or Council office or download one from www.austelect.com
 - iii. If you are going to be in hospital, if the Hospital is a static Polling Place (or a Declared Institution) a mobile polling team could be visiting on or before Polling Day.
- i. **PRE POLL VOTING** - Is undertaken at the office of the Returning Officer or at a nominated Pre Poll Office. The Pre Poll Officer will check your enrolment on the relevant voter's roll (Certified List), and if all is in order will issue the ballot paper(s). The votes are completed immediately and placed in the ballot boxes provided.
 - ii. **POSTAL VOTING** – It will be necessary to complete an application for a postal vote. The application is returned to our office for processing. If all is in order ballot material is forwarded to the elector's nominated address by post.
 - iii. **DECLARED INSTITUTION** – Times, dates and locations will be available from your Returning Officer or by phoning Australian Election Company on 1800 224 420.

31. When is the latest date that I can mail my postal vote application form?

The latest date that a Returning Officer can accept an application for a postal vote is 5.00pm, Monday, 5 September 2016.

When the application form is received, if all is in order, the ballot paper(s) will be sent to you. You must complete the ballot paper(s) before 6.00pm Polling Day and return them to the Returning Officer as soon as possible. However, they must be received by 6.00pm, Monday, 12 September 2016.

32. I applied for a postal vote because I am going away. It has not arrived and I'm leaving tonight. What shall I do?

Depending upon how close it is to Polling Day, a couple of options could be available.

If you are able to come to the office of the Returning Officer you can vote "on the spot" there by casting a Pre Poll vote or you could attend another Pre-Poll Office in your Ward, if there is one.

Alternatively, we could receive a request from you to be issued with a replacement set of postal ballot materials to be sent to an address nominated by you. However, the original ballot material subsequently would need to be returned to the Returning Officer unmarked. It is an offence to vote more than once in an election.

33. I received my ballot papers, but there is no reply paid envelope to return the ballot papers in? What do I do?

If time permits you could send a replacement or the elector can be advised to use any envelope and write the reply paid address on the envelope. Please contact the office of the Returning Officer for the address.

34. I've realised I returned my postal vote ballot papers without the declaration envelope - can I have another set?

No, unfortunately another set of ballot papers is unable to be provided.

35. My husband and I both voted by postal declaration voting, but we signed each other's envelope by accident. Will this matter?

Make a note of the elector's names for ultimate inclusion in the Returning Officer's Election Journal.

If you have witnessed each other's signature then your vote can be admitted as your signature's will appear on the declaration envelope.

If someone else witnessed your signatures, the vote could not be admitted.

36. I sent my ballot papers in an ordinary envelope, not the declaration envelope, will they still be counted?

No, they will not be counted.

37. The ballot material sent to me for my postal declaration vote did not contain any ballot papers. Please send a set.

The procedures used to issue postal ballot papers are very stringent and ballot papers should have been sent. However you can seek a replacement set of ballot papers by completing a special declaration. Once the declaration is received, a fresh set of ballot papers can be sent. Record the person's name and address and phone number on the Data Enquiry Log.

38. I have made a mistake on my ballot paper. What do I do?

POSTAL VOTING:

If you are postal voting and you have made a mistake, you can request replacement ballot papers only if you cannot make a correction on the ballot paper so that your voting intention is clear.

The request to replace ballot papers will need to be made on a special declaration and will require the return of the spoilt ballot paper before a replacement ballot paper can be forwarded. Record the person's name, address and phone number on the Data Enquiry Log.

POLLING PLACE OR PRE POLL OFFICE

If you have made a mistake on your ballot paper at a Polling Place or Pre Poll Office, you may return your ballot paper to the person who issued it to you and get a replacement ballot paper. Your original "spoilt" ballot paper will be placed in the envelope containing your declaration.

39. Can I use sticky tape, staples or my own glue to seal the declaration postal envelope?

You can secure the envelope any way you like. Sticky tape is the preferred method of fastening the envelope seal. It is better **NOT** to use staples. Australia Post note that staples may cause injury to those handling mail.

40. I asked for my ballot papers a week ago and have still not received them? Can you send me more ballot papers?

A check will be made in the Returning Officer's records to check if the Postal Vote papers have been issued.

If the system shows that ballot papers have been issued (note the address issued to):

- i. **a week ago** - your ballot papers have been issued and you should receive them in the next few days. If you still have not received your ballot papers in a few days, please call us again or call 1800 224 420.
- ii. **more than a week ago** - your ballot papers were issued. You will need to complete a special declaration before a fresh set can be issued. As soon as the declaration is received, the fresh ballot papers will be sent. If the original ballot papers surface, do not vote on them but return them unmarked to the Returning Officer.

41. I applied for a postal vote a week / two weeks ago. How do I know you have received my application and are processing it?

Have the postal voting officer check records of postal votes issued.

IF THE VOTE HAS BEEN ISSUED:

Your postal vote has been issued and you should receive it soon. If you don't get the postal vote you will have to complete a special declaration seeking a fresh issue of ballot papers. The fresh set of ballot papers can then be forwarded to you. However If you end up with two sets of postal vote materials you must only complete and post one set.

IF THE VOTE HAS NOT BEEN ISSUED:

We do not appear to have received your postal vote application. You need to complete another application (as long as there is time) for ballot papers to be posted to you.

42. Where can I vote in the September 2016 Elections?

Provided you are enrolled for your current home address, the easiest way to vote is to cast your vote at a Polling Place within your Local Government area. Essentially you need to vote at a Polling Place in your enrolled Ward or Local Government Area. There is only limited "Other Ward" voting in Polling Places in this election. Usually such Polling Places are those located proximal to Ward boundaries.

Polling Places will be listed in local newspapers and on the internet in the week leading up to Election Day. **Refer to the list of Polling Places.** The nearest place to you is:

OVERSEAS – RESIDING TEMPORARILY OR VISITING

43. I am going overseas, when can I vote?

When are you going on your trip? You may vote **at a Pre Poll Office or the Pre Poll Office of the local Returning Officer** from the 29 August 2016 or you can apply for a postal vote.

Postal voting ballot papers should be available from approx. 17 August 2016. If you have an address overseas we can send the ballot material to the overseas address. However your postal vote needs to be recorded before the close of the poll 6.00pm, 10 September 2016 and must be received by the Returning Officer by 6.00pm, Monday, 12 September 2016.

44. Do I have to vote if I am overseas?

No, but we encourage all enrolled electors to vote (if possible) before going or while overseas. You must have a postal declaration vote if you are already overseas. There are no facilities for voting outside the Council Area. Depending upon timing and circumstances, you could vote by post or pre poll before you depart for overseas.

45. Can I fax / e-mail the postal vote application form to the Returning Officer's Office?

You can fax and email your application form back to us.

You do not have to mail the original.

If you are overseas and there is not enough time to arrange a postal vote, we can note your particulars for non-voting purposes.

46. I am overseas / going overseas will I be fined for not voting?

Generally no, but we encourage you to make the effort to exercise your franchise. If you are already overseas the only way you could vote in these elections is by Postal declaration vote. You could fax or email a completed application, but the ballot papers need to be posted to you. If you are overseas we can note your particulars for non-voting purposes.

47. I am or will be away Overseas:

If you will be overseas on Election Day you can vote in one of the following ways:

- **before you leave** – vote in person at a Pre Poll Office
- **apply for a postal vote** – applications are available from your local Council or Returning Officer. They can be faxed or posted to you or can be downloaded from the web at www.austelect.com

48. My son / daughter applied for a postal vote before going overseas. He / she left before it arrived. Can I fill it out for him / her?

No – there is no proxy voting provision. Only the elector can complete their own vote.

You can however forward the postal vote papers to your son or daughter overseas. If you choose not to do this, you should return the ballot papers unmarked to the Returning Officer with a note indicating that the elector has gone overseas.

As it is not compulsory for Australians overseas to vote, your son / daughter will not be fined for not voting.

49. I am overseas will you let me know when and where I can vote?

In these elections there is no provision for voting in person at overseas locations. You can download a Postal Vote Application from www.austelect.com. We could also fax or email you a postal declaration application which you could complete and return by fax or email to us. We would then issue the ballot material immediately to you. For your vote to have effect you must cast it before 6.00pm on Election Day and it must be in the hands of the Returning Officer by 6.00pm, Monday, 12 September 2016.

CANDIDATES & NOMINATIONS

50. Who can be a Candidate?

Any person who is “qualified” to become a Councillor or Mayor of Local Government may nominate for election. To be “qualified”, a person must be an Australian citizen who lives and is enrolled in the Local Government Area and is not subject to any of the general or other disqualifications listed in the Local Government Act. Some of those disqualifications include: the person is an undischarged bankrupt under the Bankruptcy Act, the person is in prison. Any persons intending to be a Candidate should consult the Local Government Act 2003 and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 and the NSW Electoral Commission website particularly in regard to mandatory Election Funding requirements etc.

51. When do the Nominations close?

The Nominations open on Monday, 1 August 2016 and close Wednesday, 10 August 2016 at 12 noon sharp.

Candidate Nominations

Candidates’ nominations must be lodged i.e. by 12 noon, 10 August 2016 and be accepted by the deadline. The Candidate deposit for an individual is \$125 (paid in cash or by bank cheque drawn on a deposit taking financial institution. Personal cheques or EFTPOS are not accepted). Nominations must be received before the 12 noon deadline. Unless they are nominated by the Registered Officer (or Deputy Registered Officer) of a Registered Political Party, candidates need to have two nominators. For a Mayoral candidate, the nominators need to be on the Roll for the Local Government Area. Councillor nominators / proposers where of the Council is divided, need to be enrolled for the Ward contested by the Candidate. Each candidate needs to sign a formal consent to act if elected.

52. How are the positions on the ballot paper determined?

For each election, the group or candidate’s names are written on a piece of paper, the pieces are placed in separate envelopes or containers of the same style and size, the envelopes are placed in an empty ballot box. If there are groups, the draw for the groups will take place, first, followed by ungrouped candidates. If there is a separate ballot for mayor then the draw for Mayor will take place first.

The first envelope is withdrawn from the ballot box, the envelope is opened, and the piece of paper enclosed in the envelope removed. This is the first drawn candidate or group and goes in the first available position either down for an individual candidate or across for a group. The next envelope is withdrawn, the piece of paper removed and the name on this piece becomes the second listed candidate or group. The process continues until all envelopes have been dealt with. The draw may be observed by candidates, or the public. The draw is planned to be conducted say at 3.00pm, Wednesday, 10 August 2016.

ELECTION / VOTING – GENERAL

53. Some Councils are undivided ie they have no Wards. Others have up to 5 Wards.

Kempsey Council is undivided.

Fairfield, Lake Macquarie, Penrith, all have Wards.

54. When is the Election?

The election is on **Saturday, 10 September 2016. Polling Hours are 8.00am to 6.00pm.**

55. Where can you vote in the Elections?

Provided you are enrolled for your current home address, the easiest way to vote is to cast your vote at your local Polling Place. Essentially you need to vote at a Polling Place in your enrolled Council or Ward. There is only limited "Other Ward" voting in Polling Places in this election. Usually such Polling Places are those located proximal to Ward boundaries.

These will be advertised and there will be one in each Local Government area.

56. Can I vote on behalf of another person?

There is no provision for proxy voting in the elections.

However, if an elector requires assistance, they are able to choose the person who assists them, whether they vote at a Polling Place or are having a postal vote. Again, if the person cannot sign, they must make a mark and it must be appropriately witnessed.

57. If I cannot get to a Polling Place on Election Day how can I vote?

If you cannot get to a Polling Place on Polling Day you can vote in one of the following ways:

- i. You can vote prior to the day at a Pre Poll Voting Office. These will be advertised.
- ii. Obtain a postal vote application form from your Local Council or Returning Officer or by downloading a form from www.austelect.com
- iii. If you are going to be in Hospital (or a Declared Institution), that is a static Polling Place, a mobile polling team could be visiting on or before Polling Day.

DECLARED INSTITUTIONS

Details of these will be advised and available closer to the election.

58. I have Power-of-Attorney for a person. Can I vote on their behalf?

No.

There is no provision for proxy voting in these elections. However, if an elector requires assistance, they are able to choose the person who assists them, whether they vote at a Polling Place or are having a postal vote.

59. If I cannot get to a Polling Place on Election Day how can I vote?

If you cannot get to a Polling Place on Polling Day you can vote in one of the following ways:

- i. You can vote prior to the day at a Pre Poll Voting Office
- ii. Obtain a postal vote application form from your Council or Local Government Returning Officer or by downloading one from www.austelect.com
- iii. If you are going to be in Hospital, that is a static Polling Place or will be a Declared Institution in the Council Area, a mobile polling team could be visiting on or before Polling Day.

60. Are 'how- to- vote' cards allowed to be taken into the Polling Place?

Yes, you may take 'how-to-vote' cards into polling places to assist you in marking your ballot paper. However, you do not have to take any how-to-vote material offered to you if you do not need or want it. You mark your vote according to your own conscience and free choice. You certainly are not compelled to follow how-to-vote cards.. However please take your how to vote card from the voting screen and place it in the rubbish bin provided.

61. Do I need to take any identification to the Polling Place?

Not generally, but if you have your acknowledgement of enrolment card you may wish to take that with you, which should assist your ease of identification on the voters roll. If you are not on the voter's roll and you seek to enroll and vote in your Local Area (Ward), you may be able to do so by presenting approved, required, proof of personal ID, by completing an enrolment claim form and by completing / signing a special declaration. Proof of personal identity is a Driver's Licence or a photo card eg. a Passport AND the proof of identity shows that the person's residence is the same as the place specified in the claim for enrolment as the person's residence.

62. I applied for a postal vote because I am going away. It has not arrived and I'm leaving tonight. What shall I do?

Depending upon how close it is to Polling Day, a couple of options could be available.

If you are able to go to a Pre Poll Voting Office, you can vote "on the spot" thereby casting a Pre Poll Vote.

Otherwise we could receive a request from you to be issued with a replacement set of postal ballot materials to be sent to an address nominated by you. However, the original ballot material subsequently would need to be returned to the Returning Officer unmarked. It is an offence to vote more than once in an election.

63. I have recently changed my address from where I was previously enrolled. Where do I vote? What should I do?

The rolls for these elections closed at 6.00pm, 1 August 2016.

Did you advise your change of address to the Australian Electoral Commission on an enrolment form? What address do you reside at in your Local Government area? Check the roll. If enrolled in the Local Government area, advise the enquirer to vote in respect of that address and Ward or Local Government area.

64. I received my ballot papers but there is no reply paid envelope to return the ballot papers in. What do I do?

If time permits you could send a replacement or the elector can be advised to use any envelope and write the reply paid address on the envelope. Please contact the office of the local Returning Officer for the address.

65. I've realised I returned my postal vote ballot papers outside the declaration envelope - can I have another set?

No, unfortunately another set of ballot papers cannot be provided.

66. My husband and I both voted by postal declaration voting, but we signed each other's envelope by accident. Will this matter?

Make a note of the elector's names for ultimate inclusion in the Returning Officer's Election Journal.

If you have witnessed each other's signature then your vote can be admitted as your signature's will appear on the declaration envelope.

If someone else witnessed your signatures, the vote could not be admitted.

67. I sent my ballot papers in an ordinary envelope, not the declaration envelope, will they still be counted?

No, they will not be counted.

68. The ballot material sent to me for my postal declaration vote did not contain any ballot papers. Please send a set.

The procedures used to issue postal ballot papers are very stringent and ballot papers should have been sent. However you can seek a replacement set of ballot papers by completing a special declaration. Once the declaration is received, a fresh set of ballot papers can be sent. Record the person's name and address and phone number on the Data Enquiry Log.

69. Will ticks or crosses be counted?

You must always follow the instructions on the ballot paper.

70. Can I use sticky tape, staples or my own glue to seal the declaration postal envelope?

Yes, you can secure the envelope any way you like. Sticky tape is the preferred method of fastening the envelope seal. It is better **NOT** to use staples. Australia Post note that staples may cause injury to those handling mail.

71. I asked for my ballot papers a week ago and have still not received them. Can you send me more ballot papers?

A check will be made in the Returning Officer's records.

If the system shows that ballot papers have been issued (note the address issued to):

- i. **a week ago** - your ballot papers have been issued and you should receive them in the next few days. If you still have not received your ballot papers in a few days, please call us again or call 1800 224 420.
- ii. **more than a week ago** - your ballot papers were issued. You will need to complete a special declaration (Form 9) before a fresh set can be issued. As soon as the declaration is received, the fresh ballot papers will be sent. If the original ballot papers surface, do not vote on them but return them unmarked to the Returning Officer.

72. What colour is the ballot paper?

If there is a Mayoral and Councillor Elections, eligible voters will be issued with two ballot papers - the Mayoral ballot paper will be white in colour and the Councillor ballot paper are colour coded.

73. How do I mark my ballot paper?

Instructions on how to complete your ballot papers correctly are printed on the ballot papers themselves. These instructions must be followed.

Help is also available at the Polling Place if you require it. You may nominate anyone you like to assist you. The Polling Place Manager will be able to assist voters who require help to complete their ballot papers.

If you make a mistake on a ballot paper you may return it to the Polling Official who gave it to you and ask for a new one.

74. I do not understand English very well. What assistance is available to me?

What assistance do you require? Ascertain the enquirer's ethnicity. Depending upon the nature of the enquiry, we may be able to seek interpreting assistance.

75. I have made a mistake on my ballot paper. What do I do?

Postal voting:

If you are postal voting and you have made a mistake, you can request replacement ballot papers only if you cannot make a correction on the ballot paper so that your voting intention is clear.

The request to replace ballot papers will need to be made on a special declaration and will require the return of the spoiled ballot paper before a replacement ballot paper can be forwarded.

Polling Place or Pre Poll Office:

If you have made a mistake on your ballot paper at a Polling Place or Pre Poll Office, you may return your ballot paper to the person who issued it to you and get a replacement ballot paper. Your original "spoiled" ballot paper will be placed in the envelope containing your declaration.

76. Can I leave my ballot papers blank?

This makes your votes informal and they will not be counted.

77. Why do we use pencils in Polling Places? Can I use a pen?

Indeed you may use a pen. The choice is yours. Pencils are supplied for reasons of convenience and cost. The use of pencils does not diminish the integrity of the ballot. Scrutineers, the formal representatives of candidates, observe polling and counting processes. All staff also sign declarations relating to the secrecy and the integrity of process. There are also inbuilt security processes stemming from provisions in the Local Government Act. But please use a biro if you prefer.

78. How is it a secret ballot when my name is on the Postal Declaration Envelope?

Anyone who votes by post or who must cast a declaration vote (either before or on Election Day) must complete a declaration to enable their entitlement to vote to be verified by the Returning Officer before the vote is admitted to the count.

All Declaration envelopes must be opened face down so the name of the electors is not known.

The ballot papers will be mixed with many others before the votes are Scrutinized / counted.

To further safeguard system integrity, the count process is also closely observed by Scrutineers.

79. How do I know who to vote for?

To ensure integrity and impartiality in conducting the Elections, staff employed at each Polling Place or Pre Poll Office obviously cannot advise electors on voting for specific candidates.

However, doubtless there will be a range of candidate promotional material available to assist electors in making their decisions.

The names of candidates will also be advertised in local newspapers and on council websites. Candidate Statements will also be displayed in Pre Poll Offices and Polling Places.

80. Will you be producing an official election results publication?

A formal Report will be presented to Council following conclusion of election activities. It also is a statutory requirement that the Election Manager publish the Declaration of the Polls in a newspaper circulating in the Local Government Area. Each candidate also receives a copy of the formal result of Election pertaining to the election they contested. Councils also are to provide a detailed Election Report. The Results of all elections we manage will also be on our website www.austelect.com.

81. Will there be a results / tally facility?

Results will be available from your local Returning Officer, or on the Council website, and on our website www.austelect.com.

82. What happens if I don't vote?

Voting in Local Government Elections is compulsory for residential electors. If you don't vote, you render yourself liable to a penalty and you may be fined. Additional court costs may be incurred if the fine is not paid by the due date. Voting is not compulsory for "non-residential electors".

83. What is a formal and / or informal vote?

Formal: A ballot paper is considered formal if it has:

- no unauthorised writing which may identify the voter; and
- it has been completed correctly.

Voters must follow instructions on the ballot paper.

Informal: A ballot paper is deemed to be informal:

- if it has not been filled in correctly and it cannot be included in the count.
- Ballot papers that are blank, identify the voter, or have more than one first preference indicator i.e. "1, √ or x" are examples of informal ballot papers.

Voters are reminded to read and follow the Instructions on the ballot paper.

84. Are 'how-to-vote' cards allowed to be taken into Polling Places?

Yes, you may take 'how-to-vote' cards into Polling Places to assist you in marking your ballot paper. However, you do not have to take any how-to-vote material offered to you if you do not need or want it. You mark your vote according to your own conscience and free choice. You certainly are not compelled to follow how-to-vote cards. Please remember to remove any how to vote cards from the voting screen and place them in the rubbish bin provided.

85. Where is my nearest Polling Place?

Locations of Polling Places will appear in local papers in the week leading up to Election Day and at that time, also on our website www.austelect.com.

Would you like me to check the location of your nearest Polling Place?

Check the list of Polling Places by Local Government area or Ward and inform the caller of the nearest one.

86. Can I vote after Polling Day?

No. You must vote on or before Election Day.

87. Can we set up a stall outside the Polling Place?

Maybe. Usually stalls can be set up outside a Polling Place as long as they are 6 metres from the entrance to the booth and they must not obstruct voters access to the Polling Place. However you or your organisation should please put your request in writing to the Returning Officer, in order that approval may be arranged.

88. What are ballot boxes made from and how secure are they?

Cardboard Ballot Boxes predominantly will be used but also a number of metal ballot boxes may be supplied. Plastic Security Seals are used to secure the boxes. The ballot boxes are visible at all times during the poll and are under the surveillance of Polling Officials.

Scrutineers observe the sealing and opening of ballot boxes.

89. What time do the Polling Places open and close?

- **Polling Places Saturday, 10 September 2016.**
- **They open at 8.00am and close at 6.00pm.**
- **Pre Poll voting is available normal office hours at the Returning Officer's Pre Poll Office (Monday, 29 August 2016) to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.**
- **Other Pre Poll Office operating days / times will be advertised in the Local Press.**
- **Pre Poll voting closes 6.00pm on Friday, 9 September 2016.**
- **Declared Institution Voting.**

90. How are the votes counted?

On election night, the counting of votes commences at the Polling Places as soon as possible after the Polling Place has closed (6.00pm, local time). Pre Poll votes and Postal votes are also counted in the Returning Officer's Office (in the Election Centre) after 6.00pm on Election Day.

Votes in Polling Places are removed from ballot boxes, they are unfolded, sorted into candidate order and counted. When all the votes at that Polling Place have been counted, the results of the count are phoned through to the Returning Officer to be displayed in the tally facility. Election results will be available from our website www.austelect.com.

91. What is a Scrutineer and who can appoint a Scrutineer?

A Scrutineer is a person formally appointed by a candidate to observe all procedures in relation to the Election including at Polling Places on Polling Day.

Scrutineers have the right to observe the counting of the votes and can raise questions with the Electoral Official in charge in regard to the validity of any votes but they must not participate in the actual counting of votes - they must not touch ballot papers.

92. When will the results be known?

The closeness or otherwise of the count(s) has a strong bearing on when the Results will be known. The bulk of the votes will be counted on Saturday evening but postal votes can be admitted up to

6.00pm on the Monday following Election Day. Votes on Election Day will only be counted to first preference.

The Mayoral recheck of ballot papers will take place in the office of the Returning Officer, however all ballot papers for Councillors will be securely transported to Warner's Bay, scanned and counted under the proportional representation system.

93. Numbers of Polling Places

These vary greatly between Local Government Areas and will be advertised closer to the Election Day in your local newspaper and they will be listed on our website at www.austelect.com.

COMPLAINTS / CONCERNS

94. I don't agree with the campaign. Who can I complain to?

I would like to take your contact details and the details of your complaint so that I can arrange for an appropriate officer to phone you back to discuss the issue.

95. I have concerns over conduct in a Polling Place. Who can I talk to?

All issues related to the conduct of polling in a Polling Place must be referred to the Returning Officer. I can take down your contact details and the details of the problem you have encountered and refer them to the Returning Officer. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

96. I'm unhappy about the elections / candidates. I'm going to urge people to vote informal. Is this okay?

Explain that you are unable to answer this enquiry and that you must transfer the call to the Returning Officer or Deputy Returning Officer who will be able to discuss the matter. If neither is immediately available to speak to the caller, take down the caller's details providing advice for the caller to be called back as soon as possible.

ELECTION TIMETABLE

Close of Rolls	1 August 2016
Notice of Election – Opening of Nominations	1 August 2016
Postal Voting applications commence	1 August 2016
Nominations Close	12 Noon 10 August 2016
Candidate Briefing	(Indicative) 4 August 2016 (Indicative) 17 August 2016
Postal Voting 1st Dispatch anticipated	approx. 17 August 2016
Pre Poll Voting commences	29 August 2016
Declared Institution Voting commences	5 September 2016
Close for receipt of applications for Postal Voting cease 5.00pm	5 September 5.00pm
Pre Poll Voting ceases 6.00pm	9 September 2016
Postal Voting – close of returns	6.00pm 12 September 2016
Polling Day	8.00am – 6.00pm 10 September 2016
Recheck of ballot papers Mayor	Expected 11-12 September 2016
Distribution of Preferences Mayor	Expected 13 September 2016
Distribution of Preferences Councillor	12-17 September 2016
Declaration of Poll	Expected completed by 21 September 2016