

Local Government Participation and Elections Review

Public consultation feedback



Government of South Australia
Department for Infrastructure
and Transport

Build.
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Note

This document includes feedback and comments listed by reform area received via YourSAy surveys and direct submissions.

This feedback is generally as provided. Feedback and comments have only been modified to remove information that would identify individual respondents, that referenced individuals, or is potentially defamatory.

Minor formatting edits have been made to assist the layout of the feedback.

No modifications have been made to change the intent or tone of the feedback and comments.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Country throughout South Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land and waters. We pay our respects to the diversity of cultures, significance of contributions and to Elders past, present and emerging.



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General feedback about engagement with councils

"Engagement" is not required. All that is required is a method to communicate with council when needed.

A better understanding of what councils are and what they do. People seem to either think council should only care about potholes and footpaths or that they should be able to wave a magic wand and do a lot with the few resources they have.

A quarterly newsletter

A requirement that all citizens are treated with dignity and respect. That all citizens views be honestly considered and that they uphold the promise to improve the community environment rather than trash it for \$\$

Absolutely have to get more young people involved. Young people are increasingly not involved in council and council is full of older people who won't take young people's voices into consideration when making decisions about things that affect them.

Accessible online planning such as a simplified and interactive works program (including maps) and asset management plans.

Advertise meetings before they happen to the public via social media.

again. need time to contemplate

All council buisnes must be transparent and coucillors must declare anything that could cause a conflict of interest. Ther should be no hidden buisness or confidentiality

all efforts should be taken to support and improve press coverage of council operations. There is no council produced newsletter on earth that can caputre public interest like a good journalist. Compulsory voting will also encourage the public to demand greater press coverage, thus creating a virtuous cycle.

An expo highlighting services and department services

Any requirements for local governments to engage with, and ideally advertise with, local media will increase the public's awareness of council activities and foster active civic participation and engagement. However, councils should not necessarily be required to place public notices in local newsPAPERS. Any such requirements MUST be platform-agnostic, so that other publishers are not excluded.

Attend meetings and briefings , not just at nimby protests

Better advertising other than just social media.

Better civics education at schools and leaflets distributed with information on what councils are responsible for and what state is responsible for

Better education of Council's role is a must

Both councils that I have been in SA are very difficult to communicate with and have lived up to the council stereotype very well!. I have found the people that I have dealt with to be very arrogant and rude

Build integrity in the process. Make voting compulsory and ensure Residents understand the power that elected members hold- residents will then take it more seriously.

Candidates need to be screened and receive some training. A number of them make factually incorrect claims and statements to get voted in.

Civics classes for children. Deliberate and compulsory strategies for engaging with women, disabilities, LGBTQI and indigenous communities.

Clearer better websites

Clearly the current things do not work well and yet all I can think of are being done. You can lead a horse to water etc.

Commence the community engagement laws which Parliament has already passed.

Communicate key upcoming decisions with the community, communicate key Council decisions made to the community, via online video messaging. Councils to have a proper CRM system for community interaction.

community consultations and newsletters

Community engagement techniques that are not just digital, that include design and delivery by peers not just staff

Community functions, Council Meetings to be more inclusive of ratepayers and residents of the Council. Councillors are elected by the people the the Council. In recent times I have witnessed enormous disrespect of civilised people attending meetings who COULD NOT speak and were shut down and treated as though they were less than and not important. In all the years of growing up and living in this Council, I have not witnessed at any other meetings like I did at the first 2 council meetings by the new Mayor. I had never heard or seen the new Mayor prior to her nomination. Councillors are representatives of the City of Onkaparinga peoples.

Community magazine: printed and on-line.

community meetings and one on one to discuss persona lissues

Council forums should have an agenda and stick to them otherwise you have the same community people venting their own issues

Compulsory voting

Compulsory voting,

Continue promoting councils' roles in their communities and disproving misconceptions. There is a sentiment that in metropolitan Adelaide, there are too many councils. This may have merit in some areas (especially when compared to Brisbane). There remains a perception that councils are outdated and

secretive, and subject to party politics at the State Government level. It would also be great to receive annual (or even more frequent) updates/dialogue from councillors, be it digitally or by post.

Council needs to be out there in the community. I don't want Social Media updates. We don't want to hear the same thing over and over. Just real honest face-face conversations.

Council officers must be more transparent and accountable. There should be no closed council meeting sessions.

Council open Days. Meet and greet Councillor sessions

Council recognises the value and importance of wholesome community engagement. Community engagement should be an ongoing and collaborative effort to strengthen the democratic process and promote the wellbeing of the community.

By actively engaging with their communities, Councils can build trust, gain valuable insights, and ensure that their decisions reflect the diverse needs of the people they serve community. In seeking ways to better engage and participate with their respective communities, a new community engagement charter is considered a positive step. Such a charter should include flexible engagement options and consider individual council needs in relation to community engagement rather than a one size fits all approach. A state-wide review of Council boundaries with short, medium and long-term recommendations of prospective amalgamations would assist Council's in long-term planning and community engagement.

Council reports for decision could be made available on the website with the ability for community members to thumbs up or thumbs down the recommendations in the report prior to the decision in chamber, like a live interactive poll similar to the ABC Q&A sessions.

Council should make some council meetings occur at difference sites (i.e. school halls if during business hours, community centres) to attract more attention of the community.

Council staff being friendly.

Council to become more community minded, with listening to everyone in the electorate.

Councillors are mostly a bunch of people who get only an allowance and are with other employment. If it were structured more like the state government is and they were required to do more they wouldn't be so useless. They get elected and aren't heard from again. Councils are not closer to the people. The local MP's office is more useful.

Councillors engage with groups in the community

Councillors making an effort to meet constituents in different forums.

Councils and Councilors need to meet with community groups outside of council meetings.

Council meetings should be structured so as to provide an opportunity for community members to be actively involved in Council meetings.

Councils should be required to provide a detailed paper on the items to be discussed at the next Council meeting. This should be widely distributed in the community. Perhaps Councils should meet bimonthly with more work being done on subcommittees in the interim and community groups who have a direct interest in the subcommittee should be invited to attend and participate.

Councils and elected members DO NOT represent voters they represent themselves. There is no engagement between elected members, bureaucrats and rate payers.

Having only recently met and spoken to my member to establish why we were finding out things AFTER they had already been decided on, he became defensive and thought he was doing a good job. When it was suggested he do a mailbox drop or put up a poster at the post office asking for input on upcoming matters, his response was he was always contactable by phone. He did not seem to get the point that he is a participant in making decisions on our part without any input from his electorate before the event. Councillors are very quick to blame the Government as the group making decisions, especially when matters may have a grave impact (like unwanted development) on ratepayers. Even though the Council began the process and publicly promotes it.

Councils are no longer of any use. Councillors are paid big money when all they do is agree with the bureaucrats and CEO's. They never disagree with CEO's or take any responsibility for THEIR decisions. They do not even have the back bone to let rate payers know what is going on at Council level especially when it is something unwanted.

The State Government could save millions of dollars by getting rid of them and the added expense of elections.

Councils are run like the big 4 banks.

You cannot speak with anyone above the front receptionist.

Every person above that grade is a protected species and is not to be disturbed.

This of course makes dealing productively with Council impossible.

Nothing can ever be questioned.

You are not entitled to an explanation.

You are directed to their website.

Councils are under no obligation to engage with any in the community they are supposed to represent.

This is the fault of State Laws, failure in transparency, failure in listening, failure in actioning what residents want.

Councils are seen as inwardly focussed and financially grossly inefficient. "Engagement" is window dressing.

State Government needs to revisit The Act and set hard guidelines on what councils actually do.

Councils and councillors should be restricted to their core functions and MADE to focus on them and only them. Woke projects, vanity projects and getting involved in Federal and State areas IS NOT their mandate. Frankly, a lot of what councillors get involved in, or their vanity statements does nothing to encourage ratepayers to value them.

Councils just need to get creative.

Councils must not be allowed to introduce politically divisive agenda items into council meetings (such as Climate Change, Ukraine war and other radical, Left Wing agendas). Councils are just a rat-nest of Marxist ideologues, using Councils as a career path for State or Federal preselection.

Councils need to become more proactive in looking after their rate payers..ie like most business how do we reduce rates for our ratepayers rather than we need to use budget money for this year so money allocated for next year..this may mean we need to reduce money for community projects etc..think people don't see we make a difference..Council mentality is just increase rates a couple of percentage points e people will pay them..in current climate of cost of living..needvto focus more on ratepayers so Councillors will see they can make a difference..

Over past years councils receive more revenue from rates with additional houses built via subdividing blocks..what happens to these additional rates ?

Councils need to improve their communications with residents, not just about what they do but where their responsibilities end. Residents would engage better with Council if Council was more open and transparent with residents.

Councils need to listen to ratepayers instead of just say things like "that is all we need to do by law" Voting needs to stay voluntary. Perhaps if councils were far more transparent and got back to basics, ratepayers may become more engaged.

Councils need to take greater control of planning and design and bring key functions like public space design in-house. Outsourcing just creates a hodge podge of ideas and information that is expensive and hard for ordinary people to engage in. Open access to designs and design planning is key to making councils work for people and to enable their involvement and engagement.

Councils should stick to council issues and not be wasting time and money on issues that are outside of their remit. One big example is councils engaging in climate catastrophism, when anything they do will not make the slightest difference to the climate. Another example is councils trying to phase out Australia Day, with no mandate whatsoever for any such thing.

Councils should stick to their own domains. Generally people are not pleased with their local council which seems to have moved away from the old maxim 'roads, rates and rubbish'. Probably time to abolish local government or at least amalgamate existing councils. Elected representatives don't seem to have much clout, and staff are generally unhelpful.

My experience is that local council is much more concerned about promoting business and tourism, rather than meeting the needs of the community.

Disband Council

Do a better job. IE approving building on someone else's land.

Don't force council amalgamations. One southern metro huge council where I moved from only fixed something when I used the word 'ombudsman'.

People have a low opinion of councils as a rule, so huge councils make that worse

The staffing structure also needs review so that interactions are positive and followed up.

My new regional council has been a positive experience so far

Effective responses by council to communication from residents. Staff training in jargon free language. Make forms easier - when people apply for grants, for approvals etc from Council, or make a complaint or suggestion. People want to feel HEARD.

Elected Members could be used better than they are in terms of engagement. Presently, it is the Mayor and staff they lead engagement. As I have mentioned previously, the tone of how we speak about Councils and Local Government needs to change. While we look down on Councils and Councillors, who would want to put their hand up? We also need to support those that do put their hand up. The LGA is there to support Council's and staff, but who is supporting the EMs? I mostly enjoy my role, but I do carry many scars. Since becoming an elected member, I have lost a significant amount of confidence in my own abilities, lost faith that the right people are put in the right positions (I've nominated for several

LGA

board/committee positions of which I don't even receive a response), and spent over \$46,000 of my own money to dispute several code of conduct claims made by a known troublesome resident. I did not have support during my first term of Council, so I ensured that the new Councillors this term are supported and have mentored them also. I also strongly believe that the LGA should be playing a much larger role in supporting nominees and elected members.

email, social media,

Enable rate payers to directly contact senior council staff and councilors rather than relying on online indirect contact. Employ council liaison officers to expedite process. Discourage current bureaucratic method of council governance. Close the communications gaps between rate payers and council - employees and elected reps.

Enforce a lifetime ban on elected members or immediate family from threatening, abusing or vandalism towards community members.

Engage with community in a meaningful way listen to the needs ask for solutions and work with community, educate the community in what council is and isn't.

Engagement needs to be relevant and appropriate to the community. Council's also need to use a variety of mechanisms to engage community too.

Ensure councillors/mayor are not permitted to restrict topics for discussion. I witnessed this restrictive practice during the "thriving communities" meeting. The Mayor restricted topics of discussion by saying "I don't want to discuss rates or anything negative - positive ideas only". The meeting appeared stacked and I came away feeling it was a "tick the box" process. That sort of thing must be stopped in my opinion.

Ensure professional, community base people can be preselected, or at least that the preselection process ensures that the potential candidate is capable of being a community representative and that their focus is not just on one single aspect or issue.

Ensure that visitors are made to feel welcome, which they are NOT at my Council. The doors don't open for visitors until a minute or two before the meeting, even in the middle of winter when it is cold and dark outside, while attending staff and Councillors enjoy the warmth of food and drink inside. If I happen to arrive early enough, I sometimes see the ordered food and drink arrive... At those times I feel like the Little Match Girl....

Ensuring residents/ratepayers can present at Council meetings on any topic at any time.

Even though it was raised in the discussion paper it was not specifically discussed here, but I believe that in addition to an allowance to cover their time and effort to participate in councils activities, elected members should receive an allowance commensurate with the size of their constituency e.g. dollar amount per voter, to engage with the community. This should be limited to things such as postage, printing, social media advertising, venue/room hire for bona fide engagement activities, perhaps done on a reimbursement basis.

Full transparency...won't hold my breath waiting

get staff out of the office.

attend community events.

Staff & councillors attend community group/club meetings. especially at their AGMs.
If they attend and run the group/club election at a very high standard and detail.

Give people a greater say in their community to inspire them to get involved. At the moment too many people believe it's pointless to say anything when the Councils don't care or want to hear what they have to say.

I recommend that at each public Council meeting after about 1 hour into the meeting the floor should be opened to anyone in the public gallery to say something, without any prior notice. To do this they would speak from the main rostrum where anyone doing a Deputation speaks. No one should be denied the right to speak unless there is a unanimous vote from the Councillors.

This period of free speech could be limited to 30 minutes as a trial.

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Give people a greater say in their community.

People believe it's pointless to say anything when the Councils obviously don't care because they don't listen to what people have to say.

When the majority of people say "NO" to certain projects then they should NOT go ahead.

Greater focus on how councillors interact with administration. Broadcasting the role of councils and councillors better and discussing the division of the responsibility between state and local governments. Should be a way for more all in councillor forums to have councillors present and be questioned by local community.

Happy with current newsletter

Have a protocol where Councillors need to answer questions or contact ratepayers within a time frame.

Have already provided a suggestion for polling booths before the counting of votes.

Have elected members who are easily accessible.

Have regular venues for councillors to attend for the public to provide feedback. Participation in local government matters needs to be as easy and accessible to all to increase participation. People are generally time poor and there is the need to increase participation by younger generations.

How can we ensure councillors connect with their ratepayers? We have no idea what ours have been promoting or arguing against!

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen of South Australia to present a proposal that I believe will significantly improve the efficiency of local governance, reduce the financial burden on ratepayers, and streamline the decision-making process for the betterment of our state. The proposal seeks to abolish the existing local councils and replace them with a single, central council covering the entire metropolitan area of South Australia.

The current system of multiple local councils, while well-intentioned, has become outdated and often hinders the effective administration of our communities. Here are some key reasons for proposing this change:

Financial Relief for Ratepayers: The existence of numerous local councils leads to redundancy, resulting in higher administrative costs and an increased financial burden on ratepayers. Consolidating into one central council can lead to cost savings and potentially reduce rates, providing financial relief to our citizens.

Streamlined Governance: A single, central council would eliminate bureaucracy and inefficiencies associated with multiple councils, streamlining decision-making processes. This would enhance the overall effectiveness of local government and facilitate more responsive, efficient service delivery.

Increased Civic Engagement: Having a single council for the entire metropolitan area would encourage greater civic engagement and voter turnout. Residents would be more likely to participate in the election of the Lord Mayor of Adelaide, as this position would represent the interests of the entire metropolitan area rather than just the CBD.

Preventing the Creation of Future State Politicians: Local councils should serve as community representatives rather than acting as stepping stones for future state politicians. Consolidating into a single council can help eliminate this issue, enabling local government to focus on the needs and concerns of the South Australian community.

Modernization and Future-Readiness: In the 21st century, the need for efficient governance structures is more critical than ever. Transitioning to a single, central council is a progressive move that will bring local government in South Australia into the 22nd century, ensuring that we can address the evolving challenges of our communities effectively.

I believe that by implementing this proposal, we can create a more responsive, cost-effective, and engaged local government system that is better aligned with the needs of the South Australian community.

I don't use any form of social media. However, I do read the local community news paper on a regular basis. I find that this does provide some information on what the council is doing. I also participate in council surveys via email.

I would suggest that for local council the "preferential voting system is abandoned" and it is a 1 person 1 vote for the candidate of their choice. I have seen on more than one occasion "preference deals" see a very suitable candidate unelected. We struggle to get candidates, and in my view this only aids in that process of convincing people not to apply or nominate.

The result is that there is a council that is elected that really does not represent what the community wants to lead it.

I had a contract with a council. I found the council role to be very heavily compliance and transaction based, with little room for policy development, which should be the role of elected members. The state government should back off on the mandates, so councils have more rein and thus more relevance to people. If they are seen as powerless, there is no point voting for them. If they can influence peoples lives , there is. Make councils stronger and more independent, and participation will increase.

I have highlighted my recommendations for change to the current election process for candidates. Having regular progress reports from all the elected ward councillors of improvements that they have contributed in their ward would be a great step forward. This would provide constituents an idea of how involved their elected member is and will provide constituents key information to assist with voting in the next election.

I have stated that unless you demonstrate that involvement in local council is a third pillar of our democratic system then there will continue to be a lack of engagement. It is clear to me moving from a State with compulsory local elections, and voting days being quite festive events for the residents and groups, that the current system ensures a disengagement. The danger of this as demonstrated in the most recent council elections is that a vacuum is opened up for small groups of vocal and well-funded (mostly) men try to takeover the agenda with a value set that is non-representative and exculsionary. In this time of the Trump playbook being used locally and to good effect, we need to be vigilant and engage by bring back importance and significance the local place that we call home.

I think compulsory voting would encourage engagement and participation. Compulsory voting would also mean it is less likely that small but vocal minorities can capture councils.

I think council could have streetcorner meetings with administration and do more codesign workshops for infrastructure

I think it is difficult both for residents to be involved with the council and for councils to be involved with residents - yes we have lots of media but in the country we no longer have local television news so hear very little of what is happening at the local level, yes we can follow social media but we know that is awash with misinformation, people's personal agenda and is often skewed to a particular point of view. Most people form the silent majority who feel unable to offer opinion because of being abused, trolled or "cancelled", those who speak up tend to be more assertive, even aggressive personalities and they get heard, often at the expense of others. i receive a regular newsletter from my local council but it obviously represent their viewpoint, i no longer buy the local newspaper as it has increased drastically in price, has increased advertising and less "news" and once again often present one viewpoint rather than providing many opinions and thoughts.

I think it's up to people to make that move, not council's problem. Council should simply deliver its services and if individuals are interested, they can make themselves known or turn up to things.

I understand that the last round of LGA amalgamations occurred in 1997. I think it is hightime for the state government to reconsider another round of amalgamations. I accept that at the last round only entire Coujncil areas were to be amalgamated. In my instance, (and speaking on behalf of many local ratepayers) if/when there is a second round of amalgamations a defined community should be able to

ascertain if they would like to break away from their current LGA and amalgamate with a similar and likeminded LGA.

If a Council is doing a reason job, then there will be limited engagement. That should be considered a positive. If making difficult or controversial decisions the level of community engagement always skyrockets. Sometimes this helps the process or 'loud vocal' input make result in Councillors making less than optimum decisions.

If a problem happens let the rate payer know when it will be fixed in real time.

If Councils attempt to implement globalist policies (e.g. UN Agenda 2030) by stealth, they are likely to experience heightened community engagement. Most people I associate with consider that Councils should stick mostly to the basics and not involve themselves in "progressive"/"woke"/political agendas. An example was Mitcham Council deciding to support The Voice "Yes" vote (with ca \$70,000) with no community consultation last year, which caused a backlash, and the proposal was withdrawn.

If we knew that poorly performing Mayors and Councillors would be moved on and out after 4-8 years, I think that would improve peoples engagement with councils. It might improve the morale of council staff too.

In rural areas, have council meetings in townships at least once a year.

Integrity is a problem with councils. Council Debts and spending on ego based items such as events etc has gone through the roof. As such because of such expenditure rates have escalated enormously. 40% in two years. There is little or no Accountability required by councils. State governments are reluctant to show any real commitment to amending the status quo which is disappointing.

It costs money to engage people. Look at the ads developed some years ago by WALGA to promote the importance of councils or the great social media accounts like that of Adelaide's Lord Mayor

Lack of engagement often relates to trust in their council. We would all like more engagement on issues, but often engagement only occurs when a community member has a grievance to air.

Less Councils. Less Councillors but more effective and ether qualified.

LGA to provide more information about the services that all Council's provide

Live streaming council meetings and access to recorded meetings.

More readily available councillors for meetings ans community engagement

Live-streaming, online recording and newsletters.

Local drop-in sessions with candidates.

Local government should be abolished and if not, councils should be amalgamated eg Eyre Peninsula should be one council. Some rural councils have less than 3000 or so people but about 50 or more "staff", most of whom are on over \$80K.

Lower the voting age to 16 and allow people 16 years and over to run for election.

Hold council meetings at different locations.

Invite other key community leaders to speak to council regularly, in a way that works for them - show case and embrace different forms of community leadership, representation and social action and activate curiosity about why different groups in the community enjoy/participate in some community events and not others.

Make it easy, make it quick, make the information easily and readily available in many places. Remove as many barriers to voting and information as possible.

Make more information more public

Make people aware of what they can do.

Make the public more aware of their role — they're not just greedy rate risers (some are, though). Make them more accountable to the electorate — introduce recall elections if the councilor/council is absolutely mucked.

Make things relevant to the ratepayers.

Have meetings in each town and actually implement into council planning what these communities need. Don't just listen to the active noisy minority groups. Consultation has to make more of an effort to reach the mainstream.

Projects often are dependant of funding. This makes consultation seem like a waste of time to the average person.

Mandate online council meetings (not necessarily live streaming). Multi-channel community engagement (not just Facebook or online).

Mandated schedule of notifications and topics set by gov't

Maybe councils don't need to exist?

They could fairly easily be replaced by a state government department. Mostly they just seem like a waste of money and jobs creation program.

Mayors should stop impacting the Council Elections to those council

Meeting with the community

Mentoring program

Monthly public meetings available for the residents to ask questions and express concerns

Monthly reports to the community by their elected representatives.

More accountability of councils to be made public. Documentation and reviews on how councils responsibilities have improved particularly when actions are lawful as opposed to being unlawful., for example in the maintenance of properties verges. The more assistance and positive actions the council take the more people maybe willing to engage with the council. At present rates continue to increaservicese and support for members of the public appears to decrease.

More advertising on TV, online etc

More communication

More communication.

More Councilors meeting ratepayers in a community hall etc with due notice. park meetings, Street corner meetings , shopping centres , street meetings, door knocking

More Councils engagement with people. have staff assist with councillors movements, so they can attend more community events.

never have a staff member or councillor attend a community meeting alone, have at least one with interest in the subject. even record meeting.

More digital information/ engagement (ie QR codes)

More direct democracy

More diversity in the administration as well as encourage and enabling greater diversity of elected members.

Statistically valid surveys run by providers with this capability.

'Willingness to pay' surveys to gauge what people are willing to pay for.

Engage communities at events and shopping centres or other physical areas rather than just online.

Engage diverse communities.

More diversity in the administration so that there is greater awareness of what diverse communities need and there is a greater desire to actually listen to and understand the feedback.

More education about what councils actually do

More education in schooling around local government to support active and engaged citizens.

But also acknowledging and accepting that not everyone wants to engage on every issue, the important thing is being able to if and when they want to.

More education on what councils can & can't do - can be done across the state at any time by LGA. I have no idea if 'government' is part of any school curricula, but it should be taught so people learn at any early age how the various levels of government actually work & interact. What about some 'ask the LGA' segments on radio so issues are clarified well before an election is due. The perception that staff at Councils are overpaid needs explanation /review - some Council jobs I see advertised pay salaries way above comparable roles in the market. For smaller councils this is a serious problem as they simply can't generate enough revenue to employ the people they need to do the work they want to do. Please stop being so Adelaide-centric. What works in Adelaide often isn't nearly as effective in the rest of the state, which is where the majority of problems attracting folks to get involved in local government seem to exist. Finally, get politics out of local government, it's not helping local communities at all.

More events where Councillors can speak and public can get to know them.

More forums and personal contact, less on-line contact.

More information especially for the Mayor and those elected. We NEVER know what the council elected is doing in our Ward once they are elected or how to contact them. Its like they are elected, get paid and that's it!

More information provided about regular meetings, agendas and issues that are being considered e.g. building regulations, infill, trees, parklands etc. via electronic means, emails, online forums etc.

More open meetings or streamed/ videoed meetings that enables people to see, at their convenience what is happening in meetings.

An indication of different councillors' voting records on various issues.

An indication from Councils that they are there to work for the community; not the community is there to meet their agenda.

More promotion of the ways people can get involved.

More promotion on the role and work of councils and how they effect people's every day lives. More profiling about the role and work of elected members and the projects they have been working on/advocating for.

More public education on the role of local government and the constraints local government is under.

More public forums with current or past councillors to talk frankly and openly with candidate nominees without council administration, council lawyers, or LGA being in attendance.

more regular detailed feedback

More street corner meetings, notifications, everyone has an email these days!. I have never been contacted or seen my my local council area representative, in fact no one from my council for a F2F chat?. When you do contact council they hide behind a barrage of phone options and then you occasionally find someone who will give a committed answer, else its duck and weave on answers which is a shame, as my intent on the very few questions is on clarity not for a debate or challenge, just clarity. I know it is difficult because of the actions of a few, however the silent majority like myself generally just want to roll peacefully on with life.

More testimonial style promotion and better advertisement of what Councils actually do.

most people are not overly concerned with how councils are run because on the whole the administration provide efficient services. ESCOSA, Audit & Risk Committees and other oversight bodies generally ensure the smooth running of operations

Most people are too busy to be concerned with Council. Most people are happy with what Council does. I think we get too worried by the squeaky wheels. Let's remember that Council provide many fantastic services and are happy to do so. Council has many regulatory functions so sometimes this upsets people. We need to understand this so we have an equitable approach which is respectful

My council is fine. I hear about the things I need to, and can easily contact them when an issue needs to be addressed. If anything there is too much engagement, with so many projects seeking community input.

My Council works really hard to engage with community.

My council's consultation process seems to be a box ticking exercise. They are content with a small number of responses (ie less than a hundred). The process doesn't seem to push very far into the community and is content with the 'low hanging fruit'. A recent consultation was unable to locate one person who was keen on basketball and would have liked a ring to be provided in the local park redevelopment. This is despite the fact that such equipment is very popular in other parks. Most of the respondents used the park in office hours eg grand parents with children.

My councils pretty good. You can get email updates from them about what they are doing but perhaps they also could provide information on the contentious issues going on. What things are concerning people / community groups - what issues are being thrashed ut at meetings etc.

My experience is that councils take a very limited approach to consultation and do the bare minimum to meet their obligations. For example, council consultations tend to be limited to those in the immediate vicinity of the issue (such as tree planting, road works, planning approval) whereas issues are relevant to people across the whole of council. (We live in a global world which is very mobile, not a tiny ward.) While I acknowledge that all business want to limit the work they need to do, councils serve the community (and they boast about this and use this concept to their advantage when they want to) and have a much greater responsibility to actively, intentionally and widely engage with all ratepayers and residents across the council in ways that are meaningful to the people. If councils are not prepared to do this themselves, the legislation needs to be strengthened to enforce this.

Newsletters and public meetings on specific issues.

Newsletters, open forums

not about engagement but.... the position of Mayor should be chosen by the council members, not by the vote of the residents/ratepayers. We see too many good people lose a place on council because they miss out on the mayor vote.

Not sure how, but there has to be a strong connection and relationship between councillors and the people in their day to day lives

Not sure what triggers would sufficiently motivate people. Citizenship and community cohesion should be enough but with these at low levels the tendency is to resort to shock politics, virtue signalling and clickbait.

Offer electronic viewing of meetings to the public.

Allow elected members the choice of occasional electronic attendance of meetings.

Offer an open question session between the public and council members prior or at the start of meetings,

Offer a travel allowance to attend meetings.

Look at the current elected member allowances and try to keep all inline.

Try to encourage younger generations even school kids to get more involved.

DO NOT make voting compulsory.

Allow electronic voting for council elections.

On line voting on major issues

Online agenda in advance of meetings

Advice of how councillors vote

Councillors forced to resign from council if they have any direct political affiliation, e.g. member of a political party in the past 5 years, intent to stand for a political party at the next State or Federal election (this might need SA Electoral Commission to assist), but they could stand as an Independent

Ongoing updates to the community.

Stories from Elected Members highlighting the benefits of nominating.

Locally based campaigns supported by local Council and coordinated by the ECSA.

open council meetings, community events - BBQs etc.

Our council utilises "community feedback" but then has a habit of distorting statistics to report reviews in a manner that suits their agenda. Have seen it related to Parks and Road use safety surveys. After a few of these you have a bad taste of engagement impartiality....

Overall the council model is flawed, the elected members have little or no sway over the main functions of the council. Councils believe that are a level of government with a mandate to build a hugely costly organisation with little or no accountability for productivity. More empowerment for elected members would increase the effectiveness of the role and make it more meaningful.

people - members of the public - the community - should feel WELCOME and VALUED ! Seating should not be restricted - and the overall tone should be consistently inclusive - not exclusive, oppressive and intimidating ! The ethos of our councils should consistently be -a spirit of COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION WELCOMED ! Information is POWER - secrets are abhorrent and the people deserve open , trusting communication without hidden agendas.

People are busy and just don't seem to care until there is a pothole in front of their house.

People are time-poor and I really see this as the fundamental barrier to getting people to engage.

I am lucky, I represent a very engaged and active ward. Still, responses to consultations are not fantastic. Often, people will only complain after something has happened.

Mitcham is also lucky in the fact that it can afford to run consultations that go above and beyond. Many Councils however, cannot. Financial assistance should be considered for all Councils to run better engagements throughout the year.

The more people get involved with Council, the greater the understanding they might have of what they do. I tend to think that long-term, this would encourage a number of people to put their hands forward to be a Councillor.

people feel disconnected from all levels of politics, and that candidates don't represent their views. offer more surveys and public input on key decisions and actually follow through on what the community wants.

an example is NOBODY wanted a large part of Lake Windemere to be sold off by council for public housing but council refused to listen and did this anyway, we have now lost a large chunk of one of our key parks with houses being built right through the northern edge.

this was community land and should have been left as such or developed into something that benefits the community.

but salisbury council didn't care, they sold it off for a quick buck anyway.

People generally only engage with councils when they feel they have a need. Lack of engagement does not necessarily indicate complacency. It can also be an indication of satisfactions with council's decisions.

Councils should conduct regular surveys of community satisfaction and identify areas which need addressing.

People have become cynical about council engagement because often the community response seems to be downplayed or completely ignored. It seems often council come to the community already with a solid proposal so that there is little room for input. It would be good if council could co-design with the community.

People should be encouraged to say "their say" thus they will feel inspired to be more involved.

People should not just advise their council, but actually participate in voting about issues (unless urgent or petty): online technology is now ripe for that.

Personal approach/door knocking by candidates and councilors

Port Adelaide Enfield have a great online portal except it needs a general enquiry or comment section. Great staff

Proactive communication across multiple media ie newspaper, social media, hard copy letters, email Reinforce provision of key services (rates, roads, rubbish) AND promote community services (library, volunteering, events)

Encourage "human" interaction - not just electronic forms of communication.

Promotion of achievements

Q&A sessions with Mayor and Members

Realttime online access to view/listen to meetings

Annual Local Government Awards

Public surveys with genuine consultation with ratepayers on projects and ideas that are to be considered and give the ratepayers the right to veto unwanted projects instead of having them 'Imposed' on them!

Publicise info about councils and which aldermen are voting for and against on all issues and the number of meetings they attend or apologise or just fail to turn up. Ensure the elected people engage with the electorate. Some dont provide any access whats every ratepayers.

Ratepayers should be encouraged to attend council meetings where they are welcome. Our council pretends to welcome us but in reality they don't won't our scrutiny. They don't want us to witness the factions created by the Mayor and CEO which ensures their corrupt survival.They certainly don't won't us to know about the CEO briefings encouraging councillors to vote in a certain way which is conducive to their agenda ie spending millions of dollars on novelty and pet projects to the detriment of the ratepayers. On June 28th 2022 there was a press release of the ICAC findings in reference to local councils Everything in this report depicts what councils stand for, but unfortunately no action has been taken to address these findings. What a waste of taxpayers money!

Reduce complexity of the local government act. This will seek to ensure that rateholder revenue is spent on services closely aligned to core council services, such as "rates, roads and rubbish".

Reduce reliance on representative democracy and move to participatory models, including but not limited to, participatory budgeting, citizen juries, liquid democracy, tactical urbanism and direct policy decision-making at all levels of government.

Reduce the number of councils

Regular street meetings

Remove local council

Rock solid requirement that all emails, phone calls, letters, office visits are responded to by the appropriate council officer within 48 hours, instead of being ignored.

Have a clearly set out and easily identified process for communicating with Council staff and councillors. Reinstate wards.

Sadly there is a complacency from many ratepayers. As a primary producer who pays significantly more rates than compared to a single homeowner in my area, I am concerned that this is leading to a lack of accountability and unrestrained spending and deficit budgets which is not sustainable long term. I am a strong supporter of retaining local government and councils and believe they provide important governance and decisions for local rural communities which differs to the larger urban councils.

Smartphone app.

Social media and newsletters should be primary communication. Don't bother with newsprint.

Stop the elitism of one side of the tracks & stop repeat terms, for ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS & ADMIN STAFF should ALL B ON KPI's if you cant show the real improvements u promise TO ALL then out you go. MAKE IT PUBLIC THAT ALL RENTERS who have lived in the area for @ least 2 years or more HAVE THE RIGHT 2 VOTE OPEN the BOOKS, FACE TO FACE meeting with ALL communitys not just yr local Lawn bowls or Footy club or Greek Church.

That comes down to the local Council and their willingness to engage. If Council meetings were conducted during the day, Councillors would be free to attend community groups more often, especially those that conduct their business after hours. If Councillors are treated and paid as full time employees of Council, they would spend a greater portion of their time with community groups thus creating two-way engagement.

That the candidates provide contact details to speak to a community members or to record a message . That electedmembers provide a response to a community resident question or request . That the Council adminis tration provide contact officers employed by council to lodge questions or report issues and maters of concern taking considerable additional work on elected members.

The challenges that councillors face in engaging with their communities are several-fold, with the most important being their workload/time constraints and the uncertainties they face in relation to the politics/administration divide.

With respect to the former, larger municipalities (as a result of amalgamation and population growth), and the continued move to reduce the number of council seats, has increased workloads for councillors, particularly in larger municipalities. It has also made councillors more physically remote and psychologically removed from their constituents. Not only do the logistics prevent them from meeting

meaningfully with a large proportion of their constituency, but as size increases, doing so makes less sense politically (when other, less meaningful, promotional options are available). Fixing this issue will require more councillors and smaller constituencies (whether that means wards, or de-amalgamation).

With regard to the politics/administration divide, research (including my own) has identified that many councillors feel immense uncertainty as to their role, which can frustrate any initial enthusiasm they had about engaging community. Some of this uncertainty relates to the lack of discretionary authority available to councils under the prescriptive Act. But two other aspects of the legislation could also be reviewed and clarified in a circular: the first relates to councillors' relationship with staff (s59(3) and s62(4c) of the LG Act 1999); the second is the requirement that councillors serve the overall public interest (s52,2b, and s59,1ax). I do not suggest that these provisions are inappropriate – rather, I suggest that by increasing clarity as to what is and is not permitted in accordance with these provisions, councillors will have greater confidence to go forth and engage with their communities.

the people themselves need to take an interest as nobe care about anything until they have a want or a complaint

The process of council public consultation should be more transparent and honest. If you contact a council they expect you to identify yourself (name and contact details) yet councils do not in return readily provide the ratepayer with names and direct line contact details. Councils should reach out more to the community and communicate more honestly and openly - do not use words like "climate emergency" unless you are prepared to implement "emergency" actions.

the process to bring new ideas, new projects, new processes, new ideas, needs to be simple and effective, in that Elected Members need to be open to a delegate speaking to their contribution, and the council should have to consider and debate the ideas. Often delegations are heard but the gist or intention of the delegation presentation is not noted, not debated, not even discussed.

Involve students, create local student/youth Councils that consider the same agenda items of the elected council and the minutes of the youth Council be communicated to the elected member body

The services Councils provide should be increased. To help fund for this mechanisms in the planning scheme should be investigated such as Development Contribution Plans that exist in certain Victorian Councils

The three tiers of government , ie Federal State and Local should be part of the school curriculum. Civics if you will.

Place Local Government in the Australian Constitution so that it is on an equal footing with both State and Federal. By raising it's status people will become more engaged

The use of Digital Humans that become part of the community, they are advocates from group and civic movements and could also update people on the progress in near-to real time of how LGAs are making an impact

There are ample ways to keep in touch and make connection, but local govt is ignored too much by too any people until they want something. Get them involved by making elections compulsory and in a different year and at a different time of the year.

There is an immense lack of trust between sections of the community and the Local Government where I live. Anything to remedy this would be an improvement.

There needs to be genuine opportunities for engagement with Council. It is often tokenistic or the data manipulated to paint a different picture. Some councillors believe that they are the conduit for engagement with Council - this is very dangerous and gives rise to pork-barreling.

They are public servants and need to listen to the community - not the managers of the departments

They should become more democratic and political. That is party political candidates provide a platform from which to operate, provides some accountability and input.

This is a really tricky one, as people generally only contact council when there is a problem. However people do use libraries, community centres, parks, trails, roads and footpaths daily, and just have no idea of the breadth of services councils provide. The LGA SA undertook a great campaign recently (e.g. 'for the Swings, Rides and Slides') but I am unsure of the cut-through it achieved. More work needs to be done to educate communities on the great return they are getting for their council rates, and i think this needs to be a joint effort of the Office for Local Government, LGA SA and councils.

This will happen anyway as the global polycrisis unfolds rapidly. Local government will emerge as important semiautonomous communal places.

Transparency and honesty - do everything with that in mind, and the rest will come easy.

Transparency, availability

Use yoursay and social media please

Wards- local representation, someone who you know to talk to!

We do all we can at my Council. Methods stated at the start of this survey may benefit other Councils.

We have been "between elections" for years. Our council needs to be bailed out, so we can start over and have democracy and council accountability.

We need better civics education for everyone- most people don't understand what the Council actually does, and I think if people did, then they would engage more!

We shouldn't have to engage with a council that is doing its job.

When a neighbour is building next door, it should be mandatory that the surrounding neighbours are consulted BEFORE approval is given. I cannot believe that some selfish developers are allowed to build on the boundary, huge monstrosities.

Without local press this has waned. Biased local social media promote own causes for clicks. Journalists are no longer at meetings stopping public knowledge what occurs. Could universities train journalists through local gov meetings and contribute to social media channel?

More community presence... like at the markets.

Topic 1: Community Engagement Charter (1.1)

No more glossy brochures sharing Council achievements. Send quarterly newsletters (preferably email) advising works undertaken the previous quarter, works commencing the following quarter and works planned and approved for the future. Colour only in emails. Hard copy in black and white.

A charter should include flexible engagement options and consider individual council needs in relation to community engagement rather than a one size fits all approach

A directive approach is ineffective unless councils possess the requisite skills and experience in community engagement. Fortunately, many councils, particularly those in regional areas, inherently prioritise community engagement as a core aspect of local governance. By leveraging the inherent commitment to community engagement, councils deliver meaningful action, ensuring that engagement efforts are truly responsive to local needs and contexts, not just compliant to a directive

A monthly newsletter would be great if it was fact based rather than the council saying look at how good we are.

A newsletter every three or four months with updates on council projects and an up-to-date and transparent disclosure of the council budget and full details on expenditure freely available to the public on their website.

A video wrap up of council meetings and decisions should be available after each meeting given by a council staff representative (not an elected member) including how each councillor voted on any issue up for a vote for transparency.

Actually listen to the majority.

Actually listen..stop this woke nonsense, focus on being practically invisible apart from roads, rubbish and rates. WE DO NOT NEED YOU TO TELL US HOW TO THINK OR FEEL

Advise councillor names and contact details. Respond to email enquiries. Require council officers to return phone calls, office enquiries and emails within 48 hours.

Agree with mixture of approaches for charter: more prescriptive for significant decisions that affect everyone and more flexibility for local matters as long as certain principles are covered. In the Charter it should be prescribed that councils need to consult in particular ways regarding their business plan, strategic plan and budgets.

Councils could be given a guide/matrix rating system to help determine levels of community consultation on other matters. This probably does need to be somewhat prescriptive in terms of a minimum standard of consultation on each category. At the same time, I think enabling councils to be creative is helpful. Many councils have quite talented media and communications staff who are able to determine strategies to engage the community depending on the context (e.g. utilising social media trends, competitions with small prizes, etc). The charter may be able to provide some ideas or case exemplars of good practice.

I think communities tend to like consultations where they can see practical operational examples on what they are providing feedback on. It is difficult for many people to engage in consultation on broad strategic

issues like business plans and budgets as they don't know how to relate to information at this higher level as they can't see how it applies to them in real life. Wherever possible, including information and examples about the practical impact of different options on their lives is helpful to enable communities to understand the meaning of what they are reading. Many people really don't understand budgets and how rates work either so can't really evaluate this objectively.

Agree with proposed Community Engagement Charter in having categories for statutory decisions. However, it could be argued that these could be strengthened, as a council could abide by requirements for Category A processes but not be in line with the principles in Section 50 of the Act, particularly in relation to principle 1 and having reasonable opportunities to gain access to information

All local Councils required to hold an annual public consultation on the key issues in their local area, including a public meeting.

Allow members of the community to access Council meetings and chambers when decisions are on the table, make sure that the technology is working and accessible for members of the community to hear/see clearly and feel they are part of the process when implementing legislation, changes, tabling matters that directly concern individuals and members of groups that have reasonable disputes and/or recommendations that would wish to be heard and not shut out from these conversations.

Allowing engagement to be by different methods and ease to provide with everyone having limited free time.

Amend legislation so that regional Councils are required to hold meetings in the evening if not all members are able to attend during the day time. It makes it very difficult for young people and in particular working women to participate. It also better enables community members to participate in public question time or at least to attend meetings

An idea is for councils to engage with community organisations as they would for residents on matters , for example - Residence associations, clubs, schools, etc.

Any community charter prescribed or otherwise must ensure city wide engagement processes and methods are delivered in a manner that is adaptable and receptive to the differing styles of public participation that exist within the diverse mix of communities across the city.

It's important consultation processes that will be in full or in part funded from borrowings are upfront about the financial implications of borrowing such money and the impact on councils' overall debt position

Too often we see the public supporting projects with no concept of the project cost and how it will inevitably be funded.

It is our experience the most significant issue with community engagement processes, across the entire local government sector, is not a lack of public participation or interest to be heard but rather there is no obligation for the council to incorporate public concerns and or interests into their decision making regardless of the merit in such concerns and the council continues on regardless of such representations.

We are aware of numerous representations provided in statutory consultation processes that have raised significant concerns over numerous years and several terms of council, regarding councils financial position raising specific concerns with indebtedness, service standards, extravagant and unnecessary projects , employee's costs decline in asset renewal , lack of service reviews

The recent ESCOSA City of Onkaparinga 10 yr financial assessment report validates the merit in such

public concerns with its findings of the previous 10yr finances as unsustainable specifically raising concern with indebtedness, service standards extravagance, employees costs and unnecessary projects, lack of service reviews and decline in asset renewal.

It is our view a community engaged charter will not address the fundamental principle issues with local government public consultation processes.

It is our view what is needed is further oversight by an independent authority that can intervene when there is significant disparity with public expectations and what is resolved to be delivered by councils despite such concerns brought directly to the councils attention.

The public should not need to wait 10 yrs for an independent review to validate the merit with significant issues raised over the previous 10yr period.

It's critical that such independent authority has the ability to sanction action as opposed to making recommendations that have no enforceable requirement such as the Ombudsman and ESCOSA findings.

What local government needs is enforceable accountability particularly when they get it wrong.

It is our view apathy will continue to grow in the sector until accountability is implemented and in turn impact on public participants.

Any requirements for publication in the Gazette or a state-wide newspaper, which may have little relevance to individual metropolitan or remote/regional communities, should be reserved for matters of particular significance, such as structural changes (e.g., outcomes of an elector representation review). All other publication requirements should be directed solely towards platforms that are readily accessible and utilised by local communities

Any requirements should be flexible enough to allow for the unique circumstances of each council area. Whatever changes happen, there should be consideration given to equitable funding for councils from State Government to implement changes so that smaller councils with less resources (money, staff etc) are not disadvantaged and/or the Electoral Commission funded to ensure this.

e.g., The intent of the change to a Charter is to enable councils to take a more fit-for-purpose approach to public consultation, taking into account the significance of the matter under consideration, the needs of their local community, and the advantages of new technology

As little as possible. Engagement costs money and as a community we have nothing useful to add to a town planning discussion.

As many different methods as possible (without overwhelming me) so I can contribute in the way that is most convenient to me.

As our council provides water and electricity, any outages need to be flagged immediately, with constant updates as to when services will be restored.

At least monthly, by email and on Council website.

At least one or more face to face group meetings per year. Councils must NOT be permitted to restrict topics for discussion. I recently witnessed that restrictive practice during the "thriving communities" process which merely "ticked the box" in my opinion.

Be open, timely and transparent in their communication, use multiple strategies/platforms to inform their community (not just Facebook, webpage) such as local newspaper, direct email etc. Have meaningful

engagement, ie dont just say 'your voice matters' when in reality it is disregarded as often the decision is already made. When residents are asked for their feedback on plans etc, currently, the Council either never responds to that feedback or if it does it is a formed reply that everyone gets. It would be nice to know why our ideas have not got any traction. We want regular Community Forums so that we can engage with Council staff and Councillors in an informal setting. Council meetings are too rigid and do not allow for good interaction.

Being a past councillor I tried hard to get our Council to communicate better with all of their ratepayers. A token effort was done grudgingly but it was simply a rehash of their Council meeting minutes. Totally ineffective. My suggestions to my Council was always deemed to be outside the remit of a Council member and I was regularly accused of making unnecessary requests or behaving in a way that was unproductive to the day to day management of the council. Simply, I was showing them up for either not knowing their requirements, their agendas or even responding to obligations to their community.

Better access to engage with the various departments. Planning especially

Better and more balanced social media content that is appropriately curated and responded to.

Better communication

Better follow up on complaints (not from my current council, but a large metro council where I previously lived). If they have my email, keep me informed, I charge to mind read

By leaving me alone

Citizens refrain from council as the elected members are mostly members of parliament staff or trying to run for office themselves- they have an agenda and aren't actually for the communities best interests

Clarity of spending

Clarity of how rates are determined

Clarity of how property valuations are determined

Annual reports sent to all residents

Clear communication on social media and emails. The council hide a lot of what they are doing, they need to be held to account, so they need clear and concise communication. Posting out a newsletter is sub standard and a waste of resources.

Clear contact information. This should be a published document without any council advertising. Playford publishes a booklet a few times per year but it is full of BS telling us how good they have been with all their projects.

Community engagement should be appropriate to the topic being undertaken and past participation models.

Having a two hour public consultation on the Annual Business Plan and Budget each year with no attendees is a waste of council resources - there should be flexibility to choose the best methods that work within each community

Community feels like council only listens to the government narrative and to the engaged minority groups, the silent majority are always overlooked. There has to be a way to consult with the wider

community who are disengaged. Every time we consult, it is the same organised groups who are engaged and opinionated, it doesn't give us the whole picture. The average person j that have spoken to just wants lower rates and for councils to do their core business and cut costs on things which should be done at State or Federal level. They want the politics and virtue signalling to stop. Unfortunately much of it is regulated and out of our control so I actually don't know what the answer is, I just know our current model could be improved in order to get better engagement.

Community groups need to be included in council deliberations on matters that affect the ratepayers. The community groups (peak bodies) could be the voice of their community when council is seeking feedback and promotion of particular issues and wanting greater participation from locals. The elected members could play a greater role in communicating between council employees and the peak bodies.

Community meetings, newsletter, website

Community meetings/consultations, newsletters, social media

Community must be at the heart of all we do, ensuring that best local information is taken into account in future council we must engage with community before we decide what may happen, words used must be in plain English and consultation and feedback documents checked by community so it makes sense..community uptake with council in some areas is at an all time low they have lost trust with the council and see elected members as puppets who rubber stamp decisions made by staff.

Community Panels of residents with diverse experiences.

Community presence - drop-ins with elected members, social media, mail, consultation meetings, open/online council meetings, email, newsletters

Consistency across the State would be better than each Council making it up.

This will come with resourcing challenges for the small councils to keep up, but consistency would be nice.

Consultation and the ability to participate in decisions that affect them. SO IMPORTANT!
Flyers, mail delivery and community meetings ON SITE where the proposal is - not in the council building.

Consultation on important things that affects everyone like the introduction of surveillance and facial recognition

Continuous Web updates, media information, occasional postal drops when significant issues, opportunities to meet with elected members quarterly.

Council budgets are delivered to the Community and Councillors as a fait accompli with great resistance to change anything on the budget. The Port Augusta Community has asked for years for spending cuts to reduce rates but has fallen on deaf ears. The Council staff appear to run the Council NOT the Councillors. The 'Tail is wagging the Dog' not the other way around. In my opinion, as with a lot of Councils, the CEO appears to have sovereign right over the Council.

Council continues active engagement with the community via newsletter, social media articles and posts, local newspaper and radio, along with face to face engagement on projects and new initiatives such as

FOGO introduction. The continued interaction maintains Councils profile and interest of the community in council ongoing operations, projects and strategic direction.

Council currently provides periodic newsletters which are delivered to letter boxes. One was delivered recently and there are still copies of the newsletter on the footpath down the road from me. I do not believe many people read the newsletters. I am also registered to get email info from the Council but this requires me to register which many people would not bother doing. I believe a campaign emphasising the need to participate in our democracy would help engage people to be more proactive and this could start with engaging secondary students by bringing them along to council meetings and see what councils do to promote democracy.

Council Elections should be compulsory!

Prayers at the start of meetings should be banned! Australia is a secular country. Keep religion and State separate!

Council meeting agendas should be published on the Internet. Greater transparency. When surveys are done, Councils should be bound to accept the outcome, not dismiss them as being unrepresentative.

Council needs to continue to consult the community on rates, by-laws and new ideas and processes to be introduced to ensure that the community's needs are being met. By engaging with the community we ensure that community members understand the need for change and will work with Council to ensure the best outcomes are achieved. Engagement should be often enough to ensure that the message is known, but not so often as to become irrelevant or encourage people to tune out.

Council publications letter boxed not only web pages

Council recognises the value and importance of wholesome community engagement. Community engagement should be an ongoing and collaborative effort to strengthen the democratic process and promote the wellbeing of the community.

By actively engaging with their communities, Councils can build trust, gain valuable insights, and ensure that their decisions reflect the diverse needs of the people they serve community. In seeking ways to better engage and participate with their respective communities, a new community engagement charter is considered a positive step. Such a charter should include flexible engagement options and consider individual council needs in relation to community engagement rather than a one size fits all approach. A state-wide review of Council boundaries with short, medium and long-term recommendations of prospective amalgamations would assist Council's in long-term planning and community engagement.

Council should be able to determine how they will engage their community for all matters.

Council should inform Ratepayer more accurately how much money is being spent on Major Equipment and Capital works ,needs to be broker down to a simpler form how much will be spent not just an estimated lump sum . Council should let Ratepayers know of major building proposals so objections can be lodged. Salaries of all Council employees including Councilors and CEOs etc should be made public. Let ratepayers put forward ideas how to improve streets, parking, have a say in house heights and social housing. Ratepayers need to have a say on playground upgrades ,what type of equipment and be disabled child friendly as many play grounds aren't. Also playgrounds need toilets installed at all playgrounds.

Council will ask the community how they would like to be engaged.

Council will provide all relevant information allowing the community to make an informed decision.

Councillors should meet in the community regularly to hear their views

Councils and Local Elected members need to continually inform residents about any issues that impact on property owners including and most definitely planning controls and changes

Councils are already following a set of legislative and regulatory community engagements requirements. They also have a community engage Policy which outlines when communities are consulted on matters that are of particular interest. I think there needs to be some flexibility for Councils to maximise engagement opportunities when they believe this will result in a better outcome for the community. Community engagement activities are costly and too much can result in consultation fatigue or result in a belief that elected representatives are not doing the job they were elected to do - 'just make a decision'.

Councils are elected to do what their community want not spend our money on what they want to do without asking community first eg The voice. Spending our rate money on legal fees for spats among councillors!.

Also too many Councils in Adelaide should have perhaps 5 at most! North, South, East, West and City. or even 2 North or South of City Centre.

Too much money doesn't on Council CEO's and staff ridiculous.

Councils are not accountable seemingly to anyone including the State Government and its citizens. They are able to manage their own status without interference.. Councils should make it very clear their financial position eg. Overall Debt,. The business plan although helpful should have a summary page outlining. to those with no financial skills items stating Debt, Employees & Cost of Salaries, etc. Other Areas of Management are not consulted with the general public. and this should be the case . Consultation, when initiated, is often worded abiguously to gain the outcome the council is seeking?

Councils generate "decisions" within departments then present " the question" for comment. No opportunity to vote on it. Usually it's a done deal, the Ratepayer has no power whatsoever. To improve the system particularly for important decisions a Referendum should be applied at the next Council elections. As it stands Ratepayers are tolerated simply because they are cash cows.

Councils have become too political and top heavy, too many chiefs and not enough Indians.

Council land rates 40+ years ago were a lot cheaper for the home owner with more services and very good up keep of council lands. We even had fruit trees on verges, green grass.

These days our council land rates are subject to our home values. With no value added services or up keep of council land.

Plan S.A. has taken over a lot of council employees roles, but we still have to go through the 2 stage system to have plans approved.

Most people I talk to, don't like councils very much at all. Too much red tape and dictators who know a lot about nothing.

Our farmers and first nation people have a lot of knowledge, lived knowledge, not text book knowledge or hear say, they are the people we should have working with our Councils.

I also think we don't need a 3 tier government.

People are homeless, hospitals are overwhelmed.

Cost of living is a struggle and land rates costs don't make it any easier for people to live comfortably.

Especially when we pay the land rates, but also have to maintain the council land around us, in fear of bushfire and floods around us.

Councils need to engage with community groups by being involved with their strategic planning and seeking to have an organisation's representatives on various Council Committees that best suit the community organisation's purpose. I have personal experience of establishing such engagement processes when I was a CEO. I could assist with a personal explanation. A positive from this for me was that some of the organisation's executive who sat on the Council Committees ended up being elected Councillors.

Councils need to get back to basics. They also need to listen to the rate payers and not just push through their own agendas.

Councils need to recognise that not all members of the community are connected to the internet and need to provide those NOT receiving internet information with posted updates PRIOR to their decision making . Too often the community finds out after a major decision is taken there fore not providing a democratic right for ALL members of the community to have their say .

Councils provide a lot of information for those who look for it. In my view most councils are already doing an adequate job in this respect.

Councils should have accountability to the results of engagement and shouldn't be able to just dismiss the results.

Councils should be able to determine how they would like to interact with their community

Councils should contact residents and rate payers by email or Australia post to notify them of reviews or other engagements including all public meetings held at the Council premises.

The Council should never have any discretion not to follow the Public Consultation Policy of the Council but must at all times follow this policy without exception.

No Deputation should be rejected unless full reasons are given by the Mayor or the Mayor's representative, that address all points made in the submission and any accompanying communications given by the person who was to make the Deputation. The full reasons given must be written into the minutes of the meeting at which the Deputation was to be otherwise given.

The Mayor and all Councillor's should have regular interaction with residents on a 3 - 6 monthly basis through a street corner or local hall meeting in each councillor's area.

Councils should contact residents and rate payers by email to notify them of reviews or other engagements and public meetings. Email addresses would need to be supplied.

The Public Consultation Policy should include;

- The Council should consistently follow the Public Consultation Policy of the Council without exception. Any infringement of the Public Consultation process will be referred to the Minister for Local Government, the Attorney General and the Ombudsman.

- All matters of Public Consultation that are being actively publicised in accordance with Section 50(4) of the Local Government Act 1999 must appear bolding on the front page of the main website of the Council conducting the consultation showing all details of the nature, date first advertised and closing date and place and exact time for the consultation.

- Section 50(7) of the Local Government Act 1999, which gives discretion to the Council not to follow procedures for changing the policy in minor matters must be revoked in full.
- If during any period of Public Consultation there is a Petition of at least 200 residents, submitted to the Mayor or their representative, requesting to extend the period of Public Consultation such extension will be granted for a further 21 days.
- Any period of Public Consultation must be live streamed or otherwise filmed for public viewing in the same manner as Council Meetings and a full transcript of proceedings must be included in the minutes of the meeting.
- No council Public Consultation Policy should be changed without the engagement of at least 3% of the residents (those of the Property Franchise should only be included if they also reside within the Council area)(Engagement is the total number of residents who have contacted the Council in relation to the proposed change).
- If any change of the Public Consultation Policy does not engage at least 3% of the residents the matter should be included on the ballot for the next periodic election.
- No Deputation should be rejected unless full reasons are given by the Mayor or the Mayor's representative, that address all points made in the submission and any accompanying communications given by the person who was to make the Deputation. The full reasons given must be written into the minutes of the meeting at which the Deputation was to be otherwise given.
- If anyone has their request for a Deputation on any subject rejected more than 3 times in a 12 month period then the matter must be referred to the Minister of Local Government, the Attorney General and the Ombudsman for investigation

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Councils should engage to understand community concerns and seek feedback on new initiatives and planning issues. Only doing this when legislated in a minimalist approach.

Councils should engage with the community when there are decisions that will be affecting their living environment, including rates, business/strategic plans intent, community events, road works, new initiatives (ie solar panels).

This engagement, should be conducted in many different formats, ie social media, flyers, meetings, door knocking, town hall meetings, etc.

There should be regular publications, like a quarterly newsletter.

Facebook, is important to reach out to as many people as possible. This may not work for the older generation

Councils should have capacity to determine how they engage with their communities. The purpose of the legislative changes was to provide more flexibility for councils to determine appropriate tools and methods for engaging with their communities.

Suggest a mixture of approaches is appropriate. Should be some mandatory or minimum requirements for some statutory processes and significant decisions (noted as Category A in the proposed CEC), but also allow for a flexible approach for more localised matters.

Councils should look at providing a monthly/quarterly report/newsletter

Councils should only be concerned with ensuring they provide services to the community.

Their ability, or opportunity they perceive to influence behavior should be removed.

Councils to allow members of the public to attend ALL, including meetings behind closed doors. Councils and governments work for the people in the community. All information is open for discussion with the people of the community before anything is decided where questions can be freely asked non judgemental or biased without information withheld.

Cover the spectrum. Social media, hard print, radio, television. Make any engagement charter loose enough in the coding to ensure that consultation occurs, but allow for existing and also new methods of communication.

Currently council hold 'engagement' sessions etc, often poorly advertised and not always convenient. On the flip side, if a Council is notorious for this tactic-have a decision and agenda they want to progress they will persist and persist with multiple consumer engagement workshops, until they get the outcome they are seeking, often in the face of clear and consistent community feedback that their current pet project (or desire to sell yet another asset for a sugar hit, or decision to purchase multi million dollar computer contracts that go for years, or actually pay for the construction of a commercial building then

hand it over to the private investor and pay that person over \$50K per year in rent on the building built with our money when there's a perfectly adequate council owned space available to use already...just saying...)

Currently, all I get is maybe 1 A4 or pamphlet with the occasional rates. Which is about the rates being spent on. & garbage pick up.

The community/council newsletter doesn't contain Council actions only adds for library and clubs/events. I don't check their web site every two second or follow the facebook pod cast.

I would love to see an actual write up. similar to what the newspaper does. in town newsletter (all town one copy pasted) And if they are seeking consultation put a poster up on the town notice board & the library notice board!!.

Different people engage in different ways, with varying frequency.

Councils should engage with their communities and receive feedback in a variety of ways including online, in-person, written etc.

Not everyone wants to engage on every single topic, many believe that Councils should be able to be trusted to make decisions on their behalf on many matters.

The key is that the community should be able to engage on issues that are important to them when they want to. Engagement should be accessible and transparent.

Where there is an issue that has the potential to have significant community interest or be contentious, councils should make additional effort to ensure that the community have the ability to participate in the consultation.

Low participation rates are not always a negative thing -people are more likely to engage on emotive issues or where they have concerns about a proposal. Highly emotive issues will have high engagement rates.

Direct communication to the rate payer not a general flier or newsletter.

Direct contact via text or through same channels as delivering rates ie email or mail

Direct mail outs and more advertng in the local paper. Not everyone is connected digitally and a large cohort of the population does not wish to engage on social media or electronically.

Direct questioning of members and administrative staff.

Easily accessible electronic materials available if I need/want to find it

Elected members should lead community groups to gain more understanding of how constituents are thinking. I want councils to be more transparent and actually listen to feedback and not just pursue their own agendas

Electronic media as well as mail outs to household addresses for all important issues.

Open forum before Council meetings open to the public.

email all meeting agendas and especially of proposed new and changes to existing by-laws.

The Council should at no time have any discretion whether or not to follow the Public Consultation Policy of the Council but must at all times follow this known and established policy.

Section 50(7) of the Local Government Act 1999, which gives discretion to the Council not to follow procedures for changing the policy in minor matters must be revoked in full.

email and inhouse meetings

Email newsletter and social media

Email or Facebook posts

Emails each fortnight/month with the key engagements that are available to complete online (also provide hard copies for those not computer literate etc).

Would like to see emails summarising results of consultations, and next steps.

Would like to hear about upgrades to my suburb and surrounding area, particularly parks and sporting facilities.

Emails for online engagement as well as workshops

Emails to ratepayers. Some content may include projects, anything new, grants etc

Emails, lettlers, posters, events

Emails, newsletters, social media

E-newsletters, newsletters, website, social media when there are new engagements.

Engaging online and using social media is the most flexible and convenient way to engage. I would like to be involved in decision making on matters that affect the area, services and facilities in which I live.

Everything council says/does should be easily available online.

Face to face, I think it should be regularly, fortnightly or monthly . Information I'd be interested in is projects, changes to services, events, programmes etc.

For engagement to be successful, a suite of tools needs to be employed to reach as many community members as possible. Councils are best placed to determine, with their communities, what that kit bag should look like.

For me - e-mail or web site works

Frequency should be quarterly at least. Decisions taken by Councils should be open and transparent to all.

Frequent email communication on all topics with option to opt in or opt out depending on interest in the topic. Should be as frequent as necessary to ensure timely information is provided; weekly updates would be a good start. All information is relevant to ratepayers and residents and should be provided so that individuals can decide which information they wish to access (it is up to us what information we would like to consume, not for Council administration to decide what it would like to reveal). Choice of other social media platforms for those who prefer those. Much more informative website. Quarterly hard copy newsletter (current) is insufficient in terms of information and timeliness and a waste of resources.

Genuine community consultation. Councils should proactively consult with the local community and community groups and organisations in an open forum. As a past Mayor, deputy Mayor and councilor too often in my council and other council meetings I have attended the consultation was mere tokenism. The meeting topics, time and date of such forums should be chosen by the community not the /council administration.

good easy to access web site, easy access to council agendas and minutes. Need to have all councils using the same proforma. Need a good search engine to search for items in minutes and agendas. City of Mitcham has taken away the ability for residents to search agendas and minutes. Community newsletters are very good and well used. CoM has a monthly newsletter

Greater connections between individual councillors and their entire constituents. Not just their "favourite" causes

Happy with the way they engage with me.

I am engaged but believe that many residents are not. Council relies heavily on technology to engage with residents which often omits the complexity of local issues. In turn, this leads to only partially-informed opinions and a divisive community.

I am quite happy overall with how councils engage with me.

Councils generally should make efforts to engage with youth, particularly when it comes to typical local government matters. Most councils already do a terrific job of engaging primary school students via local libraries and some other activities. However, growing this to raise awareness of other council functions and progression from this into high school could be of benefit. A past example is 'Be A Community Kid' (BACK). It would be great to revive and promote this and deliver it across all councils.

I believe Council Administration are fairly consistent with their approach to engagement, and the processes that they follow. I believe that Elected Members struggle with this process, trying to duplicate information and ending up with more than one source of truth sometimes, differing to the administration view. A Charter should be developed to ensure the consistency of information being provided by everyone, with EM's being allowed to share but not necessarily posting their own information.

I believe council should engage directly with community on a regular basis. Currently information is selectively supplied online, rarely are stakeholders(rate payers) notified about council operations and decision making.

Information news letters are letter box dropped, these generally tell us what has happened.
More transparency.

I believe that there should be guidelines on when and how they engage the community. At present, we are either not consulted (because issues are deemed to be 'not required' to consult OR we find out after decisions are made. Case in point is Mitcham Council's decision regarding money allotted to yes vote for the Voice. Council only spoke to the community AFTER the decision was made and then argued that they did not need to consult because money was already allotted to reconciliation and this was part of that allocation. When challenged, rate payers were accused by some Councillors as being previously disinterested and/or being biassed against our aboriginal population.

I believe there should be minimum requirements of engagement on certain decisions however individual councils should be able to tailor what works best for their community rather than a prescriptive approach. Councils should have to report on engagement input and stakeholder responses on decisions in their annual reports

I cannot speak on behalf of other Councils but Mitcham Council, has done a lot of work in this area. The current chamber has a great interest in improving public consultations and now has a variety of methods for doing this, such as drop-in sessions, a YourSay platform and more. Better consultation does come at a cost however and some Councils will struggle to afford this.

It is a complete waste of money for Councils to be required to publish adverts in local newspapers. This requirement was more relevant when local news, such as The Messenger, was a thing. Advertising the fact that the budget is out for consultation in The Advertiser during a week day is just a waste of money.

The difficulty now for Councils is reaching those who remain offline. It is much easier, quicker and more effective to run consultations and promote them online.

I consider very important for Councils to contact residents /rate payers by email and always notify them on any Council public meetings or activities/ Public consultations. The Council MUST follow the Public Consultation Policy with no exception. All the Public Consultations MUST be made accessible - published on the front page of the website of the Council; all details presented. Section 50(7) of the Local Government Act 1999 (giving discretion to the Council not to follow procedures for changing the policy in some matters) MUST be revoked in full. Any Petition (with at least 200 signatures) requesting extension of the period of Public Consultation MUST guarantee the extension for further 21 days. EACH Public Consultation MUST be live streamed or filmed for public viewing and a transcript of proceedings must be made available. NO Public Consultation should be changed without the participation of minimum 3% of the residents otherwise the matter should be included in the ballot for the next election.

I don't own a property for rates but rent, but know that I can participate in council run events, libraries and activities that cost funds to provide these services, I do get an newsletter with updates

I don't see any need to change what my Council is doing. They are always seeking ways to improve communication and should have the flexibility to continue doing this. They should not be strangled by legislation which could quickly become obsolete. Indeed, they have just utilized a model copied from Tikila in Greece

I get emails from my Council, and that works for me. I also follow their Facebook page which seems to have any relevant info.

I know we can't go back, but I actually appreciated the old Messenger Newspaper days with the column from the council. I've felt very disconnected since, even though I am an online engagement advocate. I don't really like or engage on social media.

I support the proposal that the Charter should "set out a range of general principles or performance outcomes then enable the specifics of each council's community engagement to be determined in its own community engagement policy". The Charter could then be supported by a community engagement guide or toolkit developed by the Minister or the LGA, to provide councils with a suite of innovative community engagement techniques. An optional fund could be established to encourage and support councils to test, deliver, evaluate, and record innovative engagement processes.

As noted in the Discussion Paper, the current prescriptive community engagement requirements have often been a barrier to effective, responsive, and innovative community engagement. To remedy this, the Charter should enable councils, in consultation with community, to develop their own community engagement policies, and to deliver community engagement that suits the needs and expectations of their community.

I think Council's could make better use of a "town hall" approach, but we have found residents have little interest in attending them.

I think current engagement is good, perhaps some information nights about how to engage with council, what to look out for and where ie papers, library, facebook, website

I think much of the information from council is too long winded and often obscure. A good example is the budget process which is a very long document and it is hard to get a concise overall view of what is proposed. Similarly consultation reports about various proposals are long and seem to be padded out, particularly with pages of unnecessary statistics and graphs which don't add much. I think monthly finance statements should be readily available to the public.

I think regular newsletters are fine. Perhaps if there are large new developments this could be broadcast as there is a need for more green spaces in these housing developments

I think that councils generally do the best that they can to engage with constituents, however it is often challenging to get people to engage and I'm not sure what the answer is.

I think that Councils should have the ability to choose how they engage for the most part, however we live in a changing time, advertising in news papers or local newspapers at that effect are useless for the majority of the population. I would like to see a central source of information such as a website where all consultations must be listed. So you can see all open pieces of consultation being run across the state by councils and relevant information on such. Councils would then be free to advertise however else they want and in line with their own policies, however they shall use the single source website

I think That local Governments are democracies like any other and the primary method of engagement should be via elected members. Steps should be taken to better support elected members in this role, such as increased stipends & greater support staff

I think the council building itself should be available to community, providing the resources in the building to the community. The staff should not be behind a counter where you line up. It should look like a library or open retail space. It should be bright airy and friendly feeling. I think accessible outdoor space and a public access Cafe should be available

I think the information we receive from Council is sufficient however the new Planning system is so complex not even the Minister properly understands it without getting advice. The Government providing advice about how Council should engage during new processes such as code amendments would be useful.

I think there are certain elements of engagement that should be mandated for statutory projects/strategies/initiatives regarding minimum requirements e.g. minimum timelines and promotion/notification of engagements. I think individual councils should have flexibility about exactly how they choose to meet these requirements e.g. exactly how they choose to promote their

engagements. The current requirements of the act are too prescriptive and haven't updated with latest technology and trends. I however would be wary about social media being allowed to be the only means of promotion/notification as many/most social media platforms require a subscription or account which limits accessibility whereas council websites including engagement platforms, are accessible to anyone who has internet access.

I think there should be a minimum level of legislative requirements which Council may exceed if they so wish in the ways that they want to. More focus should be on how Councils engage. It is still of traditional book/report types and does not represent how many people interact with organisations now days.

I think there should be minimum standards of engagement and it should be cognisant of modern methods of communicating e.g. email, website, social media, SMS, etc. These days a notice in the local paper is not really sufficient.

Modern electronic communication offers so many methods for councils to get direct responses from their communities and to engage. E.g. councils could do pop random polls via SMS on major initiatives.

I would love to see councils encouraged to engage in deliberative democracy on major projects and initiatives e.g. Annual Business Plan & Budget, Strategic Plan, Planning Policy changes, etc. An example could be half day community workshop on the Annual Business Plan & Budget with attendees invited randomly from the voters roll with a \$100 voucher for each attendee at the end to thank them for their time - with as many elected members attending to listen as possible.

Legislated consultation at this point in time is way too restrictive and open to legal challenge and does not really serve the purpose that it was designed. It would be better to have some absolute minimum standards and then encourage councils to engage in methods that are more modern and participatory.

I want councils abolished and the government to run everything.

I would just like response/feedback on issues that I have raised (i am in the third year waiting for one of them) with a person not just the email process that the Mitcham council uses

I would like councils to advertise and provide information to local media outlets in addition to social media, email, post and display signage.

I would like for councils to make serious attempts to contact residents when and how decisions will impact the area. This could be done with occasional Letter drops and expanding a council emailing list on a monthly basis to disseminate meeting minutes and decisions

I would like more direct democracy and greater participation in policy decisions at all levels of government, rather than just relying on representative models. We now have technology that enables direct participation models. We need better education in civics, but direct or participatory democracy models could be trialed at local government level to begin with, before being rolled out to State and national levels.

I would like there to be rules about council needing to comply with the feedback they have received. My council seeks feedback then ignores it, they have also opened feedback up to non residents or property owners of the council, meaning that those outside our council area can have input on our local matters, which is ridiculous.

I would like to see different categories for types of engagements. For High tier Business Plan or plans that impact over 5,000 people, I would like to see active multi-day public consultations, and all tools at hand being utilised. As we go to lower tier consultations, I would prefer simple letter boxed dropped material (e.g. changes to a reserve near me). I would like to see Council's engage with me when currently necessary based on tiers.

I would like to see leaflets advising upcoming community consultations, and council meetings especially pending financial decisions. These leaflets to be included with our quarterly rate notices especially for rate payers who are not technology literate. Area councillors to engage more with ratepayers re these events.

I would like to see more public meetings and workshops where community can actively contribute to discussion and shaping council initiatives.

I would prefer they offered the opportunity to participate in summary form, but do not provide reams of info at great cost.

I'm fairly happy with our existing engagement.

I'd like to see consultation reports on how community feedback was incorporated into the result.

I'd like to see information relating to local and community events from the council instead of just rate rise notices.

Ideally, Council information should be available on a clear and easy to navigate website. Unfortunately, not all community members are tech-savvy, however as this demographic ages more will be. Facebook is good for sharing information, but again not everyone uses it. I like the idea of using visual signs/posters, for example where a major project is taking place, having a large sign there to provide information. Emails are becoming too prolific, letters are becoming obsolete - so I do believe that individuals now need to take some responsibility to keep themselves informed.

If legislation directs councils on how to communicate with the community, then all avenues of communication should be included, such as:

Ensuring community meetings are accessible to all members of the community;

1. Email

2. Telephone: text and calls, provided the receiver has agreed to these calls;

3. Letters can be included with rate notices,

4. Flyers displayed in public buildings. Such as libraries, institute buildings and on community notice boards;

Social media such as Facebook

5. Ensure that all communications and information shared by councils are accessible, easy to understand, and available in multiple formats to accommodate diverse needs

6. Encourage collaboration between councils, community organisations, businesses, and residents to leverage collective expertise, resources, and insights for the benefit of the community.

7. Implement a reliable system for disseminating timely information and alerts during emergencies, ensuring residents are well-informed and prepared.

8. Conduct periodic surveys to gauge public opinion on critical issues, gather feedback on council performance, and identify areas of concern.

9. Host quarterly or bi-annual town hall/institute meetings or in the council chambers where residents can

directly interact with council members, ask questions, and provide feedback on various local issues.

10. Ensure council management doesn't try to influence the type of response and outcomes.

If the matter they are engaging on is going to directly impact me, then I would like to received personalised information to my letterbox or via email.

Improved frequency of newsletters, getting out into the public, meet with groups etc

In my Council, I think they get it about right, but I also acknowledge that they have more resources to be able to do that. Providing a mixture of ways to engage (online and in person, written and verbal, survey and freeform) is ideal. Different consultations can happen at the same time, but I think things on similar topics there shouldn't be more than one every two-three months.

In my view most Councils do engage with residents on different issues but it is the elected members who need to engage more with their residents and better understand their community. If the Elected Members are given appropriate resources to better connect with their resident which will help them make informed decisions.

In small regional councils, town hall meetings and roadshows on major projects and annual business plans ensures the grass root nature of local government.

include local residents in issues that directly affect them

Increased use of well designed online surveys to encourage informed participation and feedback on key plans, strategies and policies.

Use of simple, easy to read fact sheets and/or flyers to inform the community of key issues, plans, strategies and policies.

Quarterly drop-in sessions - Senior leadership staff and elected members make themselves available at community locations on a regular basis to meet and chat with ratepayers and residents.

Citizen forum held annually to identify community concerns, issues, ideas and opportunities - community members nominate and a (random where possible) selection of individuals representing the community demographic and geographic range are then invited to participate in an independently facilitated workshop/forum.

Information sessions; Decisions of Council; development applications (not sure how this would work given the PDI Act); community development exercises

Information within rates notice on matters related to the whole of council, Unley Life magazine that is posted out quarterly, Unley Connect (big database of residents) email on important council issues (frequency dependent on the issues at hand).

These are all effective methods of engagement and should continue. Unley also has the Shaping Unley process where local residents help shape the consultation process, which is issue specific for whole of council matters affecting all residents.

Outside of this there are the usual engagement processes: YourSAy, community meetings, social media etc etc.

Don't need more than that.

Informative newsletters, not spin. More open meetings with Council staff responsible for a particular issue the Council is dealing with.

Internet, Print Media, Hard Copy

Issue is lack of engagement from community. Plenty of community engagement sessions where 1 person turns up.

It is hard to please all of the people all of the time. I generally engage online, occasionally face to face. I think every community would be different in the ways councils can best meet their needs. Literacy levels must be taken into account, for a variety of reasons. Everything cannot be online because there is a digital divide between rich and poor. I like a monthly update, an annual check in plus periodic info when it is concerning my nearby area.

It's not engaging with residents/ratepayers that is the issue rather it's not listening. In tough times Councils still proceed with non essential expenditure.

Just on the previous questions, Councils should have some minimum standards and frequencies to communicate and engage, but also have freedom to localise that approach, to ensure best use of dollar, utilisation of most effective methods, and easy adoption of new methods.

Just present the proposed decisions, by mail or E-mail and allow me to vote for or against them.
Frequency: whenever new legislation or major decisions are proposed.

legislate parameters however allow councils to engage effectively locally - they know what methods reach their community best. I would like to see more expanded engagement as even though I am on newsletters etc often things that impact me I dont know about until after consultation is finished.....

Legislation should be careful to specify that the requirements indicated are minimum - they should not imply that the nature of communication is limited to the specified activities.

Legislative frameworks should be in place to ensure Councils engage fairly and impartially and not be subject to design that prejudices an outcome. The outcome of the consultation should also be specified i.e. how it will specifically be used in the decision making.

There is significant duplication and inefficiency in Council consultation - a central and standardised mechanism would offer efficiency and improved probity.

Less confidential matters at council meetings and more open forums for residents

Less red tape and excuses. Talk like humans and not from a script.

Let me be involved

Letterdrops as not all are online as well as online, open access meetings at local venues

Listen and react

I raised an issue about domestic residences being turned into business sites, storing building products in the front yard, council says not an issue :(

Roads are poorly maintained :(

Verge full of weeds, sprayed but not cut down or removed:(

Cars park in dangerous spots, or foliage blocks clear view:(

Local Councils need to position themselves as resilient, semiautonomous communities using community mode of production, deliberative democracy and a demonetised system. This is urgent as a global polycrisis is rapidly unfolding (eg. Middle East escalating crisis).

Local councils should be resourced with staff with specialist skills in community engagement. Engagement strategies should be co-designed with community - so that all elements of the engagement planning process (including things like when and how key information is communicated to different groups, and how different views will be acknowledged and what feedback is provided to those who engage) can be designed in ways that maximise the potential reach beyond the 'usual suspects' to people and groups who may not otherwise have their voices heard on key issues. Generating really high quality data about the lives of the people in the local area is key - so that the right kind of investments can be made in engagement activities. Engaging community in things like budgeting and resource allocation is also really important - not just as 'listeners' but as key actors, able to exert some influence over final decision making.

Local members provide updates, they should respond to any requests for information. I contacted my ward members about an issue, it took a number of attempts to get a response

Lots of information and feedback about process: why things should change and why not?

Make genuine attempts to engage elderly or isolated people to provide assistance rather than focusing on built up areas and majority groups. Ensure revenue expenditure is spread beyond population densities and identify areas of real need rather than populist and sensational objectives

Mandatory community consultation on all issues sent online and with rates notices to all community members that are affected (within proximity) not hand selected by the council to deliver a predetermined result. For those results to be binding and not overturned at the elected members discretion. The Council to publish results and demonstrate how they align with the policies and strategies in place to deliver benefits to the community.

Mandatory standards to ensure that councils engage and consult ALL community members instead of just hand-picking a sample. Provide community proof that their work aligns with strategies and policies.

Mixed
emails
letterboxing
social media

Monthly and/or quarterly and/or annual newsletter/s (emailed) advising completed/pending works and other council related matters.

Monthly communication on general business, infrastructure progress, events, opportunities for feedback on individual council areas

Monthly updates by email. Council initiatives should stick to roads, rubbish, etc. and stay out of identity politics and climate change. These issues are best addressed (preferably not at all) at state or federal level.

More attention to existing data, listen through door knocking, community gatherings (eg street corners), regular eg quarterly and a mix of formal and informal offerings

more detailed information about council activities and expenditure. Online is fine . At least monthly or information clearly available about how to access this information

More digital (has historically been hard copy focussed)

More engagement is needed that is not just their social media page. My local council recently decided to remove a number of sub-committees that individual community members could be a part of which provided a direct line to the meetings of elected members. This was a fantastic way to raise concerns, ideas and questions and ensure we could get an answer. I believe giving individuals the chance to contribute their ideas in person would be beneficial, however, this is intimidating to do at council meeting's and there are no other structures in place such as forums, Q & A sessions or consultative groups.

More events

More in person pop-ups in places of community activity. Mass SMS functionality should be provided to councils.

More in-person, community forums, personal contact.
less online based interaction.

More input and info around the infrastructure planned for all the increase in population and housing. Need for developers to share in cost of infrastructure not increase our rates to pay for it all. Tell us how they are sharing the costs

More invites to be involved in local issues such as changing format of local roads, removal of significant trees, on-street parking, ideas for local playgrounds, as well as council wide issues as green bin collections and ward size.

More of a public face not hidden in chambers. How about a stand at the Stirling market for public feedback and awareness.

More open town hall meetings where people from all over the district can discuss issues and ideas

More public consults

Transparent council processes and meetings

Continued social media and other electronic communications

Monthly summary of actions and issues in the local paper

Meet our ward councillors a few times a year.

More transparent

Most of the information I receive from the council comes from media - facebook or the likes. I live in the Adelaide Hills Council area, we don't have mail delivery in Mylor, so my post box is in Hahndorf which is part of the Mt Barker Council. I therefore receive more information about Mt Barker Council, including voting slips for them, in my mail box.

Much more proactive monthly or quarterly council online newsletter/magazine that can be easily viewed online ad a print edition for libraries ad community centres and community gathering places such as local cafe, pubs etc The magazine / newsletters should be professionally produced.

my Council already records their meetings which I strongly agree with. Ideally I would like to see a regular (monthly or bimonthly) update on news, progress of Council decisions and commitments from the Council's election. This can be both electronic (email) and hard copy. This has cost implications for the Communications section of a Council. But maybe that has to be considered if improved engagement is the focus. Clear coverage of decisions that are listed in the budget would be helpful.

Local council members are strapped for time and money, particularly if they are engaged in employment (which most are). Systemically the current system of small recompense and little/or no discretion re spending on communication and engagement works against a robust relationship with the ratepayers. The significant role of our local councillors needs rethinking if we are to improve engagement and general literacy about the significance of local decision making when it comes to ratepayers gaining the best value.

My Council complies with current legislation but skew information in order to disadvantage groups who may have language, cultural or IT barriers in order to further their own agenda. I think it should be mandated the consultation periods are longer and that feedback is acted on, not skewed by statistics and CEO and mayors with their own agendas

My council consults well with residents Nd ratepayers, but we have to be aware of balance in responses. Response May involve bias or people across different cultural groups or age groups do not respond. The disgruntled always do, but they may not represent the community.

My Council is very proactive in informing constituents of Council matters and seeks feedback on all matters of which I have responded to many and welcome the opportunity to do so.

My preferred means of communication is via email and I occasionally refer to the Council website.

My council makes the assumption that residents will use their website to keep up to date. This is not the case. We require a minimum of quarterly (or as required for major projects such as the \$9M caryard purchase that Council kept secret until after the purchase was completed).

Regular email newsletters or topic specific emails should be mandatory

My council provide letter box drop of guide to current and future plans and financials. Also available by web site

My Council provides opportunities to give online feedback on issues but I see that participation is generally less than 1% of rate-payers. And the <1% that do respond are generally not those in the mainstream with jobs and families and many demands on their time. Yet the Council uses the responses to justify actions that are not popular with the mainstream. One way to get better participation from more diverse people is with paper survey forms included with the regular council newsletters. People are then more likely to see what it's about, fill out the survey form, and later drop it in a mailbox.

My council publishes a quarterly "magazine style" newsletter with information about budgets, programs, initiatives etc. In addition they letterbox with small fliers about upcoming events and activities. They also publish Council Agenda's and minutes on their website along with information about grants, initiatives, events etc.

I am aware that many of my neighbours do not read any of this information and so are unaware of council activities and despite this I think hard copy and on-line information is necessary to try and reach as many people as possible.

I think you can not make people engage with their council if they have no interest in local government.

Need to be by every common media possible, and regularly on issues of interest to the public. Language needs to be simplified. Transparency is vital. Each Council should ideally consult with their community on what the communication and consultation should look like for their community.

News Letter

Newsletters and broadcasts of events/opportunities/what the council is doing just so that we know, fortnightly

Newsletters, email lists, social media.

Notice (eg by email) of when public meetings will be held

Notifications for projects near me with a letter drop. Everything else like annual business plan, budget etc can just be an online survey.

On line with yoursay

Online - no public meetings as times do not suit.

Online access to council meetings/live stream.

More written paperwork of council decisions provided to rate payers

Online and hard copy

Online news and updates

Online public forum should be formed, rather than using social media; each elected member should be available at least once every two to three weeks, say one hour each session (or 20 hours each year) to have a dedicated consultation and meeting time at the council office to meet the community directly PIUS attend the regular council meetings, unless personal circumstances including family and work commitments, all elected members must attend at least 80% of the meetings or the appointment should be ceased for the following year

Online surveys

Only about the important things That impact the community a lot. Not unimportant things like changing the name of something or the speed limit of a road. They should be able to make decisions like that themselves. Keep surveys short to encourage participation.

Open forums that reasonably consider constituents' input

Open, transparent

openly and democratically, frequently

Workshops, surveys, website, social media, open expo's,

Opportunity to sign up for email or text message notifications on matters of interest. Rates notices to include information.

Our council is good at engaging with the community

Our Council relies heavily on Facebook to communicate with the community. I feel there is a huge amount of people who are missing these updates and feel we need to consider letter box drop for communication when it is a serious issue. We just had our council move the Civic building to a whole new area in Whyalla and I don't feel there was enough public consultation on this matter, especially for business owners in our Main Street where the old Civic Building resides.

Plenty of engagement, however often seeks responses which validate pre-determined outcomes and dissenting views tend not to be given air or credence. Engagement often formal rather than substantive, checking the box rather than genuinely seeking the community's views. The notable exceptions, where genuine engagement and consultation occurs, stand out. In light of this, engagement should be staged and structured, at the initial stage, with an open approach rather than a channelled one. Information should not be slanted towards particular outcomes.

Post, email, meetings

Pre Covid, my local council management staff visited the town(3rd largest in council) community meeting once a year. Councilors/CEO/mayor once in 5yrs. WITH Out request. Public meeting 1 in 15years. This was poor. Current policy is call office or watch web site daily. just impractical
Mobile council meeting give most towns residents the chance to attend council meetings to find out what happening. PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS in the town/hundred that it affects. If council is going to do a project in a town, actually / formally consult the town committee. Draft council agenda should be available more then 3 days before meeting. seem to be rare to see posted 3 full days before meeting.

Principle 4 of the Act: Would welcome further guidance and clarification on what is considered 'reasonable' when providing information about how community views have been taken into account, and the reasons for actions and decisions of council.

Efforts should be made to ensure plain language is used in the Charter and Model CE Policy to be consistent with principle 2 in Section 50 of the Act

Proactive community forums at the beginning of the formulating of the annual business plan rather than consultation at the completion would be more useful

Provide a greater range of modern options to councils to give them the tools to better engage with "their" community.

Provide information on upcoming projects and decisions that will have a long term effect on the community.

Provide meetings on a monthly basis, for residents to be able to openly voice their views and opinions to their council.

Also, ask the people where money should be spent, through phone calls, letter drops and open meetings.

Provide more detail with Annual Budgets

Quarterly financials, benchmarking against performance of other Councils

Quarterly 'listening posts' at various locations throughout communities and annual newsletters of what Councils have achieved over the preceding year along with plans for the future.

Quarterly Newsletter.

A digital platform. eg Facebook with relevant links

Quarterly summary emails, online updates after all meetings, and annual letterbox drops. Regarding rate reviews, building approvals, park upgrades and other infrastructure and programs.

Rather than implementing a charter, it would be more beneficial to establish a comprehensive framework, akin to those in place for other states. Such a framework could effectively cover all tiers of government, providing consistency and clarity in community engagement practices. Unlike a charter, which may impose rigid guidelines, a framework offers flexibility, allowing councils to tailor their community engagement policies to their specific needs and circumstances.

This flexibility acknowledges the diverse nature of councils and their communities, enabling them to adopt approaches that best suit their unique situations.

Reduce the number of councilors. WTCC have too many (double the number per capita than Marion but in recent consultation they decided to protect their own backsides). I never hear anything for my two ward councilors

Regarding the Community Engagement Charter:

- Should enable Councils to adopt a flexible approach to community engagement depending on the nature and needs of their communities
- Should be principles-based and avoid a prescriptive approach
- Could include specific requirements for key consultation issues, such as consultation on the annual business plan and budget
- Should ensure that any specific requirements contained in the Charter are, as far as practicable, technology neutral to remain fit for purpose in light of any future changes.

Regular columns in local printed media with a precis of meetings and notifications of additions to websites

Regular communications of plans and outcome through Facebook email direct mail with rates notices adverts in local newspaper

Regular emails tailored to my area/ward

Regular emails to residents on council activities.

Councils activities should be non political and focused only on core business/maintenance/service provision.

Regular forums where Ratepayers can ask direct questions publicly

regular meaningful and purposeful community events

Regular newsletters containing information about rates, upcoming projects, updates on flood recovery projects, asking for input around hazards such as footpaths in need of repair or alteration, disability access to footpaths and public buildings, toileting and changing facilities accessible by disabled adults who cannot transition from wheelchair to toilet unaided

Regular newsletters, community forums and meetings

Regular updates on Council decisions via regional press, social media and Council website

Satisfied with current approaches using media/internet/direct mail and personal representations by council spokespeople

Should be monthly, through social media and DM for non-digital constituents.
Needs to be inclusive and clearly explain benefits, cons, budget costs, risks etc.

Should have news letter to advise what action is being taken near address and surrounding suburbs and general info about rest of council area as we no longer have local papers to provide this information. This could be by monthly email or hard copy if no email. Also provide space for community groups to insert info as difficult for them to pay for and distribute flyers and council often provides support to them in other ways so should maximize their exposure

Social Media, in with Quarterly rates notice (before decisions are made)

Social media/digital marketing (email etc) is probably the most efficient for myself but I also respect that for members of the community that things like letter drops would be better. I wouldn't want to do too many things like that as it wouldn't be super sustainable.

Stop talking so much. Just get on with it. If we don't like what the councils are doing, we can vote them out next time.

The remedy is the democratic process, not more red tape requirements.

Strong lobby groups like primary producers in regional areas often have a weighted influence on Chamber decisions. These interested parties will respond to the community consultation process but there needs to be tools for Councils to ensure the diversity of opinions is fully investigated. Numeric voting tools in surveys are not adequate.

Suggest inclusion of Section 193 and 194 (exclusion from and revocation of classification of community land) as these matters are often contentious from a community perspective and would benefit from having mandatory requirements.

Query whether the Mandatory Requirements for Requirement 1 could be strengthened. It is noted that in the LGA CE Model Policy; (which was circulated to councils for comment along with a draft Charter in September 2021)

4. Policy Statement, the Performance Outcome for the first two principles is specific about ensuring affected stakeholders are engaged and using communication methods that reach affected stakeholders. It could be argued that the Specified Means for Requirement 1 is inconsistent with the intent of these two principles and desired outcomes. For example, publishing in the Gazette as a possible single option for giving notice to the public is not in line with the intent of principle 1 in terms of members of the community having reasonable opportunities to gain access to information; similarly, for a public notice in The Advertiser. Suggest Requirements 1 could be amended to require at least two of the Specified Means.

Page 4 – Adoption of Community Engagement Policy. This section states a community engagement policy adopted by a council may provide for the undertaking of additional community engagement in respect of a Category A statutory process. We would suggest a stronger word than 'may' is appropriate for Category A processes, even if Mandatory Requirements are noted for this category in the Charter.

Summary of outcomes of council meetings and engagement on significant decisions

Surveys should actually be considered and not just ignored when it does not fit what the mayor/ceo wants

Text messages 6 times a year with links to information regarding community issues

That councils must have a Community Engagement Policy, but the basis of engagement be left to the Council to decide for all matters.

The annual newsletter which is mailed out with the rates notice is full of information but as far as I can work out, nobody reads it. It's become 'junk' mail. Council needs to regularly engage with community 'where the community receive their information' not in ways the Council thinks is sufficient. Council could use local media - we have a local radio station, a local paper and a local on-line news service which covers around 20,000 community members every week. Council should do monthly interviews/columns with these media on various issues to reach people where they get their news & info. Assuming everyone listens to ABC/5AA or reads the Advertiser is a very old fashioned position as information consumption is now quite fractured. Council comms teams need training in this area to ensure community are informed via the myriad channels available. I know it's time consuming but it doesn't have to be expensive, just well planned & coordinated.

The broader community could imho be specifically invited to council meetings with reminders by post and emails - and not made to feel 'in the way'. I would like to see more transparency and a less officious and exclusive mindset or tone - and for people in positions of community leadership - must behave respectfully and demonstrate awareness of inclusivity rather than exclusivity . We need people with a genuine understanding of team skills and democratic values of true collaboration and non discrimination. No hidden agendas.

The CEC provides for options which are appropriate to meet the consultation requirements for the formerly legislated matters. Council should control engagement options for less formal matters.

The Charter and principles and expected behaviours should:

- Be aimed at the council and its bodies; all that is required from the public is respectfulness
- Require objectivity, political dispassion, and openness by the council corporation
- Apart from respectfulness, not tell an elected member how they should engage with electors or community.
- Have a level and timing in proportion to the seriousness or impact of an issue
- Allow flexibility for oral presentation by a contributor to consultation (perhaps even discussion)

Revise the Charter and principles to improve community consultation and engagement:

- Make it more certain and define what is meant by the expressions used
- Make a council give explanation rather than "No"
- Make meetings in confidence not so easy to use to get around engagement and consultation
- Make the Charter enforceable
- There should be a third-party review process so councils and corporations cannot hide behind their door or incompetence, nor be free of any consequences for poor consultation or for disregarding content of consultation.

The Charter should allow the Council's to be flexible in their community engagement policies and procedures.

The Community Engagement Charter be reviewed and extended to a 28 day minimum. Extending the consultation time is consistent with the objectives of this review – to encourage participation in Local Government

The Community Engagement Charter is an improvement on the current prescriptive requirements, some of which are outdated, and provides greater flexibility and discretion for councils to identify and build the most effective consultation methods for our communities

The Community Engagement Charter should be less prescriptive to allow Council's the flexibility to engage their communities the way the community wishes to be engaged.

The council should make all households aware of more things than they do. i.e. Last financial year there was a green bin renewal program that I only found out too late via a neighbor, and Mitcham is currently running a dog and cat management survey that I only found out about via their website, which I don't go to much.

The council where I live does ask for feedback re plans etc but I have no acknowledgement what I say is read - eg through statement saying x number of people replied, y% thought ... and z% thought...

The current level of community engagement meets my needs. It is important that communications channels are diverse and not restricted to social media or online. For example, I am not a Facebook user and Facebook seems to be a preferred channel for some councils or issues.

The current online feedback model seems too difficult for many community members and so there is low engagement in my council. Plain English should be used. There also seems to be no answers to emails or incorrect information emailed back to by council staff.

The current process as suitable for me

The first problem is the question - the presumption that people seek engagement or to increase it. Why doesn't this survey ask an open question on this topic. I do not wish to engage with Council in the manner this department is pushing. When I need to contact Council, then Council needs to provide easy ways for me to do so, which for the most part it does. Otherwise, I do not wish to engage with Council, and I don't think there is any need to have elected councillors. And while I'm at it - there are only two genders and self identification is a fiction. Please ditch the nonsense gender categories throughout.

The last round of Local Government reforms have a section already written on Community Engagement and Council's are waiting for them to be enacted. I fail to understand why this is part of the review and what it means for that section of the Local Government Act 1999 that is yet to be implemented.

The local gov association should have an smartphone app, with 68 icons, representing all our councils, with links, so we all can see, read and access all the current news, services, financial statements, meeting times etc...

Plus, links to the 6 acts of legislation (legal framework) that our local councils work under.

The Mayor being available to the public to provide feedback to. It will be handy for each Mayor to be available for a "coffee and chat" session to discuss concerns within the council boundry.

The proposed Charter should be flexible in nature to allow for a more adaptable approach to localised matters.

The proposed Charter should help guide and evaluate community engagement as well as provide requirements for engagement levels on significant decisions such as the annual business plan and budget

The 'Your Say' digital platforms are a great way for councils and communities to engage. However, I would like to see more opportunities for discussion and contribution of ideas.

there are many way to communicate with people and councils should have a presence on major social media platforms and traditional media.. To help balance consultation there should have panels that represent the broader communities with views that reflect the spectrum of opinions, too often the consultation attracts highly engaged people usually with negative opinions.

There are too many Councils in SA. They are so small that they cannot engage effectively with the community and stakeholders

There are two issues here. HOW the . As a ratepayer, I'd like to know how & why financial choices are made as its MY money thats being spent. And there there are certain topics, subjects & issues that that I have more of an interest in than others. Emails are a reasonably cost effective way of communication, , although as rates notices are posted quarterly then another opportunity is there to take advantage of. My local council does both

There is too much consultation to keep up with, some of which is very minor. When there is major consultation often the responses from the community seem to be ignored, creating a distrust from the community in the consultation process e.g. 88 O'Connell Street, the proposed changes to boundaries of wards by ACC

There is too much reliance by Council administration on social media, internet surveys and email surveys to communicate and engage with our community. Given our cities unusual demographics were over 65% of the community are over 55 years of age or older, and less than 4% as technology savvy, this results in a very low response rate to council administration online surveys and a very low percentage of the community being actually aware what council are doing.

Council has been more effective with booths set up in community shopping centres, main street, and at town hall forums. Quite a few residents no longer buy newspapers are they can't afford it, due to economical challenges and the increasing high cost of living. Over 40% of our city are on government benefits, primarily pensions. Engagement with our community needs to be more flexible and the engagement approach situational depending on the topic.

There needs to be a wider variety of ways to communicate. Email is under utilised, as is social media.

There should be a legislated requirement for Councils to engage, but they ways in which they do it should be adaptable to suit the individual Council area.

Engagement methods should be diverse to capture different demographics (ie online survey, paper survey, 'townhall' meetings)

There should be a mix of options about engagement requirements: Minimum requirements/Standards that all Councils must abide by, as well as the ability for Councils to utilise engagement methods that are specifically tailored to their community.

They should only be required to engage on significant matters such as strategic and annual business plans and budgets, mandatory policies. All else should be at the council's discretion given that consultation consumes considerable resources.

Through a variety of channels, but having access 24/7 access to support and material

Through direct emails preferably - I am registered on my council's Your Say portal. Otherwise via the My Local Services app. Letters are OK too, but are slower and cost money, so having councils capture email addresses for residents and push notifications through the My Local Services app is highly beneficial and cost effective.

Through the elected officials communicating with their constituents.

Timely, relevant, open and transparent communication that address the priority community issues rather than advertorials and glossy pictorials such as my Council's "Kaleidoscope". I want to hear from the individual councilors on local issues, what are their views and priority issues. My councilors are largely invisible in any official publication, in the sense there is a council view but not individual councillor views. Individual councillors seemingly do not have a voice. One Council's "Community News" is more timely and pertinent to local issues. It allows individual councilors to express opinions and views on ward and council priority issues as they see them.

Town hall , public forum

Town meetings, written and emails at least bi monthly

Transparency in Projects with Costs, before, during and after.

Accurate and updated timelines on projects

Reasons why projects can never ever be completed on time or on budget

Transparency with community instead of hidden agendas, corruption, in-house favours, litigious actions, ignoring community sentiments.

Un like our city cousins, regional communities are quite close to their council and elected members. In our region's most of the community organizations have either council staff or elected members involved. This gives direct connection therefore when information is needed by either party local knowledge comes to the fore. Each council district is unique therefore directing how to engage through legislation is quite bizarre and unworkable. There are enough existing guidelines in legislation explaining the minimum requirements allowing councils to go further as required.

Unfortunately I feel that my local government Council undertakes public consultation merely to tick the box as a requirement rather than to actually listen to feedback provided by stakeholders in making prudential financial decisions. There seems now to be many more decisions made in confidence rather than allowing ratepayers to see how decision has been made and why.

Unless I choose to engage with a Council, how are they really to know what I'm interested in? Some people like email, and some people prefer letters etc. How do they ensure they reach every member of a

household? Put a letter in my mailbox and my husband could throw it out before I see it :) I think we need to ask what mechanisms are available to Councils to reach the widest amount of people possible and acknowledge that not everyone is going to be reached nor receive news in their preferred format.

Via text to alert of news, upcoming events or documents that are published for viewing. Or a link to their video summaries done by Lord Mayors. Easy for broader members of the community who are not connected to social media platforms like facebook or linkedin.

VIA THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER

Via traditional communication methods, such as by letter delivered to my letter box, not just by electronic means, which disadvantages members of the community without mobile phones and/or computers

We are supportive of the LGA's proposed Community Engagement Charter, attached to this consultation paper, which:

- Sets out high level principles aligned to the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)
- Identifies minimum requirements for legislatively required consultation with a degree of flexibility to achieve this (for example more ways to provide public notice and receive submissions).
- Provides councils with flexibility to design engagement processes that are fit for purpose and best meet the needs of the local community.

The Charter should be high level and principles based, allowing councils flexibility in policy development. It should

- Set out high level principles aligned to the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)
- Identify minimum requirements for legislatively required consultation with a degree of flexibility to achieve this (for example more ways to provide public notice and receive submissions).
- Provide councils with flexibility to design engagement processes that are fit for purpose and best meet the needs of the local community.

The Charter should set out principles and minimum standards however, councils should have capacity to determine in what ways they engage with their communities.

When asked in their surveys my preferences on how they spend my money on proposed projects I would like feedback on why my suggestions were ignored

When engaging with the community, councils should include practical operational examples that demonstrate the possible impact of different options so the community can understand the implications to their lives and therefore make informed decisions. The information presented should also be easy to read and easy to access.

Where it is determined at a Council meeting that an issue is of primary importance to the ratepayers, I believe that the Council must inform them immediately via email or post or text.

The Council does have ratepayer contact information.

With plenty of advance notice and not just via council agenda which are often only available a day before the meeting in their complete form and often over 300 pages. For example my council advised of a \$12 million proposed new building only in the council agenda (district population just over 2,000) then they wonder why people took to social media and are snarky about it. Then they seem to have taken no notice and continue on their merry way buying crown land = our parklands to put it on.

Written communication

written letter to home address

YourSay pages

Public notifications and signs

Social media

Council newsletters

Council does not engage with members of the community that disagree with its progressive, Globalist, Labor-Greens agenda.

The proposed Community Engagement Charter appears to provide broad scope for Councils to determine the engagement approach (through adoption of policy) that best meets the needs of Council and the community, and recognises that what may be significant for one Council, may not be for another. Councils should be able to determine how they will engage – and the Charter provides for this.

The LGA Charter appears directive on mandatory requirements, but flexible in enabling Council to adopt its own policy and approach on other engagement activities.

Each Council should have the capacity to determine how they engage with their communities each consultation is developed based on the topic or issue and the affected people from the area captured for consultation.

It is my opinion that a Charter should exist, BUT the content should be left for each individual Council to determine. Other than the basics of Equity, Transparency, Honesty and Accountability, the finer details must be determined locally. What a large metro Council may determine is vital to them, may seem trivial, irrelevant or immaterial to residents or elected members in a small rural Council.

For the final document to have relevance it must be driven by the community it seeks to serve. A Charter that doesn't have the Community's support will be deemed to be a failure by that Community and perceived as just more "red tape for Council to hide behind".

Perceptions of Community Engagement varies from Council to Council and individual to individual, the best that any Council can wish for is to provide honest, open, accountable direction & advice while providing links to supporting documents in both hard copy and electronic formats that encourage further discussion as appropriate.

Over regulating the content would, in my experience, over complicate the issue and create disengagement by those who 'get lost in the process'.

The current Engagement practices of Open Meetings, formal Agendas & Minutes, Public Notices, Newsletters, Social Media, Public Consultation and informed comment by senior staff supported by the Mayor (with the demonstrated support of the Councillors) appears to be working. Why fix something that isn't broken?

Council should be able to determine how they will engage their community for all matters. This will allow for a more consistent approach on a broad spectrum of required and optional consultations.

This should be tailored to the specific needs of the community and the nature of the decisions at hand. Charter - Minimum req'ts/defined areas where engagement is required Policy – Methods/tools, strategies, detailed procedures/methods of engagement

Yes – in determining their own community engagement methods enables flexibility to tailor approaches to the unique needs, characteristics, and preferences of the local community.

State Government should clarify what is mandatory, and enable communities to determine what else they consider appropriate at a local level.

No, Council's had the opportunity to participate in developing the Community Engagement Charter with the Local Government Association 2+ years ago. Further resourcing and feedback to be allocated to consultation on the State Governments proposed Charter when released for consultation.

Council's have been deferring review of existing public consultation policies and procedures for several years since the concept of a new community engagement Charter was raised by the State Government and included in the Local Government Reform Bill and subsequently passed into legislation. This legislation was passed over two and a half years ago (17 June 2021) with the first provisions commencing and a proposed community engagement Charter presented by the Local Government Association in late 2021. It is now 2024 and the State Government is yet to present its own proposed draft Charter, and is only now conducting consultation seeking input on what the public wants in a Charter. Surely this step should have occurred by now, or even before it was proposed and decided (or even considered necessary) to change the existing regime. Council's and communities need the State Government to make a decision and implement their proposed Charter to provide certainty and direction as to what is mandated and what is considered discretionary for community consultation moving forward, so that Council's can commence their own processes to update and implement their own local consultation arrangements.

No objection to sections incorporated in current proposed Charter.

In terms of Councils' own community engagement policy, when considering current CE policy, this could include:

- any other principles deemed relevant and/or appropriate
- engagement context
- IAP2 spectrum relation to levels of engagement
- steps for undertaking CE processes

Ideas relating to councils' community charter is potentially hard to answer from council staff perspective, however flexibility is key. We are interested in seeing what community ideas and expectations are.

The types of information council would like to include when they engage will be dependent on the decision, activity or process to be engaged on. Information should be of a sufficient level and in an accessible format so individuals are able to easily understand the issue or proposal as well as possible impact. This includes access to information in online and offline formats, Easy Read etc

The Community Engagement Charter should be a framework that sets minimum state-wide standards, accompanied by Council set Community Engagement Policies.

There should be flexibility for Councils to choose promotion and implementation arrangements for community engagement. Legislation should be further amended and/or commenced to remove the requirement for Councils to publish in newspapers, hold specific public meetings etc. If minimum timeframes for engagement are required, this may be set in the Charter so there is consistency across all Councils.

The Proposed Charter should focus on simplifying processes for Councils as per the original intentions of the legislation change and provide an overarching framework only that enables Councils to set arrangements for promotion and implementation arrangements within its Community Engagement Policy at its discretion.

Councils should have flexibility to engage with their communities in an effective way, with minimal direction provided by the State Charter.

The Charter should be flexible enough to support Councils to keep up with technology changes and Community expectations in relation to engagement and not anticipate a one size fits all approach to engagement.

To best meet the needs of each unique community, the council should have some capacity to determine how they would like to engage

The Council utilises the engagement level selection matrix to assist in determining what level of engagement to select based on the IAP2 spectrum of engagement e.g. inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower. This assessment tool is used for each consultation to ensure the potential impacts to the community have been thoroughly assessed and that engagement methods are well informed. Councils should also consider utilising a hybrid approach in engaging the community in decision-making to ensure inclusivity, such as utilising both online and in-person methods of engagement

Welcomes a Charter that is flexible and fit for purpose but is yet to view a draft of the Charter. At the time of writing this submission a draft Charter has not been accessible.

Welcomes and encourages more participation across the community to ensure a thorough and diverse range of community views is captured.

Believes the Charter does not need to include methodology just principals and guidelines.

The Council has previously advised of its support for the LGA's proposed Community Engagement Charter. However, it is important to ensure that the proposed Charter does not become more prescriptive to ensure Councils can tailor their community engagement processes as required.

The Charter should include the statutory requirements and the associated minimum requirements in respect to these matters. The Council's Community Engagement Policies should provide a range of options for engagement relevant to the specific nature of the matter and should be based upon the International Association for Public Participation's Public Participation Spectrum.

The Council supports a contemporary approach that sets minimum notification and consultation standards and is of the view that Councils should retain the flexibility to determine how they will engage with their communities.

Councils should have the capacity to determine how they will engage with their communities.

Councils should determine when to hold their meetings and whether or not to livestream/record their meetings. There is strong support that meetings be available to their community to offer a higher level of engagement and transparency.

The Council of the Future Report recommended that Councils should be able to adopt a flexible approach to community engagement and that Councils should be moving towards a 'community governance' model of engagement. It also recognized that some significant issues, such as the annual business plan and budget, might require more specific consultation arrangements. However, the current arrangements set out in the Local Government Act are no longer fit for purpose and should be changed.

A principles-based Charter would enable a Council to engage with the community in a manner that meets the expectations of its own community, as well as be more strategic. For example, Council is currently engaged with its community to facilitate a Community Plan. This Plan, which is being developed under the auspices of Council, is entirely community driven, with wide community input.

The current version of the Community Engagement Charter (the Charter) that was produced by the Local Government Association of South Australia is supported. Council strongly supports a principles based, rather than prescriptive, approach. Maintaining a principles-based approach enables all councils to effectively serve their communities, rather than being subject to a directive regime that may not be practical in their circumstances or meet their community's needs and expectations. Given the many differences between councils and communities, a 'one-size fits all' approach is rarely effective and commonly leads to administrative burdens for little gain

That said, a minimum timeframe for legislative engagements is reasonable to mandate, however, the decision for how to engage should be at the discretion of each Council, guided by the best-practice principles in the Local Government Act 1999 (the Act), which can be contextualised in each council's engagement policy.

Any requirements should be flexible enough to allow for the unique circumstances of each council area

IAP2 defines engagement as “an intentional process with a specific purpose of working across organisations, stakeholders and communities to shape the decisions or actions of members of the community, stakeholders or organisation in relation to a problem, opportunity or outcome”.

There is a lack of understanding, among both decision-makers and the broader community, on what engagement is. Engagement is broad spectrum and ranges from informing through to empowering the community. All engagement methods are valid, and the appropriateness will depend on the nature, scale and complexity of the project.

Considering engagement as a project risk can sometimes create the risk. Engaging earlier in a project stage, for example taking into account engagement factors at the earliest stages of project planning, will mitigate risks and allow earlier identification of likely issues (including broader project risks), providing valuable time for better informed strategic decision making.

The definition of engagement should be included in the Charter to ensure that all councils are working with the same definition of engagement.

It is widely acknowledged by governments at all levels that community engagement can be a significant project risk for infrastructure and planning projects, but there are also substantial opportunities in engagement that may go unrealised.

Managing community opposition and making substantial changes to projects, particularly at late stages of project planning, can add costs and delay projects.

Engagement expertise is critical to the strategic considerations for project planning. Strategic engagement expertise will identify appropriate opportunities within a broader project plan to enable engagement to enhance a project, not simply pose a risk to be managed. For example, local knowledge can assist project planners to better understand local context that can feed into project design

Engagement by the general public should be appropriate for the community that a council is seeking to engage with, which would be best determined by the council itself. Opportunities for engagement will differ depending on geographic and demographic factors, and additional engagement opportunities may be needed for a project that is of a particularly large budget or time period.

While individual councils should determine how they engage with their communities, the requirement to

factor in the complexity, scale, budget and time should be set in the Charter, which could include a paragraph such as:

ensuring that there is at least one opportunity for the greater community and business to participate in an engagement activity that is suitable for the project taking account of factors such as resources, scale, complexity, budget, and time.

This could be supported by further examples such as an online or public meeting, workshop, community discussion or survey.

One risk that we have identified in engagement is a sense of engagement fatigue, particularly when a community is consulted about an issue repeated times without seeming to account for previous engagement. This reduces trust in the engagement process.

There is the opportunity for government to develop a Community Engagement Atlas/Wiki. This online tool could provide key information and statistics including educational information, what is happening (and where), and what is important. It would provide transparency for community and stakeholders, the proponent(s) and government, reduce community engagement fatigue, identify, mitigate and reduce risks and increase trust in projects.

The Charter should stipulate minimum requirements or performance outcomes. Councils should have the capacity to determine (i.e. through policy) how they will engage with their communities. Allowing council to determine the exact activities they will undertake ensures councils implement best engagement strategies for their communities.

No, the CEC provides a balance between ensuring minimum requirements are met, whilst allowing flexibility to build the most effective / appropriate approach.

This should be customised to meet the specific requirements of the community and the nature of the decisions being considered. Councils need to focus on actions that are relevant to their specific council and community, avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach. For instance, the details of tools and methods should not be embedded in policy; instead, we have procedures in place for handling such specifics

The existing version of the Community Engagement Charter, released by the LGA in 2021, is endorsed. Maintaining a principles-based approach allows all councils to effectively serve their communities, avoiding a directive regime that may not be practical or in line with their community's needs and expectations. Due to the significant differences between councils and communities, a one-size-fits-all approach is seldom effective and often results in administrative burdens for minimal gain.

Mandating a minimum timeframe for legislative engagements is reasonable, while the decision on how to engage should be left to the discretion of each Council. This should be guided by the best-practice principles outlined in the Local Government Act 1999 (the Act), contextualised in each council's engagement policy

One aspect that deserves more attention, whenever possible, is determining which subjects and processes are subject to 'mandatory' engagement. While it's acknowledged that the list of mandatory engagements ideally concerns matters of interest to all citizens, the reality is that many of these statutory engagements receive low levels of participation

To foster interest in civic engagement and enhance trust, governments at all levels need to transition towards more participatory engagement. Although local government is an ideal level to experiment with participatory engagement, making this shift is complex. It demands a high level of openness, flexibility,

few pre-conceptions, and a willingness by elected officials to share power. Supporting a shift to more participatory engagement requires resources and a partnership approach, rather than a top-down legislative regime

The current principles in the Act provide a robust framework for high-quality engagement. Supporting elected officials in understanding community engagement, their roles, responsibilities, and various engagement methodologies through mandatory training could empower council members to engage with their constituencies effectively. This ensures that councils continue to evolve and enhance their engagement efforts with appropriate policies and resource allocation decisions

In conclusion, it is crucial to recognise that Council Members are elected to represent their constituencies, involving the responsibility of making challenging decisions. Not all decisions may require community engagement, and authentic involvement should be reserved for matters that hold significant importance either to the State (as prescribed) or to the community (determined by the Council in consultation with the community, through a community engagement policy, or on a case-by-case basis as issues arise).

The Charter ought to adhere to a foundation of principles. Similarly, Councils' individual Community Engagement Policies should also be rooted in principles, outlining how to achieve desired outcomes. Specifics regarding methods tools, strategies, and detailed engagement procedures implemented by the council administration are further discussed in the subsequent question below.

Councils should tailor their approaches to suit the unique needs of their council and community rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all strategy. For instance, intricacies related to tools and methods will not be explicitly outlined in policy; procedures have been established to address such specifics.

Certainly – Councils should determine their unique community engagement methods, allowing the flexibility to tailor approaches to the distinctive needs, characteristics, and preferences of the local community. The needs and expectations of communities vary widely across the state. Therefore, a 'one size fits all' approach should only be adopted sparingly, and solely when the benefit to all significantly outweighs the potential inequities created by standardisation. Whenever feasible, clear outcome-based principles should be established for guidance, allowing methodologies to remain flexible for local contextualisation and responsiveness to changing conditions.

The fundamental goal of both representative democracy and community participation is for citizens to influence outcomes. There is a delicate power balance between citizens and elected officials that must be consistently navigated and managed, with a tendency to lean toward 'the community should decide.' Therefore, the Charter should not adopt a more prescriptive approach, but rather focus on its objective outcomes.

The State Government should provide clarity on mandatory requirements and empower communities to decide what additional engagements are suitable at the local level. It is essential to exercise caution when designating a topic as 'mandatory' to ensure the engagement holds value, with explicit clarity regarding the purpose of the engagement.

For instance, councils are mandated to conduct consultations on their Annual Business Plans. Typically, the participation in such consultations is low. While people theoretically should be interested in understanding their tax rates and allocation of funds, the practical reality is that most individuals are not. Therefore, imposing a universal set of requirements with fixed consultation periods and methodologies is a misuse of time and resources. Additionally, Elected Members are not obligated to act based on consultation responses, rendering the process more of an informative exercise rather than genuine

consultation or engagement. It is noteworthy that state and federal governments are not obligated to seek public input on tax increases or budgetary decisions, suggesting a need to harmonise requirements across government tiers when determining what should undergo 'mandatory' consultation.

Adopting a human-centered design approach to government services, projects, and decisions is essential to avoid futile processes that masquerade as engagement. Genuine engagement goes beyond voting and bureaucratic consultations; it involves a collective agreement on the issues to be addressed and a collaborative, power-sharing approach to identifying and implementing solutions. This approach demands time, resources, and the freedom to explore issues without the constraints of legislative directives. Instead of imposing a rigid, one-size-fits-all strategy, it would be more beneficial for the state government to collaborate with councils, building collective capabilities and capacities to engage citizens meaningfully across various matters related to public policy and public value.

In light of the declining numbers of people consuming print media publications, and the corresponding increase in digital media platforms, requesting that these legislative requirements be expanded to include appropriate digital platforms.

Feedback received from member councils by the LGA indicated broad support for the LGA proposed CEC combined with a CEP approach.

Our Association regards submissions by groups such as ours as one party not as representative of the group's membership. We have over 250 members who support our submissions however we are counted as one resident?

Council supports the draft CEC being a 'principles-based approach', to allow councils to determine the activities they will engage with their communities on with respect to the needs of their community. Providing a principles based approach allows for each council to have flexibility in the way in which they engage with their community, with minimum standards only being mandated for more significant tasks. Council also supports the approach that publication requirements should be directed towards platforms that are readily accessible and utilised by local communities and publication in the Gazette or a state-wide newspaper should be reserved for matters of particular significance.

Council favours a principles based approach with specific mandatory requirements being contained to provisions already outlined within the LG Act. Each council area is different, and Council has 22 individual settlements, all with varying preferences for engagement on matters of interest to them. Council knows its communities best and should be provided with the ability to tailor engagement solutions as and when required

The needs and expectations of communities vary across and often within regions, districts and states. Councils should be able to determine community engagement methods that are flexible and adaptive enough to tailor approaches to the distinctive needs, characteristics, and preferences of their community.

Councils already consult on many more matters pertaining to their budgets and activities than what is required by the State Government's legislation. Consultation is resource intensive, both in human and financial resources and Councillors should be able to exercise discretion to engage with the community on matters of significance to avoid consulting on everything and risking disengagement of the community.

I submit that the 21 day public notification requirement is too short. Mitcham Council has had a 28 day minimum for many years, which has been well received by the community, and has not presented any operational issues with the extra 7 days.

Extending the consultation time is consistent with objective to the review – to encourage participation in local government.

I submit that the range of consultations specified in the Act also needs to be reviewed and expanded. This is consistent with the principle 3 - “seek to foster and encourage constrictive dialogue” and is consistent with the object of the review.

I also have concerns about consultations involving on line “box ticking” processes. The risks include creating a bias by the wording of the survey questions, and the capacity to generate further bias by mass responses from a particular interest group (e.g. a sporting club) .

I have concerns with replacing prescriptive consultation requirements (which should be expanded, not diluted) with a non specific charter, which will no doubt lead to more divergent approaches to consultation than already exist.

The requirements need to be determined based on the purpose of the engagement and goal of the engagement process being either public consultation or community engagement. Where community engagement is required, this should be a flexible best-practice approach tailored to the scope and complexity of the issues involved.

A Charter should contain an overarching guide with principles and legal requirements for Council's when engaging with their community. Councils can then determine the specific and consistent approach to their community when engaging with them for a more tailored and responsive engagement process that aligns with the characteristics of each community however noting that this must be flexible and tailored to accommodate the different types and decision-making scenarios

Councils should have the ability to determine how they engage with their communities, as they are best placed to understand their local area and the most effective engagement strategies for residents, businesses, and visitors.

The benefits of local councils deciding the methods and delivery of engagement on a case-by-case basis for different matters may include a more targeted and informed approach and ensure community appropriate communication tools are utilised. This can assist to deliver more meaningful engagement, increase participation, result in a higher level of relevant feedback being submitted and in-depth insight into community sentiment and opinion on matters that may affect residents

Community engagement is a dynamic process to ensure that the community is provided with every opportunity to engage with Council. Council can ensure that many different types of materials are accessible for the community with both online and printed materials and that they stay up to date on changing and emerging technology. These materials should be adapted to the diverse needs of the community and cater for different communication styles and preferences, if required. Council should continuously explore innovative and effective ways to enhance their interactions with the community, including more face-to-face interactions, and have the flexibility to tailor engagement strategies to the specific needs and preferences of the community

Information included will be determined based on the scope of the project or decision required. This information can be presented to the community in many different forms and the use of visual aids, infographics and other graphic displays should be considered when presenting complex information in an easily understandable format to the community. More face-to-face presentations within the community should be included

It frustrates me that the current consultation process by council is largely a tick the box to satisfy legislative and compliance requirements with community feedback and concerns largely ignored in the

decision making process.

Council documents are readily available online for stakeholders to view if they wish to keep up to date on activities. Sadly many people are complacent and quite happy to pay their rates without following up how these contribute to council services. As a primary producer who pays significantly more in rates than a local homeowner with a single residential property, I do want to know how my contribution is being managed by council.

The most important issue to do with Community Engagement charters is that the results are public and the council is required to act on them.

There are too many instances over numerous years that governments have called for submissions on topics and then never responded or made public the outcomes. It is important that councils do not follow this path. A great Community Engagement consultation can be run and nothing come out of it. We do not support this.

Council endorses the Local Government Association's (LGA) draft Community Engagement Charter (Charter) and supports the minimum consultation period for those activities outlined in that document.

- Standardised engagement approach for those items listed in Category A in the LGA's draft charter
- Councils should have the capacity to determine how they engage.
- It is recognised, however, that there are some topics (such as those identified in Category A of the draft charter) that there would be a community expectation to a minimum consistent standard.
- It is essential that Council is able to develop a consultation policy appropriate for its community. A significant part of our community is non-residents. As such, we need to ensure our engagement approach is fit for purpose.

What other ideas do you have for councils' community engagement?

- Having a panel of hard-to-reach groups and stakeholders
- recognises the community's expectation of having plain English documents with both summarised and detailed information.
- Councils must also communicate better regarding how community feedback has been incorporated into decisions.
- Focus on building a relationship with the community rather than a one-way relationship of 'obtaining feedback'.

There should be guidance on mandatory consultations. The Charter shouldn't be overly prescriptive, and should allow councils to use discretion.

The Charter should offer some guidance which is high-level, or set out minimum requirements, and allow for councils to go above the minimum requirements.

The Discussion Paper recommends that instead of councils having a Public Consultation Policy, they will be required to have a Community Engagement Charter.

It is not clear how the flexibility of the Charter will improve council communication if there is a lack of desire on its part to do so.

We suggest that 'Community Engagement Charter' as opposed to a 'Public Consultation Policy' is merely semantics. At least a policy has set rules and obligations and can be enforced.

We question the usefulness of a Community Engagement Charter if it only provides principles and guidelines. Councils must be mandated to undertake specific community engagement and use the current model based on IAP2 guidelines. There is no utility in yet more 'parenthood' statements in a

Charter that councils can ignore at will and with impunity. There is a need for credibility of policy, but behaviour and intent must align with the policy for it to be credible

Generally I observe a high standard of community engagement within local government. One of the biggest challenges I see however is the community engagement framework set by the state government in regards to the planning and design code is often at odds with the high standard of consultation in other areas of council business. It's limited scope for genuinely engaging communities in local planning and development decisions makes for great frustration and confusion in the local community when they have little to no ability to have a say on such decisions.

IAP2 principles should be embedded in the Charter but it should largely be a flexible directive, with councils able to adapt to their available resources and local community expectations

I would like to see accessibility of information and opportunities to provide feedback improved within councils. For example, free translation/interpretation services upon request, requirement that there is always an option to send an email even if a structured survey response is the preferred method (maybe even audio files accepted), PDF's are accessible and friendly to online reader software, all images or diagrams used in any online material is required to have embedded explanatory text

Process and poor consultation is a feature of community engagement by councils and council corporations. It is offensive. Councils have all the power using public funds and we must do it all in our personal time. Ridiculous processes and not listening means the "locals" are in reality being excluded from local governance.

The CEC should be flexible in nature and set minimum standards for such statutory items as the Annual Business Plan and Budget with a focus on a 'principles-based approach'. The CEC should allow various means of engagement and include opportunities for Councils to base their engagement around specifics to the demographics of their community. Council knows their community and is best placed to determine how to engage with them on differing matters whilst still being clear on the objectives of the consultation itself.

The CEC should include a set of minimum standards for the categories of consultation and objectives to be considered with the more detail orientated components included in individual Council policies to allow Council's to best determine how to engage with their communities. A more directive CEC may see Council's undertake unnecessary consultation in order to meet legislative requirements at a cost to both Council and the ratepayers. Engagement should be considered in line with the importance of the decision-making process and the item on which the consultation is being undertaken. This can only be achieved by a less directive CEC. The reality is that some community members will not engage regardless with contentious issues always seeing a much higher level of engagement than those decisions which are less controversial.

Information included should provide a solid basis of background data as to the decision being made, the impacts of the decision, how the engagement is being conducted and why, what is being sought from the engagement and how the information gathered will be used. Ther CEC is minimalist in nature and a little more information around principles and performance outcomes would be beneficial.

Community engagement policies and procedures need to have the flexibility to enable Council's to engage with their community in a way that achieves the best outcomes for all and is fit for purpose in relation to the importance of the decision-making process also noting Council's approval of agreed actions to reflect changes to the requirement to advertise in a newspaper.

Council does agree that a fit for purpose approach to a Charter would benefit. Each council should have the ability to determine its own engagement strategy (in addition to what is required through legislation), as every council will have its own individual set of challenges and circumstances to navigate, which will not suit a 'one size fits all' approach

In our view the future Engagement Charter needs to be consistent across Councils and directive in its approach and should set minimum requirements and standards for Council's community engagement. There should also be consistency across councils own community consultation and engagement policies and these should be reviewed every 2-3 years to ensure councils are engaging in a modern and affective manner

Our Group supports the development of a community engagement charter to facilitate diverse participation in decision-making. Utilising a consistent and well-developed engagement charter would support young people to engage with local government providing the charter is underpinned by the understanding that young people, including those under voting age, are active citizens already who experience considerable barriers to exercising their rights to participate

Local governments undertaking community engagement, including with young people, should be mindful of organisations that provide advice and support on best practice youth engagement.

I would not support removing any of the existing minimum public consultation requirements from the Local Government Act 1999, and I do not support replacing these legislative requirements with a Community Engagement Charter. Councils already have flexibility to carry out additional engagement methods in a way they feel best meeting their community's particular needs. Having the existing minimum public consultation requirements in the Local Government Act 1999 protects these minimum requirements from being changed without going through our elected Members of Parliament to debate and vote on in Parliament. A Community Engagement Charter could be created, but the discussion paper does not make it clear who would be responsible for creating the Community Engagement Charter and any political processes around future changes to the Charter if it is not included in State legislation. If a Community Engagement Charter is created, it should be in addition to, and not a replacement of the existing public consultation requirements being specified in the Local Government Act 1999

I believe the 21 day period is too short for most issues, it takes time for constituents to hear and discuss and I think it should be a minimum of 28 days. More importantly the online consultation needs to not be "box ticking" with a leaning towards a particular agenda – it needs to allow for diversity of ideas and discussions.

A recent survey conducted among ratepayers in the Council revealed their preference for Council communication through newsletters/mailouts and Facebook. We interpret this preference as indicative of the aging demographics in the area. It's important to note that communication preferences may vary in different communities and should be acknowledged accordingly

Topic 1: Council meetings (1.2)

- No resident or rate payer should be restricted or stopped from entering a public meeting of any description of the Council regardless of limitation of seating except where there are physical limitations to the number of people who can fit into the meeting room when standing.
- No physical barriers should be set up to prevent access from the public gallery to the Council

meeting place.

- Any existing physical barriers must be removed.
 - Any overflow rooms set up for additional members of the public must have adequate and fully functional sound systems that can be heard by an average person in these overflow rooms except where a fully functional text system is in place that operates in real time.
 - No person wishing to enter such a public meeting should be asked to supply their identification, name or other details.
 - Council may have police or security personnel up to a total of 5% of the number of visiting members of the public present for the security of all attendees.
-
- When overflow rooms are set up for additional members of the public they must have adequate and fully functional sound systems that can be heard by an average person in these overflow rooms .
 - No one wishing to enter such a public meeting should be asked to supply their identification, name or other details.

Councils should become more operational under state and federal guidelines. We do not require. 3rd tier organisation to meddle in state and federal decisions.

- No resident or rate payer should be restricted or stopped from entering a public meeting of any description of the Council regardless of limitation of seating except where there are physical limitations to the number of people who can fit into the meeting room when standing.
- No physical barriers should be set up to prevent access from the public gallery to the Council meeting place.
- Any existing physical barriers must be removed.
- Any overflow rooms set up for additional members of the public must have adequate and fully functional sound systems that can be heard by an average person in these overflow rooms except where a fully functional text system is in place that operates in real time.
- No person wishing to enter such a public meeting should be asked to supply their identification, name or other details.
- Council may have police or security personnel up to a total of 5% of the number of visiting members of the public present for the security of all attendees.

1. Meeting times don't always suit people who are working. This puts a lot of people off standing for election.
2. Better quality of sound and video recording of meetings. This allows people who cannot attend in person due to various reasons, such as disabilities, distance, or other commitments, to still be involved.
3. Hold meetings in different towns so all the community members feel they are part of the council.
4. Using various avenues to promote council meetings, including social media, local newspapers, community centres, and schools, to reach a broader audience and encourage participation.
5. Regularly review and assess the accessibility measures in place for council meetings, incorporating feedback from the community and making necessary adjustments.
6. Organise workshops/community forums on specific topics before council meetings to provide residents with more context and information, fostering informed discussions.
7. Establish a way for residents to provide feedback on the accessibility of council meetings and suggestions for improvement.

Implementing these ideas and continuously seeking feedback from the community, councils can create more inclusive and accessible environments for meaningful community engagement.

1. Set day and time e.g. All Councils (across state) meetings every Tuesday 6.00pm to 10.00pm, should not go for extended periods that exclude ratepayers participating, watching
2. Publish agenda 7 days in advance to ratepayers, provide opportunity to provide feedback to local representatives
3. Live stream for people who can't attend in person
4. Publish voting records of councillors

A dot point overview of the council meeting instead of having to search the agenda and minutes

A respectful behaviours policy that is enforced. Bullying called out for what it is. Less focus on arbitrary rules around process and more focus on the content of discussion and not how much notice has been given to present a motion

Access online.

Advertise the times of these more widely

Advise when they are occurring at what will be discussed - an email would do

After business hours is best for the community I would have thought.

Live stream is a no-brainer in this day. Consistency though - like some councils show the video of the floor, but you can't see the agenda, or any amendments, because they're not on the screen. Others show the agenda screen so you can see all the amendments, and audio over that, but you can't see the chamber. it's pretty easy to set up a multi-input live stream showing the agenda and minutes / amendments, but also showing the chamber.

Agendas and minutes to be more prominent on Council's website. Mayor video messaging on key upcoming Council decisions, to be distributed on social media. Mayor video messaging distributed on social media on key decisions made.

Agendas are published prior to meetings. All meetings are open to the public except the few items in confidence. Experience shows where people feel strongly about an issue they will attend information sessions and related Council meetings.

agree as above

Agree with live-streaming meetings

All Council meetings and briefings should:

- Be livestreamed but it must have useful audio, visual, and documents or motions must also be visible with the person speaking
- Be kept publicly available
- Be public and in person and held out of work hours and any change must be unanimous i.e. all elected members
- Be able to be moved around a council area
- Not go into confidence so readily – the issue must be exceptional or personal

All Council meetings should be livestreamed and recorded - Similar to State and Federal Parliament. Once it is recorded it should only be available for Journos and EMs or Councils.

All Councils should provide an opportunity at Council meetings for Ratepayers to ask questions from the floor, just like "question time" in parliament. Sometimes you need an answer quickly. Often the wheels of Council move very slowly.....unless it's a Local Council issue pushing the agenda. After-all, Local Councils are presenting themselves as a 3rd tier of government, even though that is illegal as far as the Australian Constitution is concerned. This was ratified in 1988 at that Federal Referendum. Having said that, one Council is very good at losing questions by e-mail, closing meetings because of "privacy" and bumping questions down the priority list because they don;t like having late meetings. Too bad if it's important.....unless it affects Council.

All meetings should be open to rate payers. There are too many closed meetings hidden from rate payers. I see no need for this.

Allowing for online participation by the public, staff and EMs.

Alternate days/times. Depending on location of LGA's then every other meeting could be in the LGA's Offices & then in other places in the LGA.

An idea is to always have a hardcopy of the agenda printed out at a civic centre, for example printed out and posted up on a noticeboard. This was done in previous council terms, but the practice has stopped as it's not a requirement. However, feedback from a constituent urged the practice to be reinstated.

Also council meetings if held only once a month would give residents more time to prepare for council meetings as the agenda could be released with more days in advance. At present if council has fortnightly meetings, the agenda is released on a Friday providing Friday Monday and Tuesday as working days before the Tuesday night council meeting.

if there is an agenda item of interest to the community, then it only gives the constituents to or three business days to provide feedback or prepare a deputation with ideas, questions or feedback.

Any changes should be identical to the accessibility arrangements that exist for State Parliament.

As a minimum, all councils should be livestreaming and recording (and making available) ordinary and special council meetings. In order to do this special attention need to be given to have appropriate equipment to facilitate this to ensure that the public are able to hear all of the debate clearly and see elected members and participating staff. There should be minimum or no special requirements for software to access the live stream i.e. all that should be needed is a reasonably fast Internet connection and a modern browser. There should not be requirements to have special software e.g. Zoom. An additional feature might be the ability for community members to ask questions/make comments via recorded videos/audio - similar to questions on Q&A. I beleive that most councils have public forums where any community member can comment - the recorded question/comment could be played at that time.

Access to council documents such as agendas, minutes and publically available recordings as well as policies and plans should be as easy as possible through the council website.

As per .."All city councils hold their meetings during the evenings, but regional councils often hold their meetings during business hours', I think that half the meetings should be held during the day and half the meetings should be held in the evening. Why?

1. Increase in attendance if meetings during the day:

I think the rationale for evening meetings, is that people work and it's too difficult to take time off work. I think there would be an uptick in community engagement, if half the meetings were held during the day, as I think it may be easier for some sections of our community to get to the council during day time hours. I think this is a fair and equitable approach.

2. AS an elected member, day time meetings is more conducive to better decision making.

At my Council it is the Mayors discretion on whether to accept presentations to meeting with a general requirement that the issue must be part of the Council Agenda. This is restrictive and can prevent issues being brought before Councils.

I think it is imperative that all meetings should be streamed live and recorded for future reference.

Being scissor available at nearly anytime for feedback and suggestive purposes. It will be handy to have that access to get a better understanding on what maybe happening within the area.

Certainly having access to recordings or livestreams. In saying that, recordings should be divided into smaller components or marked with timestamps so that community members can easily jump to a section that they are interested in.

Compulsory receipt of questions from the public gallery - not just deputations

Council Agenda and minutes should all be on their websites

Council Agendas should be listed on Social media and not hidden deep within their websites.

Council billboards advising ratepayers of upcoming meetings Councillors promoting these meetings and encouraging participation

Council briefings and or information sessions should be live streamed and recorded especially in regional areas where we should be reducing the carbon footprint

Council does not currently livestream or record meetings

Available technology, installation and on-going costs and administration resources to ensure legislative requirements and associated risks relating to the conduct of meetings and livestreaming (including confidentiality) met. Implementing livestreaming and maintaining an archive of recordings will incur additional costs for technology, equipment, and personnel.

Privacy issues, potential for misuse (edited and taken out of context, doctoring, snipping and AI risks), security issues

Public question time. Noting: Provision of a public question time could be accommodated as a discretionary meeting agenda matter that without legislative change.

Council meeting times should be decided by each council. If council meetings were to be held during business hours, then consideration should be given to special leave provisions for Members who work full time

Council meetings need to be able to be adapted to the individual Council. A 'one size fits all' approach is inappropriate as there are massive differences in how Councils operate, depending on their geographic size and location, number of staff members, and number of Elected Members.

Council meetings should be less formal and provide more opportunity for the community to interact with the Council. I have attended Council meetings where the star system is used. That is a starred item is an

item that has been discussed previous subcommittee and the Mayor has used this as an excuse to gag discussion at a full Council meeting. A council should be in 2 parts. Part 1 where the formal requirements are met with part 2 allowing a free and open discussion on items submitted by the community. These items should not be allowed to be gagged by the Chair. This type of forum should also exist for sub committee meetings.

Council meetings should be livestreamed so that at a minimum people have the opportunity to go back and see the debate regarding a decision being made.

Council member meetings involving administration where decisions are not being made should not have to be public.

Council needs to have meetings at a time where most people can watch and there absolutely needs to be livestreams and recording available with subtitles to make it accessible to everyone in the council.

council should make available how, what, when and where of all of these

Council supports having the audio recording of a Council meeting available to the public to ensure public access, however livestreaming is not supported.

Councillors being officially appointed as council liaison to particular community groups does help link in directly to community members. Encouraging local community groups to request a council liaison person.

In terms of councillor allowances, I think any allowance related to constituent work over and above the current allowances would need to have some level of governance to ensure that councillors are actually undertaking meaningful constituent work and not just receiving the extra allowance for no extra work. This would encourage councillors to get out and about and reward those who are able to engage in more constituent work. Conversely, depending on the amount of money involved, I think the possible unintended negative consequences could be excluding/discriminating against people who are time poor (e.g. those who need to work in addition to being a councillor, those who have caring responsibilities, as well as those who may not have access to reliable transport to get out to see constituents or attend events). We may end up with a lot of councillors who are retirees or wealthy people, due to this cohort having more time to engage in constituent work, however may not actually be representative of the community. It would also need to be defined what 'constituent work' means - does it mean that you need to show up in person, or does it include phone calls emails and social media posts?

Councils hide behind closed door & give out info in a drip by drip wht they thnk u should know. The whole place should be cleaned out from top 2 bottom every election not just councillors, & if the performance for ALL areas of Council boundarys should get the same services & considerations as the so called affluent areas which is OLD money now. They need to be Open & transparent & stop spending all our money on so called street parties for the elites on the pretext in brings in custom & wealth 2 all it doent only to the elite streets that hold it. The Gap is wide.

Councils' meeting times should be at each Council's discretion

Councils meetings should be held a various venues around the areas it represents and not so much in council chambers

Councils mustn't be allowed to limit and restrict who can attend its meetings as my Council has.

Councils need to make online streamings of council meetings are working properly all the time

Councils should be livestreaming their meetings. Better legal protections should be provided to Councillors for this to happen though so that the debate can remain more open and honest.

Councils should consult with their community in regards to the format and times of their meetings (not just Elected Members).

Councils should have the ability to close physical Council meetings to the public in cases of severe public disruptions.

Councils should hold their meetings at times that suit themselves. As a guide very few people attend council meetings and most are negative about council business and don't add value to the meeting process. Council meetings are about decision-making and not necessarily participation of the community (although this is a byproduct)

Councils should livestream their meetings, and make recordings available as it's more inclusive

Councils should not be required to livestream their meetings due to the high costs incurred for the IT Set up, and regular connection faults in regional communities

Crazy people with council conspiracy theories should be excluded from meetings so they can run smoothly

Currently Council meetings are largely irrelevant (ie, they are more for information) as often the relevant discussions and decisions have already been had in closed sessions. These discussions are not recorded so there is no accountability and transparency. How do we know if our Councillors have represented our views in these discussions? The Council has Information and Briefing Sessions but does not record these even though they have started recording Council meetings. These sessions are very informative as they are often presentations by Council staff on innovations and studies that have been conducted with recommendations. The public are allowed to attend these but they are not recorded which means that many residents are not aware of local matters of interest. In addition, Council Assessment Panel meetings are also not recorded and even though there are notes of the meetings they are so minimal that the public are unaware of the detail of discussions.

Disabilities to be included and involved. Clear disclosure of conflicts of interest. Gender quotas. Must live within the LGA office being sought

Disband Council

Ditch Council meetings altogether. Ditch councillors. Councils need to be managed and well run, just like any other organisation or business.

Diverse opinions have been presented on the matter of meeting times:

- Some advocate for fixed meeting times.
- Concerns have been raised about the limitations of holding meetings during business hours, which may exclude those who are retired or business owners, resulting in reduced representation.
- A suggestion is made to allow Councils the flexibility to determine meeting days and times based on the availability of members and local context, recognising the varying commitments of prospective members across a 24-hour, seven-day period.

- It is proposed that the Act could require a two-thirds or unanimous decision to set or amend meeting times, ensuring consideration for the availability of all members and avoiding decisions unsuitable for a minority.
- The potential adverse effects of mandating specific meeting times are highlighted, including reduced accessibility for some members due to evening meetings requiring long drives or early morning meetings.

The fundamental question arises: What problem is being addressed by legislating meeting times, and for whom is it a problem? Is the benefit of standardisation significant enough to outweigh potential issues for some? Moreover, is uniformity in terms, conditions, or experiences necessary or substantially valuable for the majority, and could alternative approaches achieve the same results without a legislatively prescribed outcome?

Similarly, concerning the livestreaming and/or recording of council meetings, the principle of 'the community should decide' is emphasised, favouring a localised approach rather than a 'one-size-fits-all' legislative solution. It is proposed that communities should periodically decide, perhaps once per term, whether live streaming or recording should be implemented. Each council would then determine the best method to gauge their community's preference. Regarding meeting times, it is suggested that each chamber should have the autonomy to decide, considering factors like public attendance if live streaming or recording is not of interest to the community.

Do not ever try and block the public from attending.

Due consideration should be given to the run time of meetings, and the arrangements of Agenda's to ensure that matters of public interest are dealt with at the beginning of meetings not late into the night. Greater control over the order of the Agenda should sit with the presiding member not administration staff, and the presiding member should be obliged to consider public interest in their determination.

Councils should be encouraged to enable members of the public to note their interest in a particular item ahead of a meeting so as to facilitate the above referenced decision making.

Each council has its own set of local requirements that has to be counterbalanced with a generic set of requirements for local government i.e. No council member should be disadvantaged, such as those who have carer, work, study responsibilities, travel issues etc. Councils should be required to hold their meetings at a particular time to maximise community participation. This includes ability for councils to make Council meetings publicly available through live-streaming and recording available on council website. Each council should show evidence against set criteria of how they have decided their meeting timing in a council minute with regard for release of confidential information. Generally, allow flexibility to meet the needs of the community and the elected members including meeting during the day and in the evening. To encourage community participation in council meetings, all councils should be required to have on their council agenda the opportunities for applications from the community for deputations and public speaking time of up to 5 minutes and for petitions. It should not be an optional council policy.

All Councils should give the public the opportunity to ask both Questions on Notice and Questions without notice. It should not be an optional policy.

Easily accessible forward agenda for weeks ahead

Electronic attendance for Elected Members worked during COVID so why take away the option. Live streaming for those who want to view is a good idea but recording and keeping those recordings is pointless and will stifle debate and be used as a weapon which we need to help Councils to avoid.

Email residents of the time & date of council meetings. IMPORTANT communication for the process.

Ensure they are held in a large enough room to accommodate ratepayers who wish to attend.

Evenings can be hard for families to accommodate attendance due to school sporting commitments etc. However business hours is also difficult due to working hours.

I believe deputations should be able to be pre recorded and provided with any questions being posed and able to be addressed at the following meeting.

Council meetings should be live streamed with the opportunity for comments to be collected and provided to both council administration and elected members following the meeting. Council meetings should also be recorded and available immediately after the meeting has closed.

EVERY resident should be allowed to enter the public meeting regardless the limitation of seating; no barrier should be set to stop access or be removed if the case; additional room to be set up if big number of members are present; good quality sound and functional text system; police or security personnel should not exceed 5% of the number of the visiting members and exercise their role for the security of all attendees not for intimidation or restriction purposes.

Every vote should be recorded – who voted for what is always important.

Extra costs & intermittent connectivity would impact council's ability to livestream

feedback of meetings to be accepted and allowed by members of the public.

Few suggestions. Firstly, these meetings need to be advertised more clearly, being on a website or one billboard is not enough, they should be on social media. Secondly these meetings should be live streamed, but still allow members of the gallery to come and participate. Thirdly, Councils should educate the community on how to make meaningful deputations on issues.

From a standpoint of a past Councillor some times an agenda could consist of over 700 pages. This was sent electronically to each Councillor and the next monthly meeting was three working days later. Simply there was insufficient time to allow a Councillor to absorb the information and be prepared for the following meeting.

Happy with the way this is done.

Hold council meetings in different locations - including a schools and community centres, even outside in parks some times - to increase visibility and demystify processes and practices. And ask community members who have not yet participated in council meetings 'what would it take for you to come/be involved'. Often council meetings are heavily influenced by process - but this doesnt always have to be the way meetings are run. Creative thinking about how to facilitate meaningful discussion and the embrace of upward mentoring so that key council members and staff can hear directly from young people or other potentially disengaged groups about how to make meetings more accessible and inviting

Hold meetings in different locations across local government areas, especially where LGA's cover significant geography.

Council staff and elected members need to be diverse (gender, culturally, etc) so that they genuinely represent the broader community.

Holding meetings at night can pose a WHS risk to those elected members in large council areas travelling in sealed i fenced roads

hosting community forums, and leveraging social media to share updates and gather feedback. Additionally, implementing mobile apps for easy access to services and organizing town hall meetings can foster direct engagement with residents.

I agree with livestreaming council meetings I think it's a fantastic way to increase community participation in meetings. I however, am wary about this being a requirement because I'm not sure all regional council would have the capacity to achieve this. I am also wary about providing recordings of meetings as it could open councils to this footage being doctored and changed to misrepresent what actually occurred at the meeting. I think the time and location of council meetings ultimately needs to meet the needs of Elected Members first and foremost as they all have different work and family requirements and are the ones they are required to be in attendance every fortnight/month.

I attended several council meetings where wheelchair users made deputations. There was no access to the old benches used by non-disabled councillors. A fold up table with a tablecloth was eventually provided for this person. There is only 1 wheelchair accessible park near the City of PAE Council chambers, so other wheelchair users can't easily attend. The facilities often don't meet 21st Century expectations of accessibility. Auslan Interpreters are often unavailable.

I believe that having a newsletter that highlights these meeting times and inviting community members to attend would be preferable, however balancing that with ensuring the functioning of the council meeting without overly driving the meeting into less than productive areas is a difficult task

I could probably find out more about council meeting etc, by visiting the the Council's website, but I rarely have time to do that or even think about it.

I have attended quite a few council meetings during which it is obvious that elected members were briefed on how to vote prior to the decision making. Discussion is non-existent or minimal which, in addition to the reduced volume of the sound system, makes is VERY DIFFICULT for members in the gallery to understand what is happening.

I know a meeting Calander is set by my council. But Where is it
?? When its date is
changed due to a special meeting conflict, where is the new
date??

Again put up a poster at the library with the dates, the council librarian should be able to keep it up to date.

I like it when the meetings are near by. I have time to get to them. haven't seen one near by in a long time.

I like how Marion council has the board outside their council officers which advertises the next meeting.

I make the effort to watch recordings of the council meetings most of the time but I can see the participation is relatively low and yet members of the community complain about council decisions. There needs to be some proactivity from the community members as well as the councils.

I strongly agree with evening meetings

I strongly believe that having meetings live streamed and / or recorded for community members to watch in real time or at their leisure would increase participation. There would need to be a set time frame for the recordings to be made available in a timely manner.

I think it is important for transparency to have access to how discussions and decisions are made so Social Media or even meeting notes are crucial

I think it would be beneficial (especially for regional/smaller councils) to have a designated council meeting in an evening that is for public engagement. Doesn't have to be every one but maybe one or two each year that is scheduled at say 7pm and gives people the opportunity to engage and be involved. Otherwise live-streaming and recordings would also be very helpful. Potentially in that format it would be good to have a digital question submission system.

I think the issue is broader than engagement with Council meetings. We need all age education about how governments, including Councils work and how people can engage to influence decisions. Our civic literacy is poor.

I would prefer a live-stream so could select the agenda items that I am interested in.

If council meetings are live streamed for those who wish to spectate via this method, I would still like to make sure that all council meetings are conducted in a place that is still physically open to the public, with a gallery open to those who wish to spectate in person.

If Council meetings incorporated a community forum, it might attract a larger cohort but would make the meetings lengthier.

If meetings are live streamed and recordings available, then I do not believe they need to be more accessible to the community (as the community cannot really participate in meetings). The accessibility for Elected Members needs to be taken into account.

If there is not enough room for residents put the meetings on big screen so people can watch outside or put on YouTube

If we are serious about having women, young people and those in the 30-60 age bracket involved in Local Government we need to have meetings at a reasonable time. I know of a young woman aged 21 who would have run for a regional Council but because the meetings are in the middle of a day on a Tuesday it's impossible. This Council is almost all men over the age of 60 as a result of the time it's meetings are held.

Another alternative is to make being a Councillor a full-time/part-time job, reduce the number of Councillors on each Council, increase the workload and make it a proper pay scheme with superannuation, etc.

If you contact them via email it takes weeks to get an answer and they just send formal communications back. Needs to be easier to talk to key people at the council

In a spirit of openness and transparency, all councils should be required to livestream their meetings, and make recordings available

In Councils where there is a large geographic spread, there should be streaming of meetings and all those that are unable to attend meetings or present a deputation (distance, transport) should have the means to present (?Zoom). Live streaming seems a really good solution.

In Gawler we wouldn't get any candidates if we had our meetings during the day. Everybody works and it's usually busy people who put their hand up

In large council regions, the occasional Elected Member meetings held away from the council chamber in community halls etc, so the elected member body meet around the council region. I am a great believer Council meetings should be held online (as worked so well during the COVID restrictions.) The idea that members should be physically present at a meeting is archaic. Reduce elections to every three years; four years is too long for an effectively volunteer role.j

Include notice of general meetings in the monthly email. State government mandates are one of the things killing councils- the increased rigidity and compliance demands reduces responsiveness.

Increased access for rural and regional constituents through mandatory live streaming and recording of meetings. While this not only increases access, it reduces the Local Government sector's carbon footprint through vehicles being used to attend meetings. It also gives the constituents the opportunity to view their Elected Members' Performances

Increased penalties for disruption of meetings

There is provision within the Local Government (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations, Regulation 30, "Interruption by others" with a maximum penalty of \$500 and the Local Government Act, Section 95 "Obstructing Meetings" with a maximum penalty of \$1250. These provisions set out that it is an offence for a person to intentionally obstruct or hinder proceedings at a council meeting.

Whilst there are penalties in place, it is suggested that these be increased to provide a much greater deterrent to disrupting meetings and to reflect the cost to the community more accurately when a Council meeting is disrupted, requiring it to be adjourned and re-commenced. Not only is it a cost to councils, the allocation and diversion of SAPOL resources to be on standby and attend these disruptions comes at a great cost to the whole community of South Australia.

Individual Councils are best placed to determine the most appropriate time for Council Meetings – and this should remain the choice of elected Council rather than through legislation.

Initial costs to install the relevant hardware required and complexities around recording staff who are not in leadership roles and/or public who attend meetings.

In-person attendance should remain a requirement of ordinary Council meetings. However, increased flexibility such as attendance at Council meetings by electronic means in those circumstances deemed exceptional by individual Councils, may assist Councils with meeting arrangements and availability of members.

It is not preferable to hold Council meetings during business hours because many Councillors hold full time jobs.

It is too difficult to allow residents to comment at meetings or to question decisions in REAL TIME. The mayor made to pretty clear to me that my council make it too difficult to make real time comment.

it should be legislative tht all council meetings are live stream to ensure more people can be present. people that cant travel, people with disabilities, hearing or physical, people with young children. Its a no brainer in this day and age, and its embarrassing that this is not already the case

It should be up to each council as we all represent different communities

It's more that giving a deputation seems pointless, rather than that it is inaccessible. That said, the formality of the setting makes it intimidating. Perhaps having the option to do it in a less formal setting?

its not about being accessible. people do not turn up to meetings unless there is a high value topic involved

Just about everyone else us 7 days a week I think the council should be as well. Available to the community over the weekend, or open the space for community so that there can be interaction

Just online and recordings being available helps.

Less council members -> quicker, more effective meetings -> more appealing to broader range of candidates, and, less overwhelming for members of public who wish to attend

Less in camera meetings especially when it comes to councillors pay and building permits they give to Councils mates.

Like with hybrid work, hybrid council meetings would help with improving accessibility.

Live online viewing would be appreciated an available option.

Live stream, recording and allowing meetings after 5pm so people who work can attend

Live stream/access to recordings.

Live streaming

Live streaming is a natural next step, noting we had no choice during the Covid lockdown. Beyond that they should be recorded. This may have the potential to identify how much a councillor has pre-read the agenda and improve behaviour.

Live streaming kills the debate in the chamber. Very few people actually watch and are unable to engage online. If people are interested they get a lot more out of attending in person. I would like to see live streaming or public recordings stop so we can do our jobs better. Most councillors are ordinary people, they are not trained politicians and feel intimidated and reluctant to speak freely when being broadcasted to invisible people.

Live streaming on multiple platforms eg. facebook, twitter, instagram, youtube, twitch

Live streaming seems like a practical way to engage more people in Council meetings particularly if one lives in the regions where distance may make personal attendance difficult. However, where ever it is installed its presence stifles debate, content can be used to create disinformation and bully Council members on line. In this day and age of coercive this misuse of live-streamed content poses a risk of Mental health issues for Elected officials and legal costs to defend reputational damage. If this becomes compulsory the Govt must instal some protections for Elected Members.

Live streaming should be available for at least a fortnight

Live streaming should be compulsory and held in the evenings so that working people have access.

Livestream and recording

Livestream meetings and making recordings available ensures access to those who can't make it to a Council meeting. It also keeps [participants] accountable.

Livestream should include video (not just audio) and should be advertised through social media.

Livestreaming and access to recordings would be good

Livestreaming and recording and holding meetings after 6pm for meetings are the two best ways to make them accessible.

Livestreaming and recordings should be at each Council's discretion and in a manner consistent with State and Federal Government.

Livestreaming enables greater availability for the community to view Council meetings and is supported.

Councils should be provided a choice whether to make the recordings available to the public after broadcasting the meetings. Making recordings available after the meeting can expose the Council to the risk of unauthorised use of recordings.

Council has experienced incidents where a member of the public have either recorded the meeting or utilised the Council recording of the meeting for their own purposes. This has the risk that Members and the meeting may be portrayed out of context. Council recommend that investigations are undertaken into potential legislative change to better protect Elected Members who are not extended parliamentary privilege.

The Act requires a unanimous vote for Council Meetings to be held during business hours. Should Council meetings be held during business hours this may limit the ability of community members to attend and/or make deputations. It would also impact on Elected Members who work during business hours and limit potential candidates who also work during business hours.

If a Council holds meetings during business hours under the current legislation then streaming meetings and making the recording available after hours would enable the community to watch at a time convenient to them. There is a limitation to this requirement being the cost and set up of the live stream etc.

Live-streaming was used by my council during Covid and despite some technical difficulties (at their end, with getting councillors connected) I appreciated this. The sound quality, however, was pretty bad so it was hard work to listen.

Im in an Adelaide Council area and I know a lot of older residents do not go out at night so maybe city based councils could consider having a few meetings each year during the day?

Livestreaming would be a great inclusion, it was allowed during Covid periods but has now stopped. Why?

Local Government meetings are entirely accessible in their current form

Lose the ridiculous titles for addressing the mayor and weird protocols that only allow a certain number of councilors to speak for and against topics. It doesn't allow for robust debate and is confusing and difficult for the public to understand.

Make it part of the school curriculum for year 10.

Make live broadcasting online and recorded

Make proceedings audible ! There have been issues in the past where volume was turned right down. I have sat in meetings where it was ridiculously low volume for those of us in the public seating. Be sure that people are truly welcome - as would be natural in a healthy community, with integrity. This should go without saying !

Making the meeting rules more understandable to the average community member, so that they are able to interpret and understand the process, discussions and decisions in the meetings.

Making the meetings online would help a lot. During COVID I was able to watch all the meetings while doing other things around my home - it meant I could find out what Council were doing but I could still optimise my own time. Having to put on going-out clothes to sit quietly in a musty town hall on uncomfortable chairs does not encourage me to want to leave the house to participate in my local council. Also, it would be good if people in the gallery (or online) could ask questions or make comments, otherwise we're not participating - just observers. This could be done via an app so the meeting chair can still be in control and weed out any spurious input.

Maybe make minutes available - so a recording isn't necessary but a written record for the public to skim over

Maybe the forthcoming meeting agendas could be made available prior to the meeting.

Meet the Mayor or meet the councillor type gatherings at a local library or other public building where people could just have a "cuppa" and chat - a very informal way to put a face to a name and to have a chat - for some it is intimidating to have to make an appointment and then go to the council chambers to talk to someone they have never met - an informal chat can be an introductory way to both meet someone on the council, but also to broach a subject that a person may be passionate about in a more friendly environment

Meetings are weighty and are unlikely to appeal to many people. People are issues focused and so are only interested in looking at items that interest them. A recording of the meetings with "chapters" to skip to particular points of the proceedings would be useful.

Meetings could be held at different times to allow a more diverse range of people to attend. Many older residents probably do not want to go out at night and people who work probably can't attend during day time. If local people were informed of topics being discussed via an emailed/published agenda they may become more interested in getting involved. I have never been to a council meeting even though I assume you can look up details of when they are held on the Council website. The agenda may also be

published here but most residents (including me) would not remember to look up. In the past I have thought many councils are made up of business people who have their own agenda to promote.

meetings regularly in different towns. or at least more often in the middle of the council area.

Meetings should be held early evening to allow people who work to be able to attend Council meetings if in person attendance is mandated. If Councillors can attend virtually, then Councils should be given the flexibility to determine when they meet.

Members who are permitted to attend remotely should have the right to vote on matters before Council minutes to contain member input ie not just resolutions etc but detail of discussions

Need appropriate comfortable seats - CoM seats are very old and uncomfortable.

Meetings should be arranged (agendas) so that confidential items are done prior to the public meeting or at the end of the public meeting. Currently confidential items appear in the middle of agendas and so residents waiting for a later item need to sit outside the meeting, often for an hour or more, while confidential matters are dealt with.

No lawyer should be permitted to represent council admin or councillors at council meetings. They weren't elected. And stop having so many secret meetings.

No resident or rate payer should be restricted or stopped from entering a public meeting.

Members of the public must have adequate and fully functional sound with text systems that can be heard and read by an average person in all rooms used by the public attending the public meetings. Any member of public wishing to attend these meetings should not have to supply any form of ID other than stating their first name.

No, councils should not hold their council meetings during the evening, particularly in rural communities, the safety of members returning home is compromised, with the requirement of driving large rural distances in darkness.

Not all residents and ratepayers know that they can attend council meetings, request a deputation or who to contact. This information needs to be made highly visible to the community - landing page of Council website, poster in council window, part of recorded message on council phone systems, included in rates notice.

Livestreaming council meetings allows more people to engage with council meetings. This is particularly beneficial in rural and remote areas where there is a lack of public transport and distances can be long. although some may argue that bandwidth is a barrier for streaming, don't allow perfection to be the enemy of good practice!

I would also recommend that elected members be allowed to participate online at least once per year of their term. This adds further flexibility and acknowledges that people have other pressures beyond council -i.e. employment travel, family obligations etc

Rotating council meetings between locations across the electorate also provides greater opportunities for community members to attend and participate in council meetings.

Holding meetings outside of business hours allows for greater engagement by people who have work and school commitment. It also sets a culture in regional areas of Council being accessible to everyone,

not just retirees, farmers and/or small business owners who have the flexibility to attend meetings during business hours.

Not everyone have transport to attend the meetigs . Large councils with additional meeting places other than their Chamber should consider meetings held in other locations within their boundary .

Not everyone wants to go to evening meetings after being at work all day

Note that we are often removed from meetings when special so called secretive items are discussed?

Online is a good option

Our council already live streams its meetings. Ours are fortnightly which is to often. One per month should be mandated.

Our council are meant to be live streaming, however, that is not the case. Meetings are not updated anywhere near as much as they should be. I also feel our Council are holding too many informal or CONFIDENTIAL meetings in between the formal council meetings and I am concerned that vital conversations are being held and decisions are being made prior to the formal meeting.

Our Council live streams their meetings but to do not save the live stream. Not everyone is available to attend/watch at the time the meeting is held so it would also be a great archive/resource for future Councils, staff and community members to be able to revisit the livestream of any Council meeting at any time.

Our Council meetings are held at 2pm on a Wednesday. This could make it difficult for some community members to attend. Our CEO is very approachable and would be more than happy to meet with community members who have an issue to raise, and find a way forward to present this idea to Council Zoom or Teams sessions could make this easier for these community members to present as well as pre-recorded sessions for presentations. Holding meetings in the evening would place an extra burden on Council staff, as we are a small regional council with limited staffing available for this purpose.

Our Council meetings start at 6.30pm which allows most people to be able to attend.

People are busy with many engagements, so it is best to be able to view council meetings afterwards when one has time.

People unable to represent themselves need advocates to address council meetings and report feedback

Perhaps better reminders/promotion of council meetings ahead of time to build interest and engagement. For example, and email or SMS reminder, listing the key points of the agenda.

Place clear and concise restrictions on councils' powers to restrict deputations and involvement.

Provide sufficient space for visitors and have face contact to at least some degree, remembering that direct face to face with public means that councillors are not face to face and the latter is very important to improve engagement across the chamber.

Publish agenda in newsletter suggested above

Recording meetings and having the recording available on the council website is a must. Live recordings would be good too, for those that can't be there. Would also save people making the trip to the council offices to hear the one agenda item of interest to them.

Regional Councils should make an effort to hold Council meetings at different locations within their Council area, there the Council area is made up of separate towns etc. This is something we have tried to do as an Elected Body.

Residents should receive reminder notices via sms or email a week prior to the meeting

rotate meeting location throughout their districts

should have an open time for questions - my council does not do this - must be a deputation or nothing but I think should have a section in agenda for questions from the floor

Simplified meeting papers for community to view and understand. Could be different from papers the elected members get.

Sometimes I rotated the meetings to different locations to make it easier for ratepayers & others to attend. Being mindful my Council was a remote large rural council with large distances between communities/ towns.

Summary - ie topics discussed and decisions made - emailed to any ratepayers who sign up for it

Supports councils in their right to decide on a case-by-case basis whether they live stream meetings or make recordings available

Talk to members of groups and individuals with opposing views on some of the legislation to find out why and stop stonewalling people with ideas/solutions/issues - give them time to hear them out and investigate inquiries properly, also, be transparent in dealing with in-house council matters as well as public matters - the council needs to be fully transparent to its community it is representing, the council is "for the people" local council should most importantly be working with the people of the area.

The accessibility issue is difficult in some large, rural councils, where evening meetings would mean making councillors and members of the public drive for hours late at night. Live streaming and making recordings available later, inexpensive as it now is, is a good option.

The area allocated to the public to observe Council meetings is small and inadequate for times when controversial issues are on the agenda and a lot of people want to attend. An "overflow" area with livestreaming is required to accommodate this.

The Council used to have a half hour before the Meeting for general discussion but was stopped because too many hard questions used to be asked. No record of these questions were recorded and no feedback or results were given to the Public. Most were completely ignored.

The last meeting I attended seemed very archaic in terms of meeting process which makes it difficult for community members not familiar with meeting rules to understand what is going on.

The open and public nature of council meetings is an absolutely pivotal feature of our national democracy – it is the key arena where people can experience, first-hand, politics and governance in

action. It shows the process of empathy-building, compromise, and coming to agreement. By watching representatives reason in public about their positions, we are able to see that most people are driven by positive motives, even if we disagree with their final analysis. This humanises politics and breaks down polarisation.

As such, I support any initiative that reduces barriers to participation, both as constituents watching/attending council meetings, and as candidates/elected members participating in meetings. It follows that I believe that all councils should livestream and record their meetings, and that all councils should hold their meetings in the evenings. And I see no reason why livestreaming/recording shouldn't be prescribed in legislation (unless it is found to significantly reduce in-person participation). However, in relation to the timing of meetings, I do have reservations about prescribing this in legislation, given the large distances required for travel in regional councils. Bespoke solutions should be sought for these councils.

The order of proceedings are very difficult for people to understand and follow. Mechanisms for deputation are also clumsy in that they are often separate to the item when Council may consider the associated matter.

Many of the things considered by Council have little direct community interest - hence, the agendas and discussion often represent as arduous to the lay person. This results in low interest which then means subjects of interest are harder to keep abreast of - unless you have a keen interest in following the publishing of Council agendas.

Council decision making is also questionable - better legislated delineation of delegation between the bureaucracy and the elected body would create efficiency and remove scope for dubious decision making.

The paper for this review talks about how to appeal to a more diverse range of people nominating for Council, and yet you want to legislate when meetings can be held to maximise community participation - I can see these two ideals being at loggerheads for many councils. There is also a safety aspect involved with holding meetings at night in regional areas and requiring council and community members to then drive home on dusk or in the dark on un-sealed or unsafe roads. Where would the risk and liability lie?

The process is now so bureaucratic. Approval of a deputation can only be made by a Mayor meaning a personal agenda can come into play.

The position of Mayor should follow that of interstate councils - Mayor must step down after the 3 year term

The prudent use of commercial in confidence in lieu of hiding behind this when making decisions

The question about livestreaming and making recordings being made available should have been separated. I don't support livestreaming at the time the meeting is occurring because it would allow for influence during the debate from persons you can't see or hear who could be texting or emailing council members. I would support publishing a recording of the meeting (audio and visual) but not at the time the meeting is occurring. The publishing of a recording after the meeting is an excellent idea - even just audio - it allows the community to test and validate what they hear from others.

The release of recordings by council should be only through social media. Maintaining of physical recordings other than voice taped records may cause an excess of administrative work for council staff and open elected members to harassment from particular profiles of constituents.

The seemingly archaic bureaucratic and restrictive nature of how council meetings are run and the amount of jargon is not conducive to attracting candidates in a modern society.

An example reported to our Association was that “Unfortunately, in the last term the very public bullying of a female Elected Member in a rural council discouraged women to stand”.

Meeting language needs a ‘gender lens’ the tendency of male (generally older) Mayors to favour male voices is unacceptable. One Council Member resorted to saying ‘just pretend I have a male voice’ to address the sexism in her Council. Unfortunately, complaints to the Ombudsman were redirected to the perpetrator.

The public see this and understandably don’t want to stand.”

The time a Council meeting is scheduled should be determined by the Council

The timing of Council meetings should not be prescribed as each community is different and many people no longer work ‘normal business hours’

There are a number of technology issues that can impact the livestream. There is also the risk of accidental broadcasting of a confidential item due to human error or technical glitch.

There is an observed tendency to overplay the confidentiality exclusions in ways which extend beyond the intention of the Local Gov’t Act and which tend to impact adversely upon accessibility and community confidence. This needs to be tightened up considerably and training provided to Councils to better understand the limited circumstances in which discussions are held confidentially, as well as the meaning and intent of ‘commercial in confidence.’ These areas are either poorly understood or used in undesirable ways to reduce community transparency.

Additionally, there are instances where fairly esoteric and arcane procedural rules are employed in ways which stifle debate and engagement. While desirable in certain instances, training on the use of such devices appears necessary.

There needs to be actual consultation, rather than people making deputations which are then ignored, with the points raised never being addressed by the council.

They are already very accessible for those who care to look into it.

They are becoming more and more secretive. Too many in camera sessions. The rationale for this should be transparent and scrutinised

They definitely should live stream them!

They should be less ceremonial and more inclusive.

They should be making big decisions within their remit and void wandering into fields that are commonwealth or state domains.. Bigger councils making bigger decisions would allow better remuneration, could attract better candidates, reduce the current tendency for many councillors to behave like petulant children and all this would attract more interest from ratepayers. A stricter code of conduct would also help to make councils more professional.

Time allocation for deputations and a listed process (One that is actually followed). I know Playford quite often rushes through these and sweeps them under the carpet.

Timing of meetings should be left to individual councils so that it suits their community

Use remote services so people don't have to show up in person, this might also attract youth.

Varying views have been expressed:

- Support for mandating did not include any supporting commentary.
- Arguments against mandating referenced the expense of doing it properly, and noted that if people are interested, they will attend meetings in person. During COVID our meetings were livestreamed and at best 10 people viewed them who were mostly Council employees involved in administering the meetings.

The real questions should be –Do our residents (who?) wants to watch them, are they able to be viewed with the full/proper context, and does it provide community value?

Varying views have been expressed:

- Yes
- In the evenings, in business hours means only retired and business owners can become elected members which means less representation.
- After 5pm
- Councils should be able to hold their meetings based on the availability of its members and the decision made with regard to the local context

It is noted that prospective members could have a range of work and personal commitments across a 24hour/7 day period. It seems appropriate that the determination of meeting days/times be a matter for each elected Council to determine after each election, taking into account the availability of each member, as well as administrative implications of proposed times. The Act could provide that a two-thirds or unanimous decision be required to set or amend the day/time of ordinary Council meetings to avoid a simple majority deciding a time that is unsuitable for a minority, with perhaps leave of the meeting also required before a motion may be put to amend day/time.

Videotaping council meetings so residents get a feel of who their Councillors are, what they look like etc. Will also help curb inappropriate behaviour.

We received via the council website the broad budget for the next financial year. However when we sought "more detail " on several items we were told "that's all you get". Not good enough.

We support live streaming and recording of all meetings the public are able to attend in person. This would include all public meetings of elected members both formal and informal eg.workshops and council meetings , committee meetings , sub committees , audit committees , ceo performance committees.

Given the main purpose of live streaming/recording council meetings is for the public to understand how the council arrives at decisions, and offer transparency and access to decision making, we are of the view confidential matters should be recorded and made publicly available when the matter is released from confidence.

Consideration must be given to the concerning practice of redacting public meeting recordings at the conclusion of the public meeting and then claiming what has been publicly discussed and then redacted is confidential . examples can be provided.

While live streaming is ideal for those that cannot attend, I know the technology can be tricky. So live streaming should be encouraged, and recording and uploading of the meeting should be a mandatory requirement for all councils.

While livestreaming and/or recording council meetings can improve accessibility for some segments of communities, it may not increase engagement broadly while exposing Elected Members to the many risks of having an extensive digital presence. There are genuine risks in having significant digital content of a personal nature such as face and voice online. While many people put such information into the public sphere voluntarily, there are nevertheless practical and ethical questions about whether this should be mandatory for people wanting to engage in public service. For some people, it may act as a barrier to participation, even if it does result in a potentially larger number of members of the public viewing meetings than would typically attend a public gallery (noting that an increase in viewers is not guaranteed and did not appear to substantively occur during COVID). In any case, viewing a meeting only serves to inform - it does not increase participation per se

Whilst you can undertake a deputation, a lot of councils will only allow if your deputation relates to an item on the agenda, even then they maintain the ability to refuse. It should be more open. There is also no record of deputations unless the members accept to enter it into the minutes, and usually its only if its written. Rural council meetings starting at 4 mean younger people who need to work are unable to be representative, meaning the representations generally falls to those later in life or retired making decisions that effect all in the community. Meetings should ve held later in the evening to encourage a representation from all age levels

With regard to electronic meetings, the participation by electronic means is supported, as long as councils make appropriate investments in infrastructure to ensure a high-quality experience for all participants. The matter of livestreaming/recording should be left to each council to decide

With the development of Zoom and Teams live stream Apps there is no need to record and re run meetings eg via You Tube. There is too much opportunity for editing to miss interpret the facts of the meeting.

It would be very advantageous to have legislation allowing councils to use Zoom and teams for elected members to participate in an ordinary council meeting. This would need to have conditions eg limiting the number of meeting in a year or consecutive, this initiative would enhance meeting debate and outcomes, it could limit the number of councilor's taking leave of absence.

Yes - that residents understand that they are Ble to attend the meetings

Yes, via a smartphone app, to state the times of these meeting, and links to livestreams.

Zoom maybe

Most regional councils in Fleurieu Peninsula hold their meetings after business hours which restricts the number of residents who can attend. Council meetings during the day would be preferred by our community. Whilst evening meetings are great for Council administration staff in earning extra overtime, it results in a low attendance rate from our community.

Council Administration are also a hinderance in not allowing adequate videoing of 'all council' meetings. Currently only ordinary and special council meetings are filmed. And of those that council video, audio quality is poor and council live streaming regular drops out. There is no videoing of council information and briefing sessions which are critical resources for elected members to review what was presented

ahead of voting at ordinary meetings. Elected members and community members are required to seek out videos that community members may have made to validate information presented by administration or to reconfirm discussions made in those briefing sessions.

Council have implemented livestreaming of Council Meetings, but this should not be mandatory.

It is my opinion that livestreaming and people recording the meetings in the chamber put elected members at risk. As council elected members we do not have the legal protection as per members of Parliament as such livestreaming and public recordings in the chamber could easily be used to the detriment of members to belittle members on social media as happened already, even if council livestreams it is possible with today's AI technology for someone from the public with a grudge to manipulate the livestream and redirect their creation to the detriment of council, staff and elected members. With an influx of newly elected members it is easy for a Newy to mistakenly mention something that is confidential or something that could be libel and its all there broadcast on livestreaming or recorded by the public in the chamber with no legal protection for the elected member. There are many more issues with this item but to me these points are enough not to support it.

I support Councils livestreaming and making recordings of Non Confidential Agenda items. It may curb the misbehaviour practices of some elected members.

If meetings are livestreamed, the public will be able to monitor the meeting. Those who wish to make presentations/deputations to a meeting would accept that it is in their best interest to maximise the number of Councillors observing that presentation and modify their schedule to accommodate that requirement.

The timing of Council meetings is currently determined at the First Meeting of the incoming Council. The ultimate purpose of Council meetings is to maximise Elected Member's attendance, it is only logical that priority be given to those member's preferences, commitments and desires.

Meeting times are determined by the individual Councils and are set to provide the maximum attendance of Councillors.

Online meetings and Work-From-Home arrangements were necessary during legislated shut downs but soon proved to be unworkable. Remote access by members is counter-productive to open, robust face to face discussion.

To encourage community participation in council meetings, all councils should be required to have on their council agenda the opportunities for applications from the community for deputations and public speaking time of up to 5 minutes and for petitions. It should not be an optional council policy.

All Councils should give the public the opportunity to ask both Questions on Notice and Questions without notice. It should not be an optional policy.

Councils should livestream their meetings and make recordings available; however they should not be able to do both.

Council does not believe it should be a requirement to livestream meetings and make recordings available and is not convinced it would encourage far greater community engagement.

Council questions whether the timing of the meetings will have any bearing on community attendance at the meetings. Our Council meets at 6pm to allow working elected representatives to attend – our council members and staff already drive 30-40 minutes in pitch black in the middle of winter, along roads where kangaroos are common, to get home. It is difficult to see how community members would elected to do the same, unless there was a specific topic of great interest. Daytime meetings would reduce the WHS

risk for some councils in more remote regions – it should be up to the elected body to determine the timing.

Our Council does not livestream council meetings and/or make recordings available after the meeting. Reliable internet may be an issue for some in the community. There is a (low) risk of inappropriate treatment of confidential items. Also opportunity for small snippets of meeting to be taken out of context.

Position: No. Support public access to live-stream and recordings of council meetings as an identified means of increasing accessibility of council meetings, but not make it mandatory/required.

There are a variety of factors that impact the ability to live stream, and not all councils have sufficient technology or staff resources to enable this to occur easily. For example, Council opted to live stream audio and visual of minutes on the basis that Council already had the technology to make this occur. The cost for incorporating video of the meeting at a sufficient quality where community would obtain value from additional visual footage, was not considered feasible at the time. Even with the technology available, the quality of audio (which is dependent on a variety of factors and interdependencies) is not always considered appropriate quality for publication.

Where confidential items are considered at the end of the meeting, livestreaming a meeting is relatively simple. However, where confidential items are considered throughout a meeting, this makes livestreaming more challenging (and requires more manual intervention and expertise by staff).

Council currently live-streams Council meetings (audio and visual of minutes only, no video footage of the Chamber). This has created opportunities for the community to be able to access meetings and listen online, where they potentially may not have been able to physically attend the meeting. Livestream viewing statistics (refer Table 1 below) indicate that attendance is often equivalent or greater than physical attendance of a meeting by the public, however this depends significantly on the topic (noting some topics with high levels of community impact result in increased levels of physical attendance). Council does not make recordings available to the public (only elected members).

Table one – Council ordinary Council meeting attendance statistics (last 6 months)

Meeting date Physical Online

12/12/2023 11 13

28/11/2023 7 24

14/11/2023 7 11

24/10/2023 8 16

10/10/2023 1 15

26/09/2023 1 9

12/09/2023 11 11

22/08/2023 59 34

8/08/2023 0 11

25/07/2023 0 7

11/07/2023 5 13

27/06/2023 9 16

It is noted that the online attendance figures are based on unique viewers, and therefore not directly comparable to physical attendance. It also doesn't distinguish between staff vs public access. The software records every attempt at access (if an attendee accessed one part of the meeting and then another part of the meeting later, that would be counted as 2 attendances)

As Council currently live-stream and record Council meetings currently, there would be minimal impact on our council to continue existing practices. There would be budget implications should this require video footage of the Chamber, in addition to staff resourcing/support to run this aspect effectively.

In Council's experience, it is noted that the quality of existing audio on recordings is not necessarily to a standard expected by the community, and is primarily used for determining accuracy of minutes. Additional investment would be required in technology to improve the quality.

There are a variety of system/technology interdependencies that can impact successful live-streaming of a council meeting. Council have

- Sound system (microphones) – impacted by voice projection, acoustics of the Chamber
- Projector screens – for display of minutes in the chamber
- Microsoft Teams – for community to access public forums/deputations online, staff to access meetings remotely, impacted by wi-fi connectivity
- Open Broadcaster Software (OBS) – a cross platform screen casting and streaming app.
- Hosting/storage platform (Vimeo) - embeds video on Council's website

The coding that makes the technology and software operate effectively requires specialist resourcing. As a large metropolitan Council, Council had the resources to achieve this (both technology and staff resources), which a number of smaller/regional councils may not have.

Opinions were divided on the idea of mandatory live streaming of meetings of Council. Advocates for mandatory live streaming emphasized its potential to increase transparency and broaden accessibility. Conversely, opponents expressed concerns about the possibility of malicious video editing and the impact of social media commentary, fearing that these factors might discourage individuals from actively participating in meetings of Council.

The Council currently audio records council meetings and makes this recording available to the public. Live Streaming creates a risk for Council if there is defamation or a breach of confidentiality. Live Streaming also has the potential to create a platform for individuals who wish to be disruptive or engage in political stunts.

The Council currently audio and visually records all Council meetings, excluding confidential items. The recordings are indexed and posted on Council's website within 48 hours of the meeting.

Livestreaming:

Cost effective livestreaming of Council meetings is supported by Council. Consideration should be given to ensuring consistency across all Councils in South Australia with legislating the requirement to livestream Council meetings.

The legislating of livestreaming would:

- encourage a greater degree of scrutiny and disciplined behaviour
- provide greater access to Council meetings
- increase transparency
- allow flexibility for those wishing to provide a deputation

Timing of meetings

The timing of Council meetings should be flexible and linked to the fact that most members may have full time or part time employment.

No. This should be at the discretion of individual Councils.

Additional resources are required to livestream Council Meetings and in this Council's experience very few citizens accessed the Council Meetings which were livestreamed during COVID. Issues were also experienced at times due to the internet.

No. This should be at the discretion of individual Councils.

Since 2018, Council has held its ordinary meetings at 5pm in the Council Chambers in Bordertown. However, we adjust meeting times a couple of times throughout the year to an earlier time and different location (Keith and Padthaway) to facilitate attendance by students from our local schools.

Council's decision to hold its meetings in the late afternoon/evening was driven by a desire to accommodate elected members' employment and allow for attendance by members of the public outside of normal business hours.

Though we do not usually have a large gallery, almost all our meetings will welcome deputations from community groups or residents.

Like our comments above on community consultation and engagement, we note that one size does not fit all and that councils should retain the ability to determine the time that their meetings are held based on what best suits their community and circumstances.

Meetings of Council should all be livestreamed so that rate-payers can access them. Audibility issues must be addressed ie. Councillors and staff who provide information and reports at council meetings should be trained into how to correctly use their microphone. This is an ongoing problem, even when residents attend meetings in person (Councillors forget to turn their microphone on to speak, or off when they have finished, they lean back in their chair as they speak etc

If Council meetings are live-streamed, Councillors should be required to attend meetings – representative democracy is better served when the decision makers are together in person. This requirement should be made clear to candidates running for Council elections.

We are seeking further flexibility to balance the requirement for public meetings and to ensure a safe working environment. This could include the provision to conduct meetings online as occurred during COVID 19.

The majority support for electronic meetings to support work and life arrangements, including travel.

The whole Council should be able to meet remotely in situations where there are health and safety reasons for doing so (eg a Covid or other illness outbreak in the particular Council/council area)

Council began live streaming and recording Council meetings during the Covid pandemic. There are a number of benefits to the community flowing from this practice. First, people are able to attend Council meetings from the comfort of their homes, or during periods away from the Council area. It also enables people to attend meetings if they are ill or have mobility issues or some other impediment to attending a Council meeting at a physical location. Making a recording available permits the community to listen to those parts of the meeting that are of interest to them at a later date. Therefore the practice of live streaming and recording of meetings is likely to reach more members of the community. However, the easy availability of AI software poses a potential threat to recorded meetings, in that they can be manipulated to say something altogether different. This potential threat should be addressed legislatively. Secondly, live streaming and recording are likely to encourage Council members to conduct themselves more courteously in meetings if they are being recorded and recordings provide evidence later, if needed, for dispute settlement or behavioural management complaints. Live streaming and recording of meetings would support the opportunity to provide greater flexibility in how meetings are conducted.

The Council believes that meeting in person at a physical location provides the best method of conducting a participatory meeting. However, Council also recognizes that Members may have difficulties attending in person from time to time and provision should be made for individual Members to

attend remotely as necessary. In addition, as recently happened in the Council area, outbreaks of Covid are still occurring, making it risky for Members and staff to attend meetings where an outbreak is located in the Council itself. Provision should be made for the Council as a whole to attend meetings and vote remotely when such situations arise. In proposing this approach, The Council also believes that safeguards should be included, whereby the option to attend a meeting virtually should be granted at the discretion of the Mayor in consultation with the CEO.

The Council does not support mandating a specific time for Councils to conduct council meetings. Council supports a flexible and non-prescriptive approach to Council governance. Imposing prescriptive practices on Councils can lead to inappropriate work arounds, can limit Councils' abilities to respond to unexpected issues, does not accommodate differing needs and can quickly become unfit for purpose when the context changes. The introduction of live streaming and recording would substantially mitigate the difficulties of attendance at council meetings for the community.

Each council has its own set of local requirements that has to be counterbalanced with a generic set of requirements for local government i.e. No council member should be disadvantaged, such as those who have carer, work, study responsibilities, travel issues etc. Councils should be required to hold their meetings at a particular time to maximise community participation. This includes ability for councils to make Council meetings publicly available through live-streaming and recording available on council website. Each council should show evidence against set criteria of how they have decided their meeting timing in a council minute with regard for release of confidential information. Generally, allow flexibility to meet the needs of the community and the elected members including meeting during the day and in the evening

Yes - currently livestream council meetings and/or make recordings available after the meeting has concluded.

Some regional councils do not live stream and constituents have to wait 2-3 days to hear the audio (if it is working). Some smaller councils do not record the meetings, not only does this lack transparency but it relies on the Elected Members to give verbal updates to constituents

Unreliable technology because some councils can't afford the more expensive technology for livestreaming. Poor technology makes viewing and listening online very difficult

A general response for constituents when the recordings have a technology failure is that of disbelief and reduces trust in the Council and the process. The technology has to be reliable and of good quality

In-person attendance should remain a requirement of ordinary Council meetings. However, increased flexibility such as attendance at Council meetings by electronic means in those circumstances deemed exceptional by individual Councils, may assist Councils with meeting arrangements and availability of members.

Yes, councils should livestream their meetings and make recordings available as it fosters an open and transparent Chamber and assist the community stay informed.

No, this would be an onerous requirement on small regional councils. Our council has conducted research into implementing a livestreaming system, which would require significant capital investment in requisite technology and generally the take-up is minimal and wouldn't pass a cost benefit analysis.

No, councils are best placed to make these decisions for their council and their community.

No, although it has been investigated and considered as an option by our council, the cost exceeded the benefit due to low take up, security, industrial relations and publicly accessible meetings.

We livestreamed meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic and the public response was minimal.

Diverse opinions have been articulated on the matter:

- Some individuals, including a limited group of elected members and the public, advocate for mandating livestreaming, citing transparency, accountability, and public access as justifications. However, actual viewing statistics from existing examples to support this viewpoint are limited.
- Conversely, arguments against mandating highlight the associated expenses and contend that individuals genuinely interested in the proceedings will attend meetings in person.
- During the COVID period, meetings were livestreamed with minimal viewership, primarily comprising Council employees responsible for administering the livestreaming process.
- Physical attendance at Council meetings is typically driven by specific agenda items that directly impact attendees, resulting in a transient audience.
- Media representatives and a select few community members are more likely to observe entire meetings, often with particular agendas misaligned with Council's objectives outlined in various sections of the Local Government Act 1999 and other Acts.
- Councils or chambers not initially equipped for audio/visual livestreaming/recording would burden communities with installation costs, ongoing expenses for training, testing, maintenance, and usage, as well as archiving and access, potentially for a single monthly meeting.
- Smaller rural/regional Councils/communities may face disproportionately higher costs as a percentage of rates/total revenue compared to larger Councils.
- Privacy concerns, the potential for misuse (editing and taking statements out of context, doctoring, snipping), and emerging AI risks pose additional challenges, along with managing security issues, especially regarding confidential agenda items.

Key questions arise: Do communities, in general, desire to view meetings online, and can they comprehend them within the appropriate context? Are communities prepared to bear the upfront and ongoing costs associated with livestreaming/recording? Does livestreaming/recording meetings truly offer value to the community?

While livestreaming and recording council meetings can enhance accessibility for certain segments of communities, it may not significantly boost overall engagement. Furthermore, it exposes elected members to various risks associated with an extensive digital presence, including the potential compromise of personal information such as face and voice online. While some individuals willingly share such information publicly, questions persist about whether making this mandatory for those engaging in public service is both practical and ethical. For some, it may act as a deterrent to participation, even if it results in a potentially larger online audience compared to the traditional public gallery (bearing in mind that an increase in viewership is not guaranteed and did not substantially occur during COVID). Importantly, merely viewing a meeting serves to inform but does not inherently increase participation.

It is crucial to note that local government elected members lack the protection of Parliamentary Privilege enjoyed by their state and federal counterparts. Livestreaming and recording expose them to risks not experienced by counterparts in other tiers of government, presenting inherent unfairness and acting as a potential barrier to participation

No - Councils should be provided with a choice whether to make live streaming available to the public in consideration of actual merit.

The time of an ordinary Council meeting should be determined by Council. Current section 81 of the Local Government Act 1999 requires a resolution supported unanimously by all members of the Council to hold a meeting before 5pm. This provision works fine. Whilst it may work for Regional councils, if Council meetings are held during business hours it may impact on the ability of community members to attend the meetings

No Council does not livestream. The recordings of our Council meetings are available on the public website for 30 days. The current practice of recording the Council meetings enables the community to listen to the Council meetings at a time that is convenient to them.

Council meetings times to be consistent across regions, with an online option available in the evenings to ensure easy for people to access. Explore ways in Council Agendas and other mechanisms for questions from the gallery/community to be included as a compulsory item.

Supports provisions for councils to decide their preferred meeting times.

Livestreaming of Council Meetings, provided that legal rights and obligations regarding the editing/publishing of content are clarified

Council will continue livestreaming meetings wherever possible to provide alternative means for the community to engage in meetings, however this should be for each Council to determine on a case by case basis

Council is not in favour of mandatory or compulsory live streaming of meetings for the following reasons:

- It is cost prohibitive for the smaller or more rural Councils.
- Connectivity issues occur outside of Adelaide and the internet connection is not always stable or reliable in the more rural regions where this Council is based
- It would prevent Council meetings from being rotated around and held in any of the other regions within the district as currently occurs.
- Evidence provided by other councils and our own experiences through previous live-streaming of meetings has demonstrated this has not increased public participation at or in meetings.
- Privacy concerns and issues.

Council will continue livestream where possible and to explore opportunities to engage the community in meetings using technology but this should be for each Council to determine how best to manage

A one size fits all approach will not work for all Councils when it comes to meeting times.

While recognising there may be an argument that after hours meetings may increase nominations and participation by people that work during the day, the reality in a rural area is that our members are travelling up to 80kms each way to attend a meeting.

If night meetings were made mandatory, this Council would have to allow additional funding for overnight accommodation (an additional cost to ratepayers) as it is too dangerous to travel at night with the local wildlife, fatigue and other factors applicable to country roads.

Councils should be able to determine meeting days and times based on the availability of members and local context, recognising the varying commitments of elected members and residents of that region. As community input is the desired outcome of this review, Council suggests that the community (and therefore, elected members) be able to decide the time appropriate for the council meeting, in the local context, recognising the varying commitments of elected members and residents of that region.

At the moment many Councils have a gallery question time item in their agendas. This is entirely voluntary, at the discretion of individual councils. There appears to be a significant disparity between Councils, no doubt including some where this is not permitted at all.

Gallery question time encourages the community to engage with , and to a limited extent, participate in the process.

I therefore submit that, similar to deputations, gallery question times should be enshrined in legislation, and not left up to the whims and vagaries of various Councils. Resultant consistency and certainty will encourage greater engagement with the community, which will, in turn, encourage greater voter participation

Yes - The use of technology and equipment to enable a livestream and recording of council meetings, should continue insofar as it is reasonably practicable, without being mandatory to protect councils that may not be able to facilitate the provision of such services.

The ability to be able to a link to a recording of as meeting to an interested party who was not able to attend or watch proceedings live is very helpful for Council Members

Regional councils should maintain the ability to set their meeting times, giving due consideration to whether meetings during business hours are conducive to maximising community participation or if a late or evening timeslot would facilitate increased involvement by residents. Regional councils are best placed to understand the needs of their residents in relation to suitable meeting times to encourage community participation and adapt meeting times if required to better cater for public attendance. Council meetings being available online will provide all communities with better access out of hours

Meetings are held after hours and give members time to arrive from work. It also allows working residents who wish to sit in on meetings to attend which is also important. We think there would be serious problems if meeting were held during working hours as this would preclude workers from attending meetings. Weekend meetings would also be problematic for many councillors and residents as it would eat into their family and relaxation time.

Council has live-streamed its meetings and made them available on the internet before COVID-19.

- Councils should ensure that the meetings are inclusive and accessible to all Council considers live streaming an essential service for those members of the community unable to attend meetings in person
- It should remain the decision of individual Councils whether they do so.

- This should be an individual decision for each council, as well as considering how this may impact community participation

- Some regional councillors may have to travel long distances to attend meetings

Rather than a prescriptive time and given that each community has different needs, where a council chooses to hold meetings during business hours, community consultation should occur.

- This could occur as part of the adoption of the Code of Practice for Access to Council Meetings and Documents

Livestreaming should not be mandatory. There are pros and cons to livestreaming. From our experiences through covid, there may be more people attending as it would be more accessible to the rate payer. This could be of more benefit to smaller regional councils

Cons are that not all councils have the internet stability / connectivity, technical capability and know-how to livestream, and there are costs associated with livestreaming and the administration and records management requirements for governance and administration. The costs could be a greater burden to

smaller regional councils than metropolitan councils

We haven't experienced much demand for this however it could be considered for special occasions.

Council meetings are mostly held the evening. Councils shouldn't be required to hold meetings at a particular time. It might be useful for councils that are intending to change the times of their meetings to consult with their community.

There are benefits to holding the meetings during the day; for example, council meetings held during the day reduce administrative costs of overtime for staff.

Benefits to holding the meetings after work hours are to improve community access to meetings by allowing community members who work during the day to attend

Council does not currently livestream council meetings. It was only undertaken when mandatory during Covid restrictions.

Barriers to livestreaming for our Council have been the available technology, the reliability of the internet service, the installation and ongoing costs associated with setting up livestreaming. Furthermore, the layout of the Council Chambers is geared towards use of a projector. The room is not set up with a layout suitable for video conferencing. I.e. video conferencing would require major technological upgrades to incorporate the required devices to clearly show the members as they are speaking and to be able to view documents when needed

Recording meetings currently requires written approval from the CEO or the Mayor, in accordance with our Public Access to Council and Committee Meetings and Associated Documents Code of Conduct

Yes, limitations should be introduced relating to electronic council meetings, it should be allowable in certain circumstances but not as a general rule, e.g. special council meetings, or if there is an issue establishing a quorum

There are positive and negative arguments that can be advanced with reference to the issue of live recordings of council meetings.

One advantage of this is that it would make councils more accountable, by having a recording of proceedings. Citizens may want to know what happened at a council meeting which they were unable to attend, and so recordings would make meetings more accessible and transparent.

On the negative side, elected members may be tempted to deliver 'set speeches' and play to the audience if they know they are being recorded rather than discussing issues in a cogent and sensible manner or raise matters that may be contentious. Overall recording appears to have a positive impact on elected members and staff behaviour.

The possibility of elected members 'grandstanding' may make council meetings longer and more tedious than some of them already are and may further deter sensible citizens from nominating for election to councils.

Transparency and accessibility appear to be in conflict with efficiency and productivity

Country councils may find it difficult to hold meetings at night in view of the risk associated with elected members having to drive long distances on dark country roads.

Work practices are also varied in the country with the requirements of harvesting and farming impacting on the availability of elected members. Flexibility is required, as there are different considerations impacting on scheduling and timing of council meetings in country and city areas. Being prescriptive is not a solution.

It should be up to each council to decide the meeting schedules to suit differing needs

We agree that all meetings should be recorded; the files saved on the council website; and be always publicly and electronically available without cost. The quality of these recordings in some councils is quite poor. The sound is barely audible at times; meetings need to start on time with effective recording and audio-visual transmission via the internet well prepared in advance

Council meetings need to be after business hours and not before 5.30pm. Workshops should also be after 5.30 if they are needed

I believe livestreaming of formal council meetings (or equivalent based on resources available) would be complementary to improving overall community engagement within council areas.

In short yes they should be required to livestream as a standard accessible meeting practice. This might be harder for smaller councils that lack resources and capability. To account for this, if livestreaming was a standard expectation, there could be an 'opt out' or 'alternate method' exception whereby councils could have to apply for an exemption or alternative method, for example some councils do not live stream but do audio record. It is not necessary to keep the meeting record on a website forever, for a limited time period would be fine

The opportunity to livestream Council meetings or provide recordings after the meeting should be left to the individual Council to decide given the Elected Members are the ones that know their communities best and whether the benefits would outweigh the cost. There is also concern in respect to the adequacy, availability, cost and reliability of technology for this purpose along with the storage and cyber security impacts it may have. In addition, it also provides the opportunity for misrepresentation of discussions and the manipulation of information as needed with the potential for comments to be taken out of context, posturing and grand standing. The wider audience than traditionally expected can also result in greater exposure of elected members impacting their safety.

All of this can then act as a barrier to Council nominations as a result of the impacts and the pressure associated with the livestreaming and recording of meetings. It is also noted by Council that livestreaming and recording of meetings is out of step with state and federal government in that Caucus or party meetings are held in private until decisions are taken and formed. It is considered that even the current process could be amended to provide better safety to Elected Members as part of the decision-making process.

At this time Council does not livestream meetings nor are recordings available after meetings. Council's current technology, whilst having the capacity to livestream and record meetings, is limited at best and would require updating if this was to be undertaken on a permanent basis. Ongoing costs would need to be considered and depending on the timing of the meetings, connectivity may be an issue. There is also the costs of storage of the recordings, and safeguarding against cybersecurity and AI manipulation. It is evident that additional resourcing would be required with the likelihood of an extra person needed to not only manage the process at meetings but also the after-meeting delivery and information management. If meetings are being livestreamed, then consideration should be given to including subtitles to increase their accessibility for those with hearing difficulties if necessary. Conversely in providing this, will inaccuracies create further inconsistencies in the presentation and decline to give a true indication of what occurred?

In respect to the time of Council meetings it is felt that the later a meeting, the lower the attention commitment and ability to make the best decision. To legislate and force evening meetings reduces options and has the potential to create vastly different results in nomination numbers. Becoming an Elected Member is a semi-professional commitment, which will require attendance and participation in many daytime activities, including but not limited to, workshops, training, online sessions, consultation, ceremonies as well as official meetings. Diversity and inclusion is encouraged, but requirements of the

significant position and demands that go with that role should not be ignored. Safety must also be considered, especially in a rural setting. Driving home on unsealed roads after dark following a meeting that requires substantial concentration is not best practice and should be avoided if possible and poses a work health safety risk and liability to Councils. Setting meeting times, without the flexibility of Council involvement in doing so, ignores the demands of the position and lessens the ability for Elected Members to be able to fulfill their role.

In addition, Council would like to make comment on the upcoming implementation of Council's requirement, for those that currently elect a Mayor from within the Council, to a Mayor elected at large. It is felt that Council Members are best positioned to make the judgement on who is best to lead them which would then mirror State and Federal politics. It also avoids the popularity vote and instead places someone in the role with the skillset to be the best representative of Council as the spokesperson for Council.

Council also believes that regardless of how elected, the Mayor should have a deliberative vote. The Council and community look to the Mayor for leadership, and as their leader and spokesperson and arguably the most informed in the room both Council and the community deserves to see how the Mayor votes. As the spokesperson for Council the Mayor is then required to sell the decision which, given the Mayor is both responsible to the Council and community, and regardless of the way the Mayor voted, is difficult to do when there is no involvement in the overall decision-making. A deliberative vote promotes ownership of the decision. In respect to the casting vote this opportunity needs to be removed. It is simply a matter of majority rules. If the vote is tied, then the vote is lost.

Council currently livestreams its Ordinary and Special Council meetings, and the recordings are available to watch back on YouTube following meetings.

With the advancement of, and an increasing reliance on technology, it seems natural that the next step in making Council meetings public, is to livestream (or record them) and make the recordings publicly available. However, we recognise some councils may not be in a position to meet this requirement due to budget and technology constraints. This particularly becomes an issue for councils with smaller budgets and fewer resources.

Further, making livestreaming a requirement means that councils become quite restricted on where they can hold ordinary and special meetings. For a council such as Council (which is spread across 8,832 square kilometres), this can pose a problem when a meeting would ideally suit another area of the district away from the principal office (the audio visual technology setup is generally limited to the principal office's Chamber).

Since Council made the transition to livestreaming Council meetings, there has been very few members of the public attend meetings in person.

The current Council Members feel that meetings held in early – late afternoon suit them well, and that having the ability to decide on start times is beneficial. Being a regional council, Council Members and the public often drive significant distances (in excess of 100kms) to attend meetings, and the start time of meetings is generally balanced against safe/opportune times to travel home at night on rural roads.

We believe that councils should be required to livestream their meetings, with effective audio and visual quality, to ensure public accessibility and council accountability. One Council produces a livestream where

often the sound is inaudible, and the video does not show anything of the council chamber.

The recordings of these meetings should be saved on the council website and be available to the public at any time. This should be mandatory for all public council meetings including general meetings, Council Assessment Panels, subcommittees, etc.

Council meetings should be held after business hours, and indeed not prior to 5.30pm to ensure to allow for people who are working to have access to these meetings

Livestreaming is supported for easier public access.

Meeting times – each Council / group of members should be able to make their own decision, as a collective, as to what works best for them. However, if an elected member works in a 9.00 am to 5.00 pm job for example, they shouldn't have to take leave from their employment to attend a council meeting, even if they are the only one in that circumstance

Varied Locations within council area - varied times and days

Council have recently stopped livestreaming its meetings due to limited viewership and engagement. Additionally, concerns were raised about the misuse of livestream content, with instances of conversations being taken out of context, segments being shared on social media, and verbatim quotes from councillors being used in potentially harmful ways.

Staff resources are allocated to tasks such as uploading the recordings to the web, managing their removal and destruction after use, and addressing queries from individuals who have only listened to portions of the recordings. These tasks not only consume valuable time and manpower but also divert resources away from other critical council functions.

The decision regarding whether local government councils should be required to livestream their meetings and make recordings available is multifaceted and depends on various factors, including accessibility, transparency, and resource availability.

Livestreaming meetings can enhance transparency by allowing ratepayers to observe proceedings in real-time, thus promoting accountability and civic engagement. It can also facilitate access for those who are unable to attend meetings in person due to geographical, logistical, or other constraints.

However, mandating livestreaming and recording may pose challenges for some councils, particularly those with limited resources or technical capabilities. Implementing and maintaining livestreaming infrastructure requires financial investment and ongoing operational support.

Moreover, the effectiveness of livestreaming depends on viewership and engagement. If there is minimal public interest or participation in livestreamed meetings, the resource allocation may be disproportionate to the perceived benefits. This was the case for Council, where low viewership and misuse of content have been observed.

Any decision regarding whether to livestream or not, should strike a balance between promoting transparency and accountability while ensuring that the requirements are feasible and sustainable for councils of varying sizes and capacities

Topic 1: How people engage with their council

Regrettably, some members of the Council are almost invisible once elected. Face-to-face interaction will likely result in a more immediate exchange of information and opinions. Councillors should be required to hold at least six-monthly public meetings for the community

The State Government should not try and dictate the specifics of what councils should consult on due to the broad and intricate nature of their functions and services

Many people are disillusioned by local councils getting involved in matters not directly appertaining to local matters, such as climate change, changing the date of Australia Day, etc.

Thousands of dollars have been spent by councils over legal action due to petty arguments by self interested councillors.

It seems that the the councils can find money for trivial matters but local infrastructure is consistently failing the locals.

Even if you do vote for the councillor you want, 90% of decisions are made by employed clerical staff, who you can't sack or vote out.

How metro Councillors engage with their communities is vastly different to how Regional or Rural Councillors do so. In the metro area, very few residents/ratepayers know their elected members personally and so a more formal structure may need to exist. In rural and regional areas the population generally know their member personally or by sight. It is unusual if a ratepayer/resident doesn't ask that member a Council related question at any social, sporting, community or formal gathering. Generally, each Council needs to formally determine how it will address Community/Councillor Engagement in line with any Charter.

Councillors currently receive an allowance determined by the Remuneration Tribunal. Experience has shown that the allowance creates taxation issues for some serving Councillors and that issue deters some potential candidates. Providing any additional allowance may worsen those 2 issues.

There is a requirement for Councils to have public consultation policies. Nevertheless, many residents and other ratepayers are unaware of how they may engage and participate with their Council. The timing of Council meetings and online access are improvements. However, the large number of confidential items forming part of Council and Committee meeting agendas is concerning and could be limited by legislation. There can be no effective participation when items are consistently moved into confidential matters, excluding public transparency and participation

We recognise that community engagement is an inseparable part of our principal role and function as a council (Sect 6 and 7 Local Government Act 1999).

In our engagement with our community, we adopt the best practice principles and elements developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), the preeminent international organisation advancing the practice of public participation (P2). Our Core Values are based on these principles: Core Values 1. Our community engagement is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process. 2. Our engagement includes the promise that our community's contribution will influence the decision. 3. Our community engagement promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including community and Council. 4. We will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision. 5. We will seek input from participants in designing how they participate. 6. We will provide participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way. 7. We will communicate to participants how their input affected the decision.

In carrying out our consultation processes, we apply the following principles:

- Members of the community have a right to be informed about issues affecting their area and their lives and to influence council's decisions about these.
- Community interest will vary depending on the issue and the number of people affected, and council's level of consultation will reflect this.
- Community involvement in Council decision making should result in greater confidence in the Council and responsive decision making.
- Council decision making will be open, transparent, and accountable.

Our Public Consultation Policy and Community Engagement Framework sets out the steps we will take

to encourage community involvement in the planning and decision-making processes of Council. It is both a policy document and a practical resource.

As a policy document it sets out our commitment to and understanding of community engagement in the Council. As a practical resource, the Community Engagement Framework provides a clear definition of community engagement and importantly sets specific standards for our engagement: When will we engage? Who will we engage? How will we engage?

We know from past engagement that one size does not fit all, that different causes and different communities within our district require different forms of engagement. Interestingly, our smallest communities are often significantly more engaged than the larger ones.

With this experience in mind, we believe that the most suitable approach to the proposed Community Engagement Charter would be one that sets overarching values and principles and a minimum standard for specific Council decisions, like the setting of annual budgets or strategic plans as per the existing provisions in the Local Government Act 1999.

In other matters, whether localised or not affecting a large part of a council's annual budget, councils should be able to take a more flexible approach best suited to the community or topic in question.

Council undertakes community consultation on a variety of topics and advertises via letterbox drops, Instagram posts, information booths and alerts on the website. Despite this, many residents do not know a consultation is underway and/or do not respond. It is difficult to know how to increase engagement and our only suggestion is that consultations should not occur across the November-January holiday periods

Initiatives for communicating with residents and businesses include electronic newsletters. YourSay is a valuable tool for engaging with the Council on issues raised by the Council. However, there are some limitations on how to respond and the time to provide written submissions. Moreover, responses to written submissions have been mere acknowledgements suggesting a tick box response rather than consideration of the proposed matters

Newsletters sent electronically to interested residents is a valuable and efficient means of informing recipients of Council decisions, current issues for Council, consultations that are open, and events in the Council area. People who are informed about local matters are more likely to be motivated to engage and participate. We are aware of three City of Adelaide Councillors who send periodic newsletters by email or by letterbox drop. Our Institution believes these are effective and economical means of communicating with interested residents and ratepayers. Our Institution is not aware of the extent to which other Councillors use these methods of communication, but suggests that all Councillors could be encouraged to do so.

Our group considers that YourSay is a useful tool for engaging with Council on issues raised by the particular Council. However, it has some limitations in that the way questions are posed and the tick a box system can be skewed to achieve a particular outcome that the Council (or its staff) desires.

For resident groups such as our Institution, the minimum time (21 days) allowed for YourSay written submissions to The City of Adelaide Council is far too short to engage meaningfully on substantive matters of relevance to residents. It does not allow sufficient time to canvas the opinions of its officers and members and prepare a considered response. Our Institution submits that the minimum time for written submissions should be increased to 42 days.

We suggest that could improve the dissemination of information to people who do not use social media and other electronic means of communication by posting notices in Council chamber foyers, libraries, post offices and shopping centre public notice boards.

People don't bother because council does not listen, im disgusted with my Council. Most people I've spoken to don't like their council, they are pretty useless really, they've got zero ideas about parking problems in residential streets, turn

We believe that although community consultation can and does occur for many topics, there is all too often a move into confidential items and commercial in confidence (CiC) discussions. Community engagement opportunities often occur but the feedback is summarised with minimal real feedback to the community about how their feedback was addressed or the rationale for its discounting. There is often a void between the consultation effort put in by people and the result when it falls on deaf ears. It is often a 'feel good' exercise only. People are fed up with their voices not being heard and the true feedback not being provided back to council. It becomes soul destroying and people give up.

It would be reflected that some council consultation is seen as a necessary exercise to meet a minimum legislative requirement, rather than a genuine opportunity for dialogue between community members and council. Minimal effort appears to be given to genuinely advise the community regarding consultation opportunities: eg very short time frames, poor choice of communication channels. When community members do submit feedback, it is difficult to ascertain whether this has actually been engaged with, or whether it has simply been summarised and counted as a 'response'. There is a degree of cynicism from community members, particularly when genuine effort has been made to provide considered feedback, and it is difficult to see how or when this feedback has been engaged with by council staff or elected members.

It is also felt that an edited summary version is often presented to elected members, prepared by staff or consultants, which results in elected members not hearing the raw data provided by community members.

For example, on two recent occasions an edited summary version was presented to elected members rather than the full raw data. This edited version is prepared by staff who seem to have a predetermined opinion of the survey result. The elected members are pressured to make decisions based on the "summarised" data prior to the full results being made available.

On both occasions the survey ended at 5pm on the same day as the Council Meeting was scheduled (also at 5pm) to make decisions based on the data, which results in elected members not being presented the complete raw data provided by community members before making decisions.

Additionally, the use of consultants can also be concerning, as the independence of these consultants can be questionable, and it can be perceived that councils have an agenda through which the feedback is filtered and the re-presented.

We would like to see less items in a council agenda moved to Commercial in Confidence or Confidential Items, as this brings a lack of transparency and accountability, and removes the possibility for community engagement in these topics. It is our opinion that a significant number of agenda items are unnecessarily deemed Commercial in Confidence or Confidential until Finalised, preventing input on issues that have considerable effect on the community.

The SA Ombudsman "Councils Confidentiality Audit 2012" found that SA Councils were incorrectly using Confidentiality provisions and provided guidelines for improving community transparency. These guidelines could be incorporated into the Charter to prevent the abuse of "confidentiality"

Elected members should seek community feedback prior to supporting Council entering commercial or "development" agreement in which it is the principal developer or partner developer

Topic 1: Support council members to engage with communities (1.3)

A toolkit for Council Members may be useful that:

- Explains in simple terms how Members are allowed to engage
- Provides examples of good engagement ideas
- Provides templates to assist

Allowances are critical, as I paid for all my own costs and Council would not even reimburse my petrol to events where I did not have an “official invitation” this included attending Anzac Day services. An allowance based on real costs: coffee, petrol, stationary etc would be a good encouragement.

An allowance to support constituent work is unnecessary as the existing Councillor allowance is sufficient for this activity.

An Electoral allowance based on area covered should be determined by the RTSA. In regional Councils, expenses that only relate to formal invitations means the Elected Member is constantly out of pocket to attend community meetings, one on ones with constituents (only covered if it is an Agenda item). Sometimes issues are raised and need research and consultation months before they make the formal Agenda and some Councils do not cover the mileage for these meetings.

If Elected Members want to have regular “listening posts” then they should be encouraged with staff support to use Council facilities and promotional channels

Any increase in allowances would be an additional cost burden to rate payers.

Council believes that the elected member allowances is adequate and that councils should be mindful of increasing costs to their communities. It is noted that the workload of an elected member can, at times, be equivalent to full time employment.

Council has facilitated community forums, onsite meetings and drop-in information sessions on matters of significant importance and interest to the community.

Council members are elected to make decisions on their community’s behalf and should be supported in stronger engagement for council members to increase engagement with local matters and decisions while respecting operational rather than strategic council matters. Council members that are retirees and unemployed/low-income community members may be financially disadvantaged when paying for promotional items (printing newsletters, paying for venue hire and websites etc), especially those in large or remote council areas.

Support could be by Council providing:

- free venues and online meetings for council members to hold community meetings under agreed rules of engagement
- promote council member community meetings on Council social media
- promote Council member contact details including social media sites on Council website (with proviso that responsibility for this is the Council member’s not Council)
- providing reasonable space in Council’s community newsletters for Council member articles and photos
- providing a specific allowance with accountability for expenditure by the Council member to support

constituent work set by the independent tribunal that sets Council member allowances like the State Elected Members (RTSA). Some regional Councils are larger than the State Seat.

Council members are provided with an allowance to assist in undertaking their roles and responsibilities – and costs to undertake engagement with the community should be borne by Council through a Council endorsed approach (rather than individualised approaches).

Council members current allowance is sufficient

Elected Members are already provided with connected laptops, email address and access to a meeting room if required.

Elected Members of this Council currently engage with their local communities in a number of ways and staff are available at all times to assist them as required.

Encourage Elected Members to set up regular sessions, coffee catch ups, listening posts as part of their role

Engage with young people directly to better respond to their views and experiences, including in relation to:

- a. Enrolment and voting.
- b. The experiences of young candidates, including the barriers they face and the support they need.

Engagement training and equipment to support engagement activities

Access to shared office space for Councillors to focus on emails, calls, and arrange meetings with community

Administration-supported 'listening post' events and community forums

Ongoing promotion about the role of Councillors and how to connect with them

Free or heavily subsidised public speaking training for Ems would support Ems to engage directly with their community

I am supportive of the idea that all council members be provided with a specific allowance to support constituent work.

Members already receive an allowance, ostensibly designated for this purpose. However, neither the Act nor the Remuneration Tribunal Determination explicitly outlines the specific member expenses that the allowance should cover.

No, the current structure provides for council members to receive an allowance to support them to perform their role on council. This type of allowance has potential to become cost prohibitive for smaller regional communities.

Once elected, it is important for the elected body to work as a collective decision-making group and funding for individuals to promote themselves is not supported

One matter which could be given greater consideration is which subjects and processes are subject to 'mandatory' engagement. While it is acknowledged that the list of mandatory engagements generally contains matters that ideally should be of interest to all citizens, the reality is that many of these statutory engagements receive low levels of engagement

People are generally more likely to be engaged when they can be involved in a decision, take an action or see a direct relationship between their involvement and an action occurring. Filling in surveys or responding to consultation documents (especially when they relate to what people perceive as matters of bureaucracy) generally attracts only those respondents who are already strongly interested in the topic. Unfortunately, that also typically means that the most strongly held, often most polarised views are disproportionately expressed, while the majority who may have other, more loosely held, views are not compelled to participate

Recognises the general need for an increase to support for elected members and supports additional allowances for elected members which should include (but should not be limited to) superannuation, allowances for out-of-hours work, and further statutory criteria which would compensate elected members for defined additional service

Regional councils actually appear to have higher engagement rates with their communities, which is likely as a result of the visibility and accessibility of members.

Supports more flexible regulatory arrangements that enable councils to provide elected members with the tools of trade useful for performing their duties

The current principles in the Act provide a sound framework for high quality engagement. Supporting elected officials to understand community engagement, their roles and responsibilities and different engagement methodologies via mandatory training could both support council members to engage with their constituencies and ensure that councils continue to grow and improve their engagement efforts with appropriate policies and resourcing decisions

The difficulties that many Council Members face in engaging more with their communities is more likely to be a lack of time than funds, and therefore does not support the introduction of additional specific allowance for community engagement

The Elected Member Allowance should be adequate to support the work of Elected Members.

The provision of timely and accurate information to provide for informed discussion, debate, and information sharing.

To build interest in civic engagement and increase trust so that governments can be seen by citizens as partners, governments at every level need to shift to more participatory engagement. While local government is an ideal tier to experiment with partic

To strengthen the relationship between council members and the local community it is important that Administration support members in promoting and facilitating engagement sessions, bolstering social media and online presence and helping the community understand the role of council

Varying views have been expressed:

- Printing, legal support and office space.
- It is up to Members to do so themselves as part of their commitment to Council as Elected Members.

Noting:

o Council has discretion to provide/reimburse Member support/expenses within the scope of existing legislative provisions, on a consistent basis for all Members (with the exception of the Presiding Member).

o Member Printing has previously been considered as part of environmental sustainability initiatives, and legal support scheme provisions were removed from legislation as part of the 2021 reform.

o “The Tribunal recognises at the outset that there is a significant element of voluntary community commitment on the part of members of local government” and “allowances provide at least partial recognition of the time and expenses incurred by members depending on the nature and structure of the council and the functions they perform as members” (refer Report of the Remuneration Tribunal 2022 – Allowances for Members of Local Government Councils)

Varying views have been expressed:

- Difficult to monitor.
- Allocating additional funds would divert resources that could be used for other priorities, place more strain on ratepayers and potential for misuse of public funds,
- No, should use existing allowance

Permit Councillors to provide informal, conditional advice when questioned on a specific topic provided such advice is in line with Council’s resolved position, policy and program on that topic. In rural areas a Councillor who replies to a direct question with the required “You need to write to Council” response will be accused of hiding something, thus creating un-necessary friction.

Require elected members to have a minimal skill set or previous relevant experience will strengthen the relationship between council members and their local community members.

Strengthening the relationship between council members and their local community members involves clear communication and education about the roles and responsibilities of both councillors and staff. It’s important to clarify that councillors primarily focus on strategic matters, such as setting policies and making budget decisions, rather than day-to-day operational tasks.

To enhance understanding, it’s crucial to emphasise better the separation of duties between councillors and staff. This means clearly delineating that councillors do not have the authority to direct staff on daily operational matters, such as road grading schedules. Instead, councillors make decisions on road-related issues through policy settings, and strategic planning activities such as Annual Business Plans and Long-Term-Financial-Plans, and asset management plans.

By providing this clarity, community members can better understand the decision-making processes within the council and the limitations of councillors’ roles. This can foster trust and cooperation between council members and the local community, ultimately strengthening their relationship

Position: Training

Elected members have a challenging role, whereby their role in a Council meeting is to make decisions that are often more strategic in nature (set objectives and policies), review resource allocation etc, with operational matters implemented by staff. This can often appear to be in direct contrast with an elected members role in representing the interests of residents and ratepayers of the council (often individual interests rather than a group), whereby the community’s expectation in reality is that an elected member can directly resolve and make decisions about operational matters (rather than just facilitate communication between community and council).

Additional training in the varied skills this requires (as opposed to training on what their legislative roles are) could be beneficial. It is not considered that this requires a change in legislation to support this, but perhaps a refinement of the mandatory training modules / learning outcomes

Position: Yes

The varying entitlements/benefits/allowances for elected representatives between different levels of

governments should be reviewed to ensure greater consistency (while still having relevance to the specific level of government it applies to).

While the legislation prescribes that an allowance is not intended to be a salary, it is not clear on what the purpose of the allowance is (or what it is intended to be used for). Consideration should be given to all elected member benefits, facilities and support being made equal across councils for the most part, and be identified in the legislation as opposed to being prescribed by council policy in the main part. A small allowance to support constituent work would potentially be one of these factors

Elected Members are currently able to engage with their communities through a range of opportunities (eg Coffee Chat, civic events, open meetings, published contact details etc) and they have technology (eg iPads) to support these activities.

Members should be supported by Administration staff to engage directly with the community. Support could be given in the form of facilitating staff-initiated public meetings related to council business and providing advice

Views were divided regarding the question of providing a specific allowance for constituent work. Advocates for the allowance emphasized its potential to increase engagement with the community and offset the costs taken on by Members. Conversely, opponents of the additional allowance believe the allowance already received by Members is sufficient and that an additional allowance may result in unintended negative consequences. Any additional allowance received should be subject to a stringent and structured governance system to ensure it is utilized appropriately

More flexibility could be included in the Local Government (Members Allowances and Benefits) Regulations, in particular to enable elected members use of council facilities when their intention is to engage with communities. Regard to this service would need to be considered during Caretaker periods.

Council provides an Elected Member Enquiry service to elected members. The EM Enquiry service is designed to assist members in engaging with their communities and provides them with responses to questions and initiatives that relate to local government. The EM Enquiry system has service standards attached to response times to assist with efficiencies.

Support the requirement for Councils to have public consultation policies. Nevertheless, there are many residents and other ratepayers who are not aware of how they may engage and participate with their Council. Many are not sufficiently interested, and some do not have the knowledge or ability, to search for information about how they can do so. This might account in part for the lack of community engagement and low voting rates

Regrettably, some members of Council are almost invisible once elected. Face to face interactions are often very useful, particularly for people who are unable or unwilling to read much and particularly for those who are unable to use electronic means of communication either in their homes or at all. Face to face interaction is likely to result in a more immediate exchange of information and opinion. Further, face to face interactions give people a more accurate impression of their Councillors than can be obtained by electronic means. Our group submits that Councillors should be strongly encouraged to hold at least six monthly public meetings or drop-in gatherings.

Our group is pleased with the way two Adelaide City Councillors make themselves available for informal meetings at local coffee shops when any interested person may attend. This provides an informal means of engaging with these Councillors that is much less daunting for some people than writing to them or the Council or making an oral representation at a Council meeting. It gives people who are not

confident about their ability to write well in English or who have certain disabilities an opportunity to raise issues of importance to them and to hear what the Councillors and others at the meeting have to say. The exchange of information, ideas and matters of concern is very valuable. Further, informal meetings such as these may be more comfortable for some Councillors. Although Our group does not suggest that this type of meeting be mandated by legislation, it submits that Councillors should be encouraged to make themselves available to residents and other ratepayers in this way.

Yes, a more diverse range of people would be attracted to the role if allowances were increased and believe at the very least that the amounts be reviewed.

Council Members could be better assisted by Councils hosting regular meetings with constituents, which are organized by the Council. Councils could also facilitate 'one-on-one meetings' for individual Council Members to meet with constituents by making a room available (eg the 'Mayor's Parlour' or equivalent) at a regular time.

In favour of a very small, modest allowance, if there are guidelines provided on how it is utilised. In regional communities this is critical to cover petrol and wear and tear of the private vehicles

No, councils should not be required to hold their meetings at a particular time. Each council should determine their day/time of the meeting that suits the needs of both the Council Members and the community to encourage active participation.

Mount Barker District Council holds council meetings out of standard business hours to make attendance more accessible to residents but also elected members that may work those hours.

Our council conducts township meetings throughout the Council term, which are an open / informal way for members to interact with each community directly. Council utilise Mayor and CEO drop into locations and community groups. Council works through a network of progress associations locally where beneficial. Elected Members are invited to and appointed to outside committees (CFS, sporting, progress associations, schools etc.)

This is in addition to targeted consultation on key issues / projects, and making their contact information available generally, which seems to work well for engagement levels in our council.

Whilst engagement with the community should be promoted, communities may not wish to be oversaturated with these types of events / information. Council has developed a community engagement charter which provides guidance.

The activities performed by elected members in their capacity should not be overseen or managed by the administration. For instance, if reimbursement is employed, it could impose an administrative burden and be considered as assisting Members with campaigning and politicking

Provide numerous opportunities for community to engage with Council including Mayor/CEO meet and greet meetings. Council meetings to be held in locations other than Chamber at times to allow opportunities for other people to attend.

Supporting Council Members to engage with communities by enabling fairer reimbursement of expenses and providing more clarity on the respective roles of Council Members and Administration

While occupying a vast region, in terms of community, the Council is a small district and elected members are engaged with their community by living, working and participating in their local community. Elected members are easily accessible in a variety of different community settings.

Council is not supportive of providing alternative means for members to engage with their communities as this is the role of a council member by nature.

Council does not consider a 'specific allowance' is necessary to support constituent work, however notes that Elected Member remuneration is not reflective generally of the diversity and size of the actual work involved in being an elected member.

Council notes that the remuneration allowance provided to members is then not considered an allowance when taxes are prepared, which often makes the allowance meaningless for members. Local Government needs to be more aligned with State legislation, and change payment to elected members from an allowance to a wage in line with Members of Parliament.

This would allow for superannuation to be payable to elected members and reduce the tax implications that attach to an allowance in this state.

If this change is not possible Council supports enacting legislation to exempt tax upon Elected Member's allowances

To be elected, many candidates are active and well known within their community and individual councils undertake a variety of activities to engage with their communities.

Allowing council's that flexibility to determine the means and approaches taken to engage should be continued. There are very few councils that actively deter members engaging with their local community members.

Training sessions and workshops to enhance communication and engagement skills for members to engage more effectively with their community would support members. Resources including clear direction for members will provide guidance and reference material as appropriate.

Provision of 'safe' meeting spaces for members to meet with community members.

Opportunity for members to be included in Council community engagement sessions. Members can observe community engagement being delivered and learn from it.

No - any additional allowances would be an impost for ratepayers to fund.

We believe that it is important for councillors to be paid an allowance to cover the work outside meetings including reading of papers as well as all the meetings and community events they are required to attend.

However, the allowance should not be so high that it attracts candidates who are more interested in the money as opposed to being interested in the work of the council. It should remain with the Tribunal to set the allowance and also needs to take into consideration the workload of the councillors as this varies considerably between councils

It is important for councillors to hold street corner meetings so that residents can meet with them and raise any issues they have.

Councillors are often hard to get hold of and do not always respond to emails

One Prospect councillor can be contacted on Friday mornings when he walks with his dog at a local park. This is an excellent pro-active communication by a Councillor and appreciated by locals - pro-active behaviour beats reactive approach every time. He can keep his ear to the ground regarding local issues and residents can raise specific issues with him

1. Public Consultation

2. Publicity via local media

Hold them at different locations within the townships that fall in our council area

Elected Member should be attending "XX" number of community events per year.

- There needs to be a clear delineation regarding context and purpose, i.e are they representing a Council-endorsed view or their own?
- If Council Members speak on behalf of the Council, all correspondence and communications should be authorised.
- Council Members should remain responsible for their statements

Should all council members be provided with a specific allowance to support constituent work, similar to the allowance that is provided to Members of Parliament?

- Should be a decision of council as part of the Allowance and Benefit policy.

What other ideas do you have to strengthen the relationship between council members and their local community members?

- Training as part of the Council Member Mandatory Training sessions on how to engage with communities.
- This training should provide guidance on using social media as well as clarifying roles and responsibilities

I believe that the ultimate goal should be not just to increase the diversity of candidates - but to encourage better representation of residents on council. I believe that increasing awareness of the role of local government and encouraging the wider community to participate in Council elections through communication and various awareness campaigns is what's needed to improve participation, and I strongly agree with this recommendation of the Review.

In smaller regional areas this is not as much of an issue as in larger regional and metropolitan council areas. There is less of a requirement for support as the people know people within their local community in smaller regional areas. However, in larger regional areas such as ours, the breadth of the area in which to engage with our communities is a challenge. Some assistance in travel allowance would be beneficial

This is not necessary in smaller regional areas. There is some merit for this in larger regional and metropolitan areas. As there are already allowances in place, this is not a necessity

Council staff should support elected members to engage with their communities through arranging public forums and community events. Elected members are basically responsible for interacting with their communities. If they fail to do so, then electors can remove them from office at election time.

One of the key issues that is constantly referred to by community groups has been that Council administrations appear to have become too corporate in their operations. This has led to a sense of communities and even elected members being 'outside' the decision-making process.

Changes to the Planning system introduced in 2019 have impacted on the capacity of elected members to engage with the local community. These reforms have resulted in less input from local communities and meant that elected members and councils are not able to influence or participate in major planning decisions in local communities across South Australia.

Destruction and loss of built heritage and character, and over-development remain critical problems which concern elected members, local councils, and local communities but they are powerless to intervene.

The introduction of the State Government legislated 'Planning Reforms' from 2016 have resulted in major projects outsourced to the State Planning Commission. The Commission does not reflect the views of local government areas but rather vested political and commercial interests.

The taking away of planning from local communities has had a profound impact on the conduct of councils across South Australia since 2019. This transfer of power from the local community has led to much dissatisfaction and cynicism when it comes to planning issues that impact on local areas.

Elected members and local councils should have the power to make decisions that impact on their communities. Smaller, less bureaucratic, decentralised decision-making is more democratic and more responsible to local concerns.

In other words, transfer decision-making back to Councils and community engagement will naturally occur. Elected members will have a reason to engage with the community

We submit that existing elected members' allowances should be sufficient to cover any normal costs of constituent work. It is an allowance and not a wage.

Reimbursement of actual expenses should continue to be made for non-usual activities such as attending conferences and training courses, as long as they are not ratepayer funded 'junkets'.

The question assumes that local government members should be equated to State Government parliamentary representatives. This is detrimental to what local representation is about. Local Government has a different function and role to State Government. By increasing monetary allowances to elected members it erodes the sense that this is a civic role which is intimately linked to the community and daily life in the community

Council Administration needs to be made more accountable to the elected members. Information conveyed by Council staff to elected members is often not concise or clearly stated but appears to be obtuse, overly complex and bound by confidentiality clauses. This means that elected members often cannot discuss critically important matters or projects with their constituents. In order to improve communication with local community members an independent referral or advisory agency might be highly effective for both the community, and elected members, when seeking an alternative to the advice being pushed by Council administrators.

Council administration should support Residents' Associations as these groups do valuable work by acting as an interface between elected members and the community, and so often bring both closer together.

Residents groups hold public meetings and invite councillors along to speak.

We believe there could be more public meetings or informal coffee meetings between councillors and their constituents. Councillors could be encouraged and supported to hold regular meetings or forums where the community can attend, discuss issues, and ask questions. Some Mayors have regular open-door policies which we applaud eg in Unley. These forums are a good way for the community to raise their issues in a more informal environment. Two community-based meetings should be compulsory by each councillor to get feedback from the community on their past and future activities

One of the main complaints one of our members receives is that Councillors not responding to ratepayers. This erodes the reputation of not only the Councillors but the Councils. There needs to be a protocol introduced to all Councils that it is mandatory for Councillors to reply to ratepayers within say a 7 - 14-day period

This is a nice idea in theory but needs further investigation as to what the nature of these activities would be. Councillors receive an allowance in recognition of what is essentially 'volunteer' time and their efforts

toward community outcomes and responsible decision making. As Ward Councillors are not the official spokesperson of the council however, such an idea presents other challenges, for example, when would this allowance be suitable to exercise? I believe the greater issue to discuss is that if Councillors are to be expected to have more, or deeper, engagement with their communities, there needs to be further discussion about if the role of a Councillor should be voluntary or needs to be more formal – for example a part time paid position equivalent, which is more aligned with the formal role of a Member of Parliament.

The mandatory training for Councillors has little to do with improving Elected Member capacity to engage deeply with their communities and does not provide Councillors with tools and strategies to better connect with their communities. While deserving of their position if elected, we cannot assume every person elected comes with an already developed community engagement skill set. This is an evolving process over an Elected Members term. Developing the skills of Elected Members to deal with difficult conversations, including how to heal and restore strained relationships between community, council and Elected Members toward better collective decision making, would go a long way.

The number and diversity of candidates varies a lot between elections and between council – just like at other levels of government – that cannot be easily managed, what can assist is to remove impediments. Local participation in local community groups is ‘grass roots’ involvement and should be supported by councils, including access to halls and audio visual equipment etc. Local community and involvement should be the main driver for local governance.

The relevant consultation processes should be in place to facilitate structured engagement with community members as required. As part of the training process for Elected Members, community engagement needs to be incorporated to sufficiently enable Elected Members to undertake this process with a view to appropriately skill them in this area as well as educating them on being able to handle operational vs strategic activities. The community should also be educated on their ability to engage with their elected body on an individual basis as their elected representatives.

Elected Members should be provided with an Elected Member allowance specifically to support community engagement to be meaningful whilst also needing this engagement to be structured and flexible. This allowance would need to be closely monitored and reported on given it will be an additional expense to Council. In addition, Elected Members should be provided with a professional and personal development budget line to improve their skills and improve their performance. An obvious course is the Australian Institute of Company Directors course which has been shown to be beneficial yet cost prohibitive. The International Association for Public Participation Community Consultation Training is a further example

Support for members to engage directly with their communities should include some surety that members are appropriately trained in communications (not only with the media but with also with residents), and be understanding of the limitations of their role as an Elected Member.

This Council does not feel that members should be provided a specific allowance to support constituent work, as members already receive an allowance and reimbursement for other benefits and support.

It is our view that consistent legal advice should be provided to all Councils, and through the Local Government Association approved lawyers, to all elected members highlighting that they, as an elected member, are allowed to speak to their constituents about their concerns and priorities and to advocate on their behalf

The implementation of heavily prescribed bureaucratic processes with managing elected member enquires that prescribes response time frames and types of queries that can be submitted has increased employee control and workload.

These elected member enquiry systems have

- increased turnaround time frames with responses
- Increased the disconnect between elected members and the public
- Seen elected members having to advise constituents they need to contact the council directly to have their concerns considered
- Increased constituents' dissatisfaction .

We are of the view

- Elected Members should have their own independent full-time staff
- The role of Elected member should be full time position and an allowance similar to members of parliament should be paid .

There is currently no independent authority that elected members can contact for independent advice without the administration of council being involved. There are examples that can be provided where council staff themselves are in fact the problem and have the ability to control responses to elected members to mitigate personal accountability in their work role .

We are of the view that serious consideration must be given to elected member social media use.

We have observed

- the loss of valuable public content when elected members members leave council and social media pages deleted
- Significant issues with the use and content of social media pages used by the primary spokesperson of council delivering their role as the primary spokesperson of council, that are used for personal gain and provide mixed messages of personal view and that as the official spokesperson of council.
- Elected members using their position and elected member social media profile to increase their public following while in office and then changing the name of their social media profile for electioneering for re-election or standing in state or Federal government elections . Examples can be provided

We see great value with elected member social media pages used to implement the role of elected members being in ownership of the council , particularly social media pages used by the primary spokesperson of council.

The advantages include of council ownership include and are not limited to

- the public records created over a council term remaining publicly available at the conclusion of a council term
- The social media public following that's created over the council , directly in relation to delivering the role of elected member, remains in ownership of council not the individual , the same as what happens to emails and email contacts.
- Social media pages that are used to deliver the role of elected members are not able to have name changes for the purposes of Electioneering.
- Equal playing field with candidates and elected members seeking reelection during election periods and limits the ability of elected members using their position and their acquired public in following attained through their role as elected member being used for personal gain

We believe it needs to be clearly articulated to all potential and existing elected members that it is an expectation for councillors to be available to their constituents. Similarly, this should be clearly articulated to constituents, so that community members are aware that their elected members are available to be contacted.

We are open to council members being provided with a specific allowance to support constituent work, to

encourage them to place a priority on this, however this should have commensurate Key Performance Indicators attached.

An opportunity for the community to address questions to the elected members with a free discussion prior to council meetings would encourage better communication

Council members are elected to represent their communities in strategic decision-making, not to engage in operational matters. Operational issues are the responsibility of council staff, who are hired for their expertise in managing day-to-day operations. It is essential for councillors to maintain their focus on strategic matters and avoid becoming bogged down in operational details.

To facilitate community engagement and ensure that ratepayer concerns are heard and addressed, Council staff organise and conduct consultations through surveys, public meetings, and drop-in sessions led by council staff. Councillors are encouraged to attend these consultations to listen to ratepayer concerns and gather feedback, but the responsibility for managing the engagement process primarily rests with council staff, and it should continue to.

In conclusion, while it is essential for councillors to engage with their ratepayers and gather feedback, the primary responsibility for managing community engagement should lie with council staff. Councillors should focus on strategic decision-making, leaving operational matters to trained professionals.

Expecting elected members to personally address and resolve every citizen concern is impractical and unrealistic. The role of councillors is to make decisions on behalf of their community based on strategic considerations, not to act as intermediaries for individual ratepayer issues.

Furthermore, regional councils do not have the resources to compensate councillors at the same level as Members of Parliament (MPs) for their role in local government. MPs often liaise with council CEOs regarding constituent issues related to local government matters, demonstrating that there are existing channels for communication between elected representatives, constituents and council administration

Topic 2: Consider real-time publishing of nominations (2.6)

“Fact checking” of nomination details and profile may encourage a greater number of more diverse candidates

1. I have concerns about public scrutiny, negative campaigning, or personal attacks that could discourage potential candidates from standing for election.
2. If nominees are announced too soon, it could lead to people nominating to prevent others from being elected. This would mean that the best candidate might not be elected.
3. A complicated nomination process with numerous requirements, paperwork, or unclear guidelines can deter individuals who are unfamiliar with the process or lack the resources to navigate it. Simplifying and clarifying the process can make it more accessible.
4. If potential candidates feel that the council does not adequately represent or address the needs of diverse communities, they may be less inclined to stand for election. Actively promoting diversity, inclusion, and equitable representation can encourage broader participation.
5. If individuals perceive the council as ineffective, bureaucratic, or disconnected from community needs, they may question the impact of standing for election. Enhancing transparency, improving

communication, and demonstrating the council's responsiveness to community concerns can build trust and encourage participation.

A nomination for an elected role on a council should be published once accepted and remain published if the nominee nominates for another role.

A rejection of politically motivated aspirants must be considered

Again, open and transparent processes, open to questioning will engage the public rather than keeping them out.

Agree with nominations being displayed at Council Offices and on the ECSA website once accepted. The veil of secrecy did appear to have an impact on the number of nominations and the interest in people nominating, particularly in the regional areas.

Candidates should also be able to inform the community (not campaign) once the nomination is accepted and displayed. Such an approach can potentially encourage more people to vote at the election.

All candidates should be required to declare what political party they belong to, or have belonged to.

All nominees must be Australian citizens and declare any political interests

All nominees must be available for all to see at the time of registering.. I think not seeing this discourages potential nominees.

All nominees should participate in the election, whether they are the only candidate or not. As an elected unopposed Council member I would have preferred to still give people the opportunity to vote me in, or not. This would provide credibility while giving those elected a confidence boost.

An idea is to have a Councillor Mentoring Program - for example over the term of council Councillor could mentor prospective candidates for the following term. This would be a formal program very much like the ones universities have for students that are about to graduate. For example the university of South Australia has a business School mentoring program that I've been involved with for many years. It runs courses on mentoring and students are matched to professionals who mentor them over the course of the year.

Any improvements to the nomination process should avoid 'campaign-style' politics, which can be negative.

As a minimum, a live count of the number of nominees would be useful to be published. If there were no nominees, advertising and recruitment measures could be increased.

The information being available creates more interest during the process, and may better encourage nominees if numbers are low. Knowing who the candidates are could also encourage other candidates to nominate. There is a chance to talk to candidates and if no candidates nominate, they can lobby for a candidate to nominate. There is greater transparency in the information being available

At an information meeting for potential councillors that my council organised prior to the 2022 elections, which I attended and which was also attended by sitting councillors, one prospective very well educated candidate with a degree in Social Work, asked how many hours a week a councillor would need to devote to council business. A sitting councillor answered this question and stated that he received

around 25 phone calls a day from ratepayers and residents and that he spent around 40 hours a week on Council business. This answer was sufficient to deter this very deserving prospective candidate and ensured that most sitting members retained their seats. A number of those present at the meeting questioned the veracity of this councillor's claim.

At the moment we receive a very brief printed summary, usually written by the candidate themselves, when we get information about nominees. This is sometimes very minimal and does not give sufficient information to make an informed decision about the person. I would like more information e.g. education qualifications, job experiences, community involvement, family information - if appropriate, areas of interest or expertise and perhaps an online video clip / movie to see the person talking and in action.

By publishing nominations of who is running in what ward you will get particular candidates shopping to run where they will have the best chance as opposed to their local ward area. I think reducing the number of Council Members through legislation for the size of a Council is key. You can then pay more for each Council Member and have more competition for seats.

Candidates must be informed/allowed to freely express his views. No political allegiance disclosed - as this may be viewed as endorsement of a particular political party. Candidates must be allowed to say "their say" (including negative comments about the Council) - providing it is no personal /defamatory but more in a constructive manner.

Candidates need to know they have more of a free hand in expressing what they believe.

Increase the size of the profiles that Candidates can submit from the current 1000 characters up to 3000 to allow you to be heard by everyone voting.

Remove the ability of a Candidate to declare their political allegiances as many see this as an unfair way for some candidates to get ahead by assuming the endorsement of a major political party.

Don't stifle what Candidates can say in their profile. They must be allowed to include negative comments about the Council but not anything that might be personally defamatory to individuals.

Candidates should have more freedom in expressing what they believe.

Increase the size of the profiles that Candidates can submit from the current 1000 character up to 3000 to allow you to be heard by everyone voting.

Remove the ability of a Candidate to declare their political allegiances as many see this as an unfair way for some candidates to get ahead by assuming the endorsement of a major political party.

Don't stifle what Candidates can say in their profile. They must be allowed to include negative comments about the Council but not anything that might be personally defamatory to individuals.

Candidates should not be allowed to declare their political allegiance's it is totally irrelevant.

Once candidates have reached their required number of votes to be elected in they should not be able to pass the remaining votes over to any other candidate as each candidate should only be voted in by the resident/ratepayers of that area and not by another member of councils preference.

Don't limit what Candidates can say in their profile. They must be allowed to include negative comments about the Council in general but nothing personally defamatory to individuals. We the public want

honesty and openness.

Candidates will nominate through the ECSA, who will publish their nomination immediately. Groups of people standing under a banner or party should be identified as such. ECSA could call for more nominations if numbers of candidates is insufficient.

Change the local government act to give elected members more say and rights. It has gone way too far the other way!

Clarity and transparency of the number of nominations is crucial. Especially in areas that have lower nomination numbers. Publication of nominations could encourage more nominations and reduce the need for supplementary elections when there are not enough candidates.

Community and elected members need to know this information in advance of closing dates as it may help folks to decide if they want to nominate.

Consider reducing payments in the second term of a council member (if terms are introduced).

Council admin, Caucasian able bodied people doesnt accuratley represent the world around us, consider ensuring diversity hire first,

Councils have a vested interest in ensuring that the process is thorough and meeting the needs of their community. Being involved in the process also encourages nominees to touch base with the council and provides opportunities to have conversations, ask questions etc.

Displaying of nominations is important because it can affect who nominates and for which positions. Additionally, it allows community members to see who has nominated and this can influence further nominations. Some community members might be motivated to put their hand up and nominate themselves if they are unhappy with the candidates listed, or to not nominate if they are happy with existing candidates as they feel they will be well represented.

Councils should be involved in displaying nominations locally.

Councils should display nominations, but not have the capacity to accept or reject nominations

Councils should have no role in accepting nominations, however, should display a full list of candidates running for the role at their administration building that is updated every 3 business days following approval from electoral commission.

Councils should know if they have enough nominations to fill vacancies at least one week prior to nominations closing. Publishing nominations prior to this occurring is not necessary, but councils should have more information to ensure that they have enough candidates running in their area. This would ensure that costly supplementary elections are not necessary and that Council can run at capacity from day one, with all committees having appropriate representation.

Councils should not be directly involved in the receipt/processing of candidate nominations.

Councils should not be directly involved in the receipt/processing of candidate nominations. Councils could then display the nominations from the SA Electoral Commission as nominations are accepted.

Nominations could be published online on ECSA and Council websites as soon as received or updated weekly over the nomination period.

Councils should not have a role in the nomination process, including publishing the names of nominees

Councils should stay at arms length from the process as they are somehow conflicted. This is the domain of ECSA. Publishing interim nominations causes candidates to "shop" for the position with the highest chance of success which is based on the wrong motivation to stand. Those positions which are uncontested could potentially receive an extra grace period to call again for more candidates in that context; i.e. an extended nomination period for those positions with no or only one candidate.

Councils should visit schools in the area and engage with senior school students either promote the elections for prospective candidates (for those 18) or to gain questions for candidates to answer to respond to.

Councils to run their own processes!

currently people are elected unopposed even in areas that they do not live

Depending on which option is the most achievable for councils and the electoral commission, I would like to see nominations displayed at council offices and/or online on the electoral commissions website, as soon as possible after someone nominates.

Disband Council

ECSA could continue to receive nominations directly with a requirement for nominations to be published throughout the nomination process, not at the end.

These could be published online on ECSA and Council websites

Education is key to finding candidates, and getting them to understand what Councils do.

end of current term Councillors, should make a nomination first.

Mayor election candidates should be also able to be nominated as councillors if unsuccessful in becoming mayor.

hold nomination promotion meetings in towns other than the council office.

Ensure maximum communication on nomination process and market research impact

ECSA nominations should be published on a live basis. (VERY IMPORTANT)

Council to publish each nomination ASAP as received via social and website.

Existing councillors, mayors and staff should not interfere, intimidate, harass, lie to potential candidates!

Extensive background checks on candidates' suitability.

Full transparency. Tonight I know a new role in Onkaparinga is up and yet nothing from the council.

Get rid of wards - this would remove a lot of the issues re required by-elections, lack of candidates etc

Greater centralised promotion, TV, radio etc, supported by targeted consultation by councils at key points throughout the election process.

Having the ECSA run the whole process does provide a level of distance and removes the potential for any political influence from current members who are re-nominating.

Having worked 1 periodic and 3 supplementary elections prior to 2022 I must say that not having that involvement left us in the dark as much as everyone else. It was a wonderful experience being able to talk to the nominees and get a feel for who they were and why they were running. I understand we had it good with a team of 3, and that other councils would be disadvantaged.

As a way around this the nominations should be sent to council either as they are approved, or at the end of each week. The real loss in 2022 was evident with 93 seats not contested and 9 supplementary elections as a result of lack of nominations. If someone is hesitant, seeing the fact that an uncontested election - or no election happening can tip them over the scale.

I agree with the lead in statement. Individuals can be discouraged from nominating if the "usual suspects" are nominating and also if there are a large number of nominations. Of course, publishing nominations as soon as they are received will not prevent "gaming" the system for those intent on doing so, that is, leaving their nomination until the last day.

I am more trusting of SAEC managing nominations than council administration. Nominations should be published as soon as received so community can see who is running. Candidates should only stand for own ward not be allowed to ward hop.

I believe it is preferable to see who and how many people are nominating.

I believe publishing nominations as soon as they are received would encourage more nominations. People can see straight away and might consider running because of the current nominees.

I believe showing the nominations prior to them closing would be great for people who are unsure about running, however, there should be a rule that if you withdraw your nomination, you cannot re-nominate elsewhere to reduce the chance of ward shopping.

I believe that making nominations visible as they are received will absolutely encourage people to stand. If you are aware that no one has nominated, then you may be inclined to nominate or encourage someone else to do so.

I believe the current Council is not best placed for some of this role, ie they should facilitate but not decision make whether a nomination is acceptable.

I don't believe nominations should be published. You either want to nominate or you don't. I would however like to see the number of nominations published, but not the names of candidates. That way, you would at least know there were enough candidates.

I feel that nominations should be announced fortnightly and should be done to show potential vacancy.

I like the idea of having a live nomination process. I also like the fact local government nominees are required to share information on why they are standing, unlike our federal and state politicians.

I nominated and I didn't know who I was running against until after the closing date and also other people don't know I'm running unless I tell them and it doesn't feel truthful because no where says so until after the close of nominations

I prefer that candidates can't more their nomination to a ward without other candidates. Candidates can express that they have nominated through their own platforms.

I support nominations being made publicly available ASAP for other potential candidates to monitor the need.

I think assistance to nominate would be a welcome addition. I know one prospective candidate at the last election who failed to nominate correctly due to a boundary change that unless you were paying close attention months prior to nomination you likely would not catch.

The issue had to do with the "I live in the ward" selection unaware of the border change that had moved her 50 meters outside of her old ward.

Maybe removing the question and having candidates' nomination webform just have them insert their address and state all of the wards including the one they are in highlighted.

I think it could be made as easy as possible.

I think it is important that prospective councillors are aware of the role and limitations of being an elected member. One issue that I found difficult when I was first elected was the relationship between elected members and staff and the inability to direct a staff member and distinguish between my personal opinions and those of council. This is somewhat different to the role of members of parliament and ministers at state and federal levels of government that most community members hear more about. Some understanding of this would be useful.

I think it would assist with ensuring that there are no wards without any nominations, because it would encourage people who are on the fence about nominating to be able to (for example) say "no one has nominated in X ward, I might put my name down as I'm likely to be elected unopposed there." On the negative side it may encourage political gamesmanship but overall the goal of increasing participation should come first.

I think knowing who has nominated might encourage more to nominate

I think the Electoral Commission of South Australia (ECSA) did a great job, given this is my first term. Publish real time (once reviewed), but go through a neutral body,

I think the 2022 process worked well

I think the risk of 'ward shopping' is too high.

I think this was the single biggest influence in the poor turn out of candidates. They should be published in real time - who cares if some one who's keen to serve the community jumps in to an area where they have more likely hood of winning??? This objection, which fuelled the decision to keep nominations confidential until the period had closed, is nonsense!

I worry that publishing of nominations will lead to some candidates waiting until close to the deadline, and then nominating for a vacant or the least-contested seat. It encourages tactics that are undesirable.

I would like to see no real estate agents and no developers being allowed to stand due to conflicts of interest

If a particular area is shown to have no or low nominations then people might be encouraged to nominate who were not previously prepared to for the role and lead to sub par outcomes.

If I had of known who and how many had nominated for my Council, I would not have nominated myself at all. Please show the list.

If you are disappointed in the nominations more people may consider nomination and as such I think that the nomination process could be more visible.

In my experience, mayoral candidates have very often nominated or not nominated based on who else has or has not nominated. It is essential that prospective candidates be able to make life-changing decisions about whether to run for office based on the fullest possible understanding of their chances, their opponents etc.

In relation to question 21 I selected neutral as i can see both sides - there are some people that after doing "training" may decide that "yes I can do this" or "no it is not for me" - both of which can be seen as positive results, whereas for others it could be intimidating in itself eg if someone lacks formal education, or has poor literacy skills they may feel that completing the training would be beyond their capacity, even though that may not be the case. Also if there was any type of cost involved in the training, that may present a barrier for some people

Increase the size of the profiles that Candidates can submit from the current 1000 character up to 3000 to better inform everyone voting.

Increasing awareness of the option for people to nominate and the benefits of becoming a councillor, especially to diverse cultural groups.

Information about how the nomination process works should be broadcast to make it easier for potential nominees to access.

Information about the duties, responsibilities, and requirements of the role should be provided to candidates who should confirm having read and understood the information at time of registration, and agree to mandatory training if elected.

Information on nominees should be provided i.e. what they stand for and if they have links to developers etc.

Information on the role and duties of elected councillors and how to nominate would be useful.

It is appropriate that ECSA manage the nominations lodgment process as they are ultimately accountable for nominations, however lessons must be learnt from errors made in the 2022 Elections. Refer to comments in donations return section.

ECSA must inform the CEO as early as possible if there is a risk concerning nominations or candidates.

One Council believes the publishing of nominations throughout the process assists in generating interest in the elections and may also prompt further nominations where there is a low number and/or lack of diverse candidates.

It is important to keep nominations hidden until closed. Potential candidates should not be "shopping" around for wards that have few or limited candidates. Candidates should be applying because they are

committed to the community they live in and be applying because they are confident and care. Not because they chase the most likely "opportunity to win" ward.

If nominations are visible, we will see elections where candidates representing Political parties start stacking certain wards where the numbers are low.

It's tricky. Displaying them could encourage or deter, but by-elections are expensive for the community so perhaps displaying them is better?

Just the name of a candidate or even their personal history, do not help voters to vote intelligently. Every candidate should therefore publish, way before election day, a detailed agenda and a list of their proposed policies, and these should be published early.

Keep councils out of this process as they may end up being seen as influencing the process unduly.

knowing the candidates or the lack of enables those who are wavering to make more strategic decisions and help manage the nomination process.

Knowing who else has nominated can be both an attractant and deterrent for nominations as the culture of the past elected body can influence whether people want to be part of that body or not. Personally, I'd like to know who has nominated and whether there is likely to be a group of people who can work effectively together in spite of differing perspectives and opinions. In rural and remote areas people do tend to know the nominees and can make this assessment.

Lack of nominations should not trigger boundary reform

Let the council staff handle it , ECSA staff have been problems every election

Local government election processes should be conducted impartially by the Electoral Commission of South Australia and its officers (on a cost recovery basis), none of whom should be engaged in the administration of the council in which the election is being held.

Make people aware of what is required to be a councilor.

Makes absolute sense for the community to be aware of who has nominated

Many don't understand process, teach at schools and online

Members were divided on the idea of publishing council nominations throughout the process. Some believe it would level the playing field for those candidates who are not connected to political parties. Whilst others argued it could discourage candidates from nominating and would lead to candidates swapping wards based on the competition

More people from diverse groups would apply if they knew there was not many nominations. if people felt strongly against a specific candidate they also might step up.

More scrutiny of what people say about themselves in those words on the ballot paper is needed. There are some untruths spoken and statements made that can be misunderstood if English is not the first language of the voter.

More/further information options and freedom of speech.

Most of the time we have no idea that elections are coming up.

NEEDS IMPROVING AND MORE PUBLIC EXPOSURE BY THE AEC

No – the arm's length process currently in place, where nominations are managed by ECSA, gives integrity to the process.

Yes – councils should be involved in the process to alleviate no candidates being nominated

No requirement to declare their full address to the public for their own safety. There should be more information provided about the nominee in regards to where they stand on issues like First Nation, Arts, Sports, Economics, Conservative, etc.

No, I think I have said enough. However, my simple comment is: "A Council should be receptive to their outlier communities to show a willingness to listen, understand and accept that all communities are different". Even with my research through ABS statistics our community is completely different to where the main Council is based. I base this statement on the qualifications and accuracy of the ABS statistics but also on my awareness that our local community is fundamentally different from where the bulk of the Councillors, staff and employees come from.

Nomination process should only be handled by ECSA keeping the process being handled by an independent agency separate to councils ensuring that there are no perceptions that Council Staff are assisting candidates and existing members.

the names of candidates do not need to be published in real time but the number of candidates in each election could be published so that it can be seen if there are nominations received.

Nominations should be accepted by an independent group.

Nominations should be available to the public well before the cut off date.

I was reluctant to nominate because I couldn't see who else had nominated.

Nominations should be confirmed publicly quickly. This will allow for campaigning.

Nominations should be open and transparent. The electoral commission is an independent body that should have carriage of all aspects of local government elections.

Dual nominations for Mayor and council should be allowed. At the current time councillors are discouraged for running for Mayor as a loss means that that cannot continue to be involved in council.

Nominations should be published once they are approved after all the relevant checks by the Electorate Commission or on weekly bases to ensure EC can manage it's resources.

Nominations should only be publicised once the candidate statement has been approved. Also candidates should be required to complete a primary return with their nomination and this should be available to the public on request.

Not knowing who and how many people have nominated leads to difficulty in filling positions and sometimes poor quality of candidates being elected as they have not been challenged

Once you have your nomination published you can begin your 'campaign'. Publishing nominations as soon as they are received may entice people to nominate earlier rather than later so they can commence this process.

Only one member of each household should be able to apply and stand for council.

Over the years I've been astounded & disgusted by the 'activities' of a handful of elected LGA Councillors. We should ensure that the process of nominations leaves it up to the person to provide 'bona fides' & that they are a 'fit & proper person' for a nomination to be accepted. That once elected if the rules ARE broken they can have the position they hold withdrawn. That way we should spend the millions of dollars spent on legal fees on services for the residents.

People are likely to nominate based on who they know are also nominating, if you know an elected member you respect the views of is not standing you might be more likely to run, or if you know those you do not share views with are running you may want to put your nomination in, if you know there are less nominations than positions you might be more likely to run or if there is a low amount you may also play the odds in your mind.

People need to see whos running or not running early, this is especially important for mayors. Seeing who is running may make others throw their hat in the ring if they see there are vacancies or more importantly see there is a poor quality of candidates and decide to step up.

People nominated should disclose their political leanings.

People quite often say there is no point in nominating, because hey are either not well-known, there is a clear bias toward one or two people already an elected member, or the current members have been on 10 or 15 years as it is, so no one else will get a look-in because the same people will continue to be voted back in. Having set maximum lengths of time would be fair and more equitable.

People should only be able to nominate for the ward they live in,

Perhaps you could publish the number of nominees.

Please introduce a nomination process to Coober Pedy, so we can assess it.

Potentially a first announcement of candidates followed by a second period allowance for people to nominate.

Prevent those nominating from lying about their campaign funding, alliance to political parties etc. Prevent other candidates playing the system by passing votes to ensure a successful victory for a particular alliance.

Publication of nominations in real time has proven to be effective in encouraging candidates to nominate, particularly for regional councils.

Publishing candidate nominations in real time on a website administered by the Electoral Commission of South Australia (ECSA).

Publishing nominations ahead of time would be a good step.

Reach out to community groups to share information around nomination process to share within their groups.

Real time publishing is a risk and vetting is required (and should be seriously increased). Periodic publishing would be more practical.

Real-time publication of nominations should be reinstated by councils. I agree with the discussion paper that many non-elections in 2022 would have been contested were real-time publishing in place (e.g., the Hectorville Ward had 7 candidates for two positions; the neighbouring ward had only two candidates).

I believe it is incorrect to assume that 'ward shopping' is necessarily a bad thing. I disagree with the assumption of the following sentence in the discussion paper, which implies that just because someone doesn't want to go through a contested election, that they are not entering local government for the correct reasons: "There is also a view, though, that the publication of these details encourages people to stand for reasons that may not be considered the best reasons—for example, because they know that they will not have to run in a contested election—rather than simply because they wish to contribute to improving their local community."

It is clear from academic studies that people don't just run because they have a pre-existing interest in local politics – they also respond to the opportunities placed before them, and they often 'step-up' to meet their civic responsibilities (as occurs in re-elections). Seeing a lack of nominations will often trigger a latent interest in local affairs, ignite community-minded feelings, and lead to thoughts such as "maybe I should run; yes, I think I would do a good job". Moreover, competitive elections are often barriers to candidate diversity, as they favour those with funding, those with confidence, extroversion, and public speaking ability.

Real-time publishing of nominations is strongly supported. The Discussion Paper notes that this can lead to 'ward shopping' however it does not explain why this is believed to be a problem. If anything, candidates being able to select wards with lower numbers of candidates to maximise their chances of being elected is an efficient way of ensuring that there is a reasonable distribution of candidates

real-time reporting on noms allows gaming the system and incentivises last-minute nominations.

Reduce unnecessary unfair competition and transparency is crucial during the nomination

Regarding the nomination process No current Councillors should be involved as there is a conflict of interest. Separate independant group should be organising nominations for a fair selection of candidates.

Representative democracy has major flaws. Need different forms of democracy particularly as we transition into a new Degrowth world.

Restrict the number of candidates from one household/family to one and enforce a strict term limit.

Risk to removing wards are lack of knowledge and representation in localised communities

Simplify the application process, provide resources on the responsibilities and benefits of being a councillor, and offer training programs for potential candidates. Foster a sense of inclusivity and diversity, emphasizing the importance of various perspectives in local governance. Additionally,

collaborating with local community groups and leaders to identify and encourage potential candidates can broaden the pool of participants.

some community hot topics may lodge nominations to promote an agenda item. Counter views should be aware of nominations so the community may decide by voting.

Some people who live on the edge of wards shouldn't be publicly outed for not living in their ward when the majority of their time and business is spent in another ward. There should be a 2km grace from the border.

State Government should fund the LGA to run a bigger campaign.

stop the electoral commission from interfering

Strongly support nominations being displayed at Council Offices and on the ECSA website once accepted. The veil of secrecy did appear to have an impact on the number of nominations and the interest of people nominating, particularly in the regional areas. Candidates should also have the right to inform the community (not campaign) once the nomination is accepted and displayed. Such an approach has the potential to encourage more people to vote at the election.

Supports ECSA retaining management of the nomination process, and that accepted nominations be made public in real time

The nomination process should stay in its entirety with ECSA and that the nominations, once approved, should be displayed on an ECSA website

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this survey. I feel that my previous responses have been detailed enough to express my views on the nomination process.

The 2022 Council election was the first time that nominations were not published when they were received. This had an interesting effect in Mitcham where the wards who normally get less candidates got more and the wards that normally get more candidates got less.

This did not however, increase the quality of the candidates, with many putting their hands up in the less popular wards only because they thought they would have a better chance of getting elected.

I think that the nominations should be published when they are received. This allows for people to work out what the competition in that ward is like and if they might be better off running in a different ward. This happened back in the 2018 Council elections, where many people nominated for a neighbouring ward to provide competition if there were less candidates.

The 2022 election showed the unintended consequences of not publishing nominations until closing date. Some wards and councils had insufficient candidates which meant there was the palaver of running additional elections. Or in other cases, the number of candidates was the same as the number of vacancies which denied residents the opportunity to choose their candidate because they were elected by default.

The confidential, or "blind", nomination process which occurred in the 2022 general election had a disastrous effect on the number of nominations received across the state. It is important that all nominations be publically listed as they are received, at the respective Council office and online. This will

ensure greater transparency of the nomination process and may also encourage individuals to nominate for Council where nominations are few. Hard copy nominations, in addition to electronic nominations, will also ensure a more accessible and inclusive nomination process.

The identity of candidates should not be disclosed, however the number of candidates for a particular nomination should be known, to eliminate the need for supplementary elections if insufficient nominations are received.

The information should be shared on as many social media platforms plus TV and Radio as possible.

The lack of information about who was running in certain wards created unexpected problems like no candidates in some wards and too many in others but there was something to like about the 'not knowing' who was running.

The last election was a disaster thanks to the decision not to publish names. A number of Councils did not have sufficient nominations because people kept away in droves from the nomination process thinking nominations were filled. We would never use secret nominations in State or Federal Elections - it was a dumb idea the way it was handled last November.

The live posting of nominations allows prospective candidates to make as informed a choice as possible. removing real time nomination was a significant contributing factor to seeing some councils have to re-run elections for some wards, while having a plethora of candidates for a neighbouring ward.

The more day light shone on candidates the better. The rate payers are entitled to know who is interested in representing them.

The nomination process should be managed by the Electoral Commission, just like it is for any other tier of government. Who else is running should not effect anyone's decision to nominate - if it does, then there are bigger problems in the system. Having enough nominees is a different problem to solve than how to manage a nomination process.

The nomination process should contain the political affiliations and employment of the candidates

The nomination process should remain separate to council

The number of candidates should be published as they are accepted, so that more people could put their hand up if they see that there may be a shortage of candidates.

The process for nominating during the last election was tedious. The technological processes have been very poor. These need to be made easier and user friendly.

The reality is that savvy candidates often find out a lot of information through their networks who is nominating and not nominating anyway. Publishing the nominations live on the LGA website actually levels the playing field for candidates who are not connected to political parties or who are not already involved in LG and may not otherwise have access to this information. I support live publishing for this reason.

The removal of publishing names was designed to prevent ward swapping at the last minute. This is the lesser of two evils in that the chances of needing a bi-election increase as we found out in 2022.

There should be a cooling off period after official close of nominations where candidates can have the option for training and finding out who else has nominated. They can withdraw nominations in the cooling off period. But a code of conduct must apply once nominations have been received.

This has been mentioned in my previous comments.

This has the potential to be very intimidating. The process should work, and a suggested process for lack of nominations is outlined in my previous comment about limited terms.

This is very important

This should not be a Council problem. When ECSA receive a nomination, and once checked that it is in order, a copy of it should be posted online, immediately. Simple.

this would encourage people to run - ie. if they see not many are running, if they see nobody is running, if they feel they are more qualified than those who are running - good for everybody to see who is running progressively so as to inform decision

Traditionally the names were available immediately. This was a poor move leaving multiple candidates in some wards and none in others.

Up to date information on nominations is needed.

Varying views have been expressed:

- Did we previously ?
- I would have thought Council would prefer to have oversight of the process but acknowledge it is a lot of work, so maybe more contact/information from ECSA would assist. Was there a lack of information in 2022 ?
- No.

Noting concerns raised by Council Administrations in the past have been around: - staff/officers being arms-length/separated from the nomination process to avoid any perception or insinuation of beneficial/detrimental treatment of existing or prospective members, - double handling by Council and SA Electoral Commission - maintaining multiple different methods of administration (via Council, online, direct to SA Electoral Commission) - timeliness/delays with documentation received and scanned/posted and returned between Council offices and SA Electoral Commission. - consistency of administration and information for which responsibility/accountability lies with the SA Electoral Commission.

Varying views have been expressed:

- Yes, they should be published at the local council office.
- Just the numbers.
- Include names
- (current) photo should be mandatory Noting the concerns referenced in the previous response

Varying views have been expressed:

- I think the nomination process has to be kept at high level of attainment, and whilst we welcome diversity, candidates have to have a certain ability.
- Leave it as is, if you try to create further barriers it will just result in less diversity.

Leave it as it is. Remove the political parties as all it does is push us towards a party political future in Council elections.

Varying views have been expressed:

- I believe nominations should be published in real time.

- Only numbers.
- virtual or remote options for the nomination process?

We all observed the negative and detrimental impact of with holding the nominations until after the closing date. This resulted in costs, time delays and secondary impacts that could have been avoided. Strongly support shift back to previous format of council and/or available as received.

We support ECSA continuing to receive nominations directly, with the requirement for nominations to be published throughout the nomination process, not just at the end
 We support these publications being made available online on the ECSA website and made available on boards in Council offices as the nominations are processed

what budget is the candidate using and support base

When a person nominates the name should, once necessary checks have been made to ensure their validity, be immediately posted (see comments below re composition).

When Councils had a great role in taking nominations the nomination forms were displayed on a notice board in the council offices. This led to a lot of last minute tactical withdrawals and changes and created administrative difficulties. The new system managed by the Electoral Commission is better and less prone to errors. Candidates should nominate because they truly wish to represent their community, not because they can see an opportunity to win a position that is under-represented.

When people nominate for state or federal elections it becomes public, this should be no different

While there has been criticism of "ward shopping", I'm from a Council without wards and have the view that either wards should be abolished entirely, or you should only be able to stand in the ward that you live in.

I think that the opportunity to see who has nominated is particularly helpful especially in the case of Mayor. There have been issues where someone thought someone else was running or not running for Mayor so didn't nominate. Good people miss out because they wrongly assume someone else is standing or accidentally nominate for Mayor while a candidate with similar views has done the same and one or both of them (because of a split vote) gets taken out of the picture entirely. On a separate note I think that preferencing all boxes should be mandatory for the Mayoral ballot, too many times there are exhausted votes in a large field which lead to people with under 50% of the preferences getting elected.

There should be a strict code of conduct for those running about bullying and harassment of other candidates with monetary penalties and disqualification as the most serious offence. Both myself and my best friend were physically intimidated by older men (existing Councillors of multiples terms) running in elections. My friend who is a young woman was relentlessly bullied and despite winning resoundingly would prefer not to run again due to the harassment she continues to receive from these spiteful people.

whose paying for all of this, the Govt or as usual the TAXPAYER

Would like to return to previous legislations when it comes to real time publishing of nominations

ECSA have the responsibility as Returning Officer for elections, and all nominations should be lodged, received, and acknowledged on line by ECSA.

All nominations that are accepted as valid should be 'published' on the ECSA elections website (for LG elections) – and Councils can then link to these pages to promote such information to their communities.

There is then one source of information rather than Council initiated information on candidates Accepted nominations should be published within a determined timeline from acceptance ie by COB that day, and this could include exceptions/exclusions for any valid nominations received on the last day to not be published (they would be provided to the public as part of the draw for ballot paper positions if an election is required, or as part of initial declaration of no election is required).

Evidence shows that there can be no doubt that in 2022 potential candidates may not have nominated as they didn't know who was standing or if their own nomination was required. The fact that those 'under subscribed' Councils were able to hold successful by-elections to fill the vacancies supports the belief that potential candidates existed but didn't nominate.

If ECSA and individual Councils were allowed to publish names and profiles (as was the process before), potential candidates would be in a better position to make an informed decision about nominating

Councils should not have a role in the nomination process due to lack of resources

Yes, should be a requirement for ECSA to definitely publish nominations when received. Copy at Council Office and on ECSA website

Removal of contact details from published nomination, with a generic email provided for each candidate may encourage a greater number of more diverse candidates

Council does not believe councils should play a role in the nomination process – this exposes Council to risk if appropriate governance arrangements are not in place and also creates a burden for Councils without sufficient resources to manage the process.

While Council understand the concept of 'ward shopping' is not ideal, it supports transparency of the overall process. There is merit in understanding, at least, how many have nominated before the closure of the nomination period to allow for more intensive communications if required.

Position: No

Having nominations consistently applied and considered by ECSA is beneficial for the sector. It was one of the key benefits in previous rounds of legislative reform

Position: Yes, published online by ECSA and Councils can link to a single source of truth

Removing Council Staff from the process of candidates nominating reduces risks associated with Council Staff being implicated in any complaint of mismanagement or inequitable treatment of candidates

Removing Council Staff from having a role in the nomination process would strengthen trust and consistency in the process across the State.

The 2023 nomination process required candidates to divulge their addresses. Elected Members noted concerns regarding privacy and security. It should be sufficient to identify that candidates do or do not live in the area/ward and to provide phone and email contact details.

Publishing nominations on the ECSA website as they become available will provide transparency and increase competition for positions available.

Real time publishing of nominations should align with the state and federal members of parliament nomination process.

However, ensuring a wide spread of nominations in wards may be assisted with real time publishing of

nominations and may prevent the need for a supplementary election if nominations are not received for a ward.

It could be considered that people may only nominate if they don't think the people that have nominated are suitable.

No. The Council supports the current provisions in respect to the nomination process (ECSA managing this process), with the exception of the publication of the Nomination Forms – see below.

Yes. Whilst the role ECSA played in the nomination process is supported, it was disappointing that the Council was not provided with a copy of the nominations as soon as they were approved by ECSA, so that the Council could place the nominations in hard copy at the Council's Principal Office.

A number of citizens take the opportunity to view the information regarding Candidates in this manner and this information should be accessible to all members of the community.

We are passionate about the re-introduction of real-time publishing of nominations. We have received feedback from many community members who were confused about the lack of information on who was nominating, and who were not comfortable putting their name forward without knowing who they would be standing against.

We are confident that in regional communities many more would have put their hand up to serve in their local council, had they known that insufficient nominations had been received. Certainly, this appears to be evident in the significant number of councils where not all vacancies were filled in the 2022 periodic election compared to previous years.

Councils should not have a role in the nomination process, rather, these should continue to be received directly by ECSA and published at the time they are received, rather than just at the end.

Real time publication would encourage more participation – if people can see who has nominated, (a) they are more likely to find out what the candidate wants to achieve and (b) if there are no nominations it may encourage others to stand

Full support for nominations to be published throughout the nomination process, not just at the end.

Nominations should not be published during the nomination period, but at the conclusion of it, as is currently the case Councils should not have a role in managing the election process in any form and the shift to making ECSA responsible for Local Government elections has been widely supported by Councils. The current system of publishing the names of candidates at the end of the nomination period should be retained.

If the real time publishing had taken place some Wards would have had less candidates – for example South Ward of Alexandrina had 13 candidates, some that lived in the West Ward that would have made quota and been elected if they ran in their own Ward. Consequently, South Ward's third Elected Member did not make quota

The confidential, or "blind", nomination process which occurred in the 2022 general election had a disastrous effect on the number of nominations received across the state. It is important that all nominations be publically listed as they are received, at the respective Council office and online. This will ensure greater transparency of the nomination process and may also encourage individuals to nominate for Council where nominations are few. Hard copy nominations, in addition to electronic nominations, will also ensure a more accessible and inclusive nomination process

No. Councils should not have a role in the nomination process

Yes, during the nomination process ECSA should maintain a real-time nomination list on their website.

No, it would be entirely inappropriate and potentially unreasonably expose staff (this is not their core role). This process must remain with ECSA, as with all other tiers of government.

Absolutely, nominations should be published in real time on the ECSA website, which can then be shared / promoted by councils.

This step likely would have prevented situations encountered in the previous election where secrecy resulted in many councils not filling vacancies and the community losing faith in the transparency of the process. Generally, the community rally to fill vacancies or to compete as appropriate.

Councils should be excluded from involvement in the nomination process, addressing concerns raised by Council Administrations in the past, including:

- Ensuring staff/officers maintain an arms-length separation from the nomination process to prevent any perception or insinuation of favourable or detrimental treatment of existing or prospective members.
- Avoiding double handling by both Council and the SA Electoral Commission.
- Streamlining administration methods, eliminating the need for multiple channels (via Council, online, direct to SA Electoral Commission).
- Addressing timeliness and delays associated with documentation transfer between Council offices and the SA Electoral Commission.
- Establishing consistency in administration and information, with clear responsibility and accountability under the SA Electoral Commission.
- Mitigating conflicts of interest within Council administration/Election Officers, particularly when dealing with sitting/former Members or community members they know.

While there are considerable advantages to ECSA overseeing council election processes, potential drawbacks include the loss of locally-available assistance. Contacting 'faceless bureaucrats' in the city may be more intimidating for potential candidates than interacting with local council offices. In regional and rural areas, this challenge becomes more pronounced. It is recommended that ECSA enhances its direct interaction with potential candidates to address these concerns, rather than compromising neutrality principles by placing more responsibility on council staff.

What is the underlying issue with publishing/not publishing nominations?

If there is hesitancy in aligning with the consistency observed in other State/Federal nomination procedures, it's essential to acknowledge the distinctions. Councillor elections typically involve filling multiple positions, and unlike State/Federal elections, candidates cannot be anticipated based on political party affiliations.

If the goal of publication is to prevent supplementary elections, various solutions ranging from structural adjustments to administrative measures could be explored. For instance:

- Consider only publishing the numbers of candidate nominations per election, without specifying names/details.
- Implement a flexible cutoff time, such as 12 o'clock or extending for further time until sufficient nominations are received.

While an unequal distribution of candidates for seats may not be ideal, from a principles-based standpoint, it's worth debating whether this is a problem to solve or an outcome of other structural issues, such as the existence of wards

The primary principle is to maintain consistency between state/federal and local government election

processes. Consequently, it is fitting for the Electoral Commission of South Australia (ECSA) to manage the candidate nomination process in a unified manner. This raises the question of why state and federal nominations aren't published in real time – is there a specific reason, or is it just convention?

Real-time publication of nominations enables candidates to strategically choose wards to maximize their chances of being elected. While this is not a concern in state and federal elections dominated by political parties during pre-selection, it prompts the question of whether 'ward shopping' is a problem to be addressed in local government, where political parties have less influence.

If 'ward shopping' is deemed an issue, numerous solutions exist, such as eliminating wards altogether or assigning elected members to wards after an election. For example, candidates could stand for the entire council, and wards could be assigned post-election. This approach offers increased flexibility for managing elected member workloads, encourages a holistic community perspective, facilitates fair elections, and maintains harmony with ECSA processes across government tiers.

Whilst councils should be at arm's length so not to be perceived to interfere in the process, they could support ECSA by putting up on the Customer Centre window the nominations received. This could be processed by ECSA for independence, and published by Council. Real-time publishing eliminates the risk of underrepresented areas.

Agree that real-time publishing of nominations would be a good thing.

Overall Council should not be involved in the nomination process, to avoid duplication of process and ensure impartiality.

Council notes the current process can be difficult for nominees to navigate and use and further work on the nomination portal and timely support for nominees is required

Yes, nominations should be published throughout the nomination process.

In smaller or more rural areas a lack of information about who is standing can lead to a reduction in the number of nominees. Publishing a board with nominee details is an important way to connect with and engage residents and community in their local body elections

I have witnessed the former "notice board" model, and have seen the 11th hour nomination shuffling that used to go on. Doing away with that was a good idea.

I don't think the argument that not having forms on a notice board in the Council foyer is detrimental has any credibility. I can't see any reason why nominations shouldn't be posted on the ECSA website.

But there should be measures to prevent last minute "ward swapping". Requiring candidates to live in a ward (or a council area for a council without wards) would be a simple and effective measure

The responsibility for nominations should remain with ECSA as the relevant authority responsible for conducting the elections.

The process undertaken at the November 2022 elections, following the local government reforms, including availability of an improved online nomination portal and ECSA maintaining responsibility for the receipt and processing is a much more efficient process. It removes duplication of effort and council staff are not involved nomination process which the Town of Gawler believes is good governance practice and completely removes any potential for a conflict of interest to arise

For area councils, there is no reason for nominations to be withheld until the end of the nomination period and published only once nominations have closed.

Nominations should be published in real time and relayed via Council website. This will increase public interest and participation

This initiative would have significant benefit to local communities and encourage nomination and engagement by alerting stakeholders as to potential members or lack of and whether their skills match the community expectations for their councillors

There are some advantages in posting candidates at the council as they become available. This lets us know who is nominating where and whether there are too many or too few nominations. With this system it does allow people who might be unsure or who do not like something to still take some action

Should nominations be lodged with councils this may result in council administrators getting involved in what some might see as helping the “right” person to be elected - one who will support the aims and objectives of the council staff, rather than the general community

We support the independent ECSA receiving nominations, registering them and posting details of them on-line as received. The council should also be required to ‘mirror’ the nominations on its website and to also post them on a physical noticeboard in the public area of the council office for those who are not computer literate (this will help to foster age and digital diversity).

If people are to be encouraged to nominate for election, they need to be kept up to date with who has nominated and how many nominations have been lodged. This should minimise the situation arising where there are no candidates for any one ward

I don’t know if councils should have a role but I agree there should be ‘real time’ (or 24 hour delay) publishing of nominations. It could really make the difference between someone choosing to nominate or not. Having nominees elected unopposed is a very problematic scenario and not very democratic at all

The role of the nomination process should remain with ECSA who should conduct the elections in their entirety to ensure an open and independent process.

It is considered that real-time publishing of nominations is required. The ward shopping argument is not accepted and in the event that wards are retained then nominations for wards should be restricted to those persons who are primary residents in that ward eliminating this concern. The nominations should be publicized as soon as they are received and accepted.

In regional Councils some candidates are reluctant to “put themselves out there” by being subjected to what may be considered a popularity vote given the size of the community and the fact that ‘everyone knows everyone’. If there are not enough candidates, then people may be more inclined to nominate.

Council does not believe that councils should have a role in the nomination process. The receipting and processing of nominations is quite onerous and needs to be carried out in an exacting and independent manner.

Under the current arrangement (nominations receipted by ECSA), nominations should be made public throughout the nomination process via the previous method of displaying candidate profiles at Council offices once a nomination has been accepted, in addition to the profiles being published online by ECSA.

Transparent election processes will be best facilitated via the independent Electoral Commission of South Australia. We support real-time publishing of nominations

The blind nomination process left communities unaware of insufficient interest to fill the roles of Mayors and Councillors, impeding their ability to encourage potential candidates. Consequently, the 2022 elections saw a record number of supplementary elections, with ten rural councils lacking sufficient nominations. These supplementary elections, estimated to cost each council and their ratepayers between \$20,000 to \$30,000, underscored the challenges faced by rural and regional communities.

Despite the administrative benefits to the SA Electoral Commission, communities such as the Council believe that the change in process disadvantaged rural and regional areas. The increased efforts to rally community members to fill Councillor roles for recent supplementary elections highlight the importance of community involvement in local governance.

Nominations should be published on Council's social media channels, on notice boards, in newspapers and in Council buildings.

Topic 2: How can we encourage a greater number of more diverse candidates?

1. Engaging with community organisations and local media to promote civic engagement, highlight the importance of local governance, and showcase the impact of council service can inspire more individuals to become actively involved in their communities and consider running for office.
2. Simplifying and streamlining the nomination and candidacy processes, including reducing bureaucratic hurdles, providing clear guidelines and support, and ensuring transparency and accessibility, can make it easier and more appealing for potential candidates to navigate the electoral process and stand for election.
3. Collaborating with employers to promote flexible work arrangements or time-off policies for employees who wish to run for council positions can facilitate greater participation in the electoral process by removing logistical barriers related to work commitments.
4. Conducting public education and awareness campaigns to inform potential candidates about the roles, responsibilities, and impact of serving on a council can take the fear out of the process and encourage more individuals to consider running for office.

1. Make voting in local government elections compulsory to (a) increase interest in local government, and (b) avoid less suitable nominees being elected with a small number of votes.
2. Increase the allowances for councillors to encourage nominations.

A clear understanding of what counsellors do.

Greater visibility of local government in the work of the community.

a Higher profile and stronger understanding of the decisions councils can make and what actions they can perform

A local event may assist in encouraging community members to nominate, with council representatives actively encouraging people to stand. I attended our Australia Day Breakfast where our CEO and Deputy Mayor were active in talking about the Supplementary Election and encouraging people to participate. This prompted me to stand for election.

A strong campaign of information to better enable people to understand the role of Council and the role of an elected member

A sufficient allowance to allow people who are currently working Full Time to go down to part-time (0.8 or 0.9 FTE) to create time for Council work and attending community events would be of great benefit in attracting people to join Council.

Our current remuneration documentation details that as Elected Members we are "on call" to the community 24/7 - this reflects that there is no "right to disconnect" for elected members. Our phone numbers, emails and residential addresses are all public and easily accessible. Assisting Elected Members in navigating a work/life balance with Council would help to attract younger people and others who are balancing work, family and life generally.

Actually holding elections would be a good place to start...

Additional leave allowance similar to jury duty.

Advertise in all newspapers, on TV, social media

Again, by making local Councils important - compulsory voting!

Also hold elections in years when there is not a State or Federal election. Make Council elections the third important wheel of a representative democracy, and locals can then come out on their special important day like they do in the States that have compulsory voting.

All the encouragement needed is provided. Can lead a horse to water.....

An increase in the allowance may enable a more diverse range of people to be attracted to the role as an increase in remuneration would allow people to consider a reduction in paid working hours to better support the requirements of being an Elected Member.

The addition of superannuation would be a valuable asset in attracting Members of working age. For Mayors and Members who reduce hours to enable them to fulfil the role there is a significant impact to superannuation.

Elected Members are not employees and therefore are not extended the benefit of leave such as annual, long service or parental leave. This should be considered when determining the allowance.

Where Elected Members stop working or reduce their paid working hours this impacts on their long service entitlements and should be considered as a factor when establishing allowances.

At this point in time I don't think the most appropriate persons are serving on most councils. Most have not the skills required. Just seeing some of those representing councils in city areas are most inappropriate.

Make it harder and make it more prestigious to have a role on council.

Promote the skills current members have.

Ban anyone with political or union affiliation from standing for council.

Being required to provide personal information irrelevant to the position while campaigning (home addresses, workplaces etc.) can be off putting, the why behind this requirement should be reconsidered.

Better education in civics and democracy. The opportunity to participate more in decision-making/active engagement outside of being elected members. Participatory democracy, liquid democracy, participatory budgeting and tactical urbanism and many others provide alternative models for how people can engage more in community decision-making without needing to become elected officials.

Big problem is councils reputation. People don't want to be involved with an organisation that wastes money & do their own thing, screwing over people. Council staff that extort funds for pay increase, or their own project, perks, lose money on lazy half done actions. Councillor getting new driveways, expensive sport facilities to use, ignorant on what's happening in their own community. ALL DUE TO

SCALE. Staff/councillors are so far away from other Staff/councillors/local community in the organisation structure they aren't assisting or monitoring the actions of the other. letting thing fall through the big cracks.

Councillor has become a bad word/title.

Yet, Town committee volunteer is a praise and rewarded role. specially for sorting out councils idleness on a community issue.

Certainly not paying more money!

Certainty in the way elections are run. There is too much room for manipulation in the current postal voting, non compulsory system.

Compulsory voting

Compulsory voting for local government elections

Compulsory voting so the elections are fair and not stacked.

compulsory voting, increased prestige, increased professionisation, increased stipeds, increased staff support, & increased press coverage.

Consider how we allocate decision making power between Local Government and State government particularly for the provision of services that directly impact people's lives. I think that if being a local Councillor meant that you could actually change things for the better for people in your community (eg help them overcome aspects of poverty, or overcome isolation and loneliness, or address environmental protection, or facilitate access to housing or mental health care) then that would motivate more people to nominate. I think it is also critical to engage with communities who do not know what local council is or what it does first - and ask them why they haven't ever thought about nominating. The time/pay aspect is definitely something that would be a barrier for some - but perhaps also the feeling that 'local councillors can't really do anything anyway' is also an issue (however misguided that might be).

Council elections should be conducted in conjunction with state elections..

Reduce wards in council zones to reduce costs

Council should run a section of their main website where every Candidate has a place to add their own details and election platform, this could be beneficial to candidates who have never run an election campaign before.

Councillors need to have permanent addresses in their local government areas. However, this favours homeowners and disadvantages others. I am a young person and would love to nominate as a candidate, however, as a renter with a growing family soon in need of a bigger dwelling, I am unsure if I would be able to remain in my council area, let alone my ward.

Councillors to be seen as gatherers of community opinion.

Councils have a heavy leaning towards male domination. There is a level of bullying in many Councils and this is supported by LGA rules.

I would like to see far greater female participation as 50% of the population is female.

Councils should be funded so that council can provide Skills assessments to help resident assess if they have the skills and experience to be a good councillor. Proof of an assessment should be a requirement of the application process. It is important to have quality applications not just any body. Last election there were councillors who were elected in, who had no education and o ability to understand or learn.

Councils to be fully supportive of people who may want to stand for election by giving them full opportunities for them to be heard and seen by the communities.

Covered on previous answers

Create paid full-time positions for those representing various communities , not necessarily under the structure of a council.

Cultural and gender diversity

Current Councillors to be more engaging and approachable for people to ask questions for consideration. I have been to 2 Council Meetings in the last 6 months and it was very noticable which Councillors were in a 'click' together and which Councillors were on the outer and I witnessed one councillor being belittled. It was shocking to witness and that behaviour would not encourage me to be involved on our Council.

Current elected members must get involved in the process and be voices for elections, rather than be silent because they don't want to be replaced. They must attend forums, meetings and events to promote elections and nominating.

Disband Council

Diversity is key. Whatever can be done to ensure a range of different, new candidates are elected the better

Elected members often are treated poorly by community members because their role is not understood. the negativity is very discouraging. Helping the community to understand their role and elected memebtrs to learn how not to take this personally could help.

Encourage people with limited means, disability, age impairment etc to be elected or to support the election of people who will represent their interests

Encourage school kids, both junior and senior by participation with local councils to get them involved. These kids are the next generation of councillors and voters.
Work with local media and papers to get the message out there.

Encouraging people to stand for elections is only part of the problem. Once elected, there needs to be more support and encouragement. To be very honest, as an educated, resourceful intelligent person - I often wonder why I am an elected member. There is no protection from the community, a lot of expectation and lots of politics. We are provided with training, but this does not really assist in how to actually BE a Councillor in the community. I always find it really interesting to speak to Councillors from other Councils, both here and interstate, we all have different interpretations and expectations of our roles. Including the level of support provided by staff. The LGA could do much better in bringing the role of a Councillor and the level in support into alignment.

Ensure candidates who consider a councillor role a stepping stone to a state or federal government opportunity wear fluoro jackets throughout the build-up to the election so they can be easily identified. Local government is for people who want to represent their communities interests, not their own. People with a genuine interest in representing their community's interest can feel intimidated by the semi-professional politician. People want to be able to differentiate between the people who have their interests at heart and the fluoro people.

Ensure Council's focus is on policy, strategy, business planning and regulation rather than operational issues that are best managed by the Administration.

Ensure that appropriately qualified people can stand for elected positions. Ensure that the Council and the Mayor run the council and that the CEO is responsible in deeds as well as legislation and regulation to the council. Not the other way around. Council is the Board and the Mayor is the Chair. The CEO is employed by council and acts as an advisor - not a dictator. This will empower candidates in the knowledge that they will be directly influencing the way the council operates.

Even though I am not really sure we need such a campaign, get a professional firm to do a TV and radio campaign that is inspiring. Previous campaigns have been insipid.

Generally, the last periodic local government elections were widely and consistently marketed in South Australia. Unfortunately, the selected marketing material lacked relevance and connection with genuine South Australian communities, felt by regional and rural communities disproportionately. Customised marketing which is relative to the circumstances of individual or grouped communities may improve engagement with a diverse demographic.

With all South Australian Mayors to be elected at large at the next election, a nomination for Mayor should not preclude the nominee from a nomination of Councillor. This is particularly important in regional and rural communities where experienced Councillors may be few and can be inadvertently lost by Council should their nomination for Mayor prove to be unsuccessful.

Get rid of corruption.

Get rid of political party involvement in councils!

Give Councillors some clout within Council, not the current situation where they are considered a "Rubber Stamp" at Council meetings.

Greater knowledge of what councilors do - and what they are limited from doing and can't do.

Greater promotion of the role and achievements of local government.

Realtime online attendance at council and committee meetings (similar to Parliament).

Annual State Government awards for councils based on criteria of community engagement and satisfaction, cost of services, major investments/achievements, etc.

Having a clear focus on what is expected.

Hearing from those already in the position might encourage others.

Higher pay

Higher remuneration and fair treatment for complaints are my paramount concerns.

Higher salaries for fewer people. Restrict single households from running multiple candidates.

Highlight achievements of Councils outside of 'rates, roads, rubbish' eg community services, libraries, playgrounds etc and the ability for Members to have an impact on how these projects/programs are delivered.

Hire more inclusive staff within LGA

Hold community forums with current and past elected members with potential candidates to have an open and frank Q & A session, without council administration or the LGA in attendance.

I believe a good mentoring program, targeting Resident associations, schools, universities and clubs could help

I believe the Ward system which supports an adversarial approach discourages people who already have enough angst in their lives. Some may believe they cannot fight sufficiently for their ward and some may be put off purely by the 'bullying' tactics of other Councillors that this system allows to thrive.

I don't know how but I feel like the current governance structure of LG's in SA need modernising. My perception is that they are old school and would not appeal to the broader community.

I like the idea of having a Council that represents the demographic and issues specific to the Council area. eg: if you have a large number of people in your Council area aged between 19 and 35 ensure they are represented and/or actively promote this need. For example: We are seeking nominations from people aged between 19 and 35 to ensure the views of people in this age group are appropriately represented. This need may vary at each Election.

It's no good having a bunch of old people around the table presenting their own views: diversity needs to be strongly encouraged!

I think the issues in metro Adelaide are different from regional SA

I think with the increase of social media our elected members now have less protection than they ever have. Community members can contact them at all hours via phone and social media platforms and tag them into any complaint or conversation. I think some of the prestige of the position has been lost and that communities respect for the role elected members play has decreased. It is very easy to make a disagreement with a council decision a personal attack on a mayor or individual council member. I think councils, the OLG and LGA could play more of a role in communicating the role and importance of elected members and what is appropriate and unacceptable behaviour from our communities.

I would not want councils to end up being mirrors of political parties. Therefore candidates must declare their political leanings or allegiances.

Identified positions, quotas, and more required Section 41 committees.

Identify the skill set required, and skills gaps on council, and promote opportunities accordingly. Have local area meetings explaining the role and importance of councillors and councillor nominations. Have a marketing budget for seeking nominations. Communicate the role and importance of councillors in decision making and corresponding impact on the electorate.

If I knew the answer to this :) Dispelling the myth that Councils don't do anything worthwhile would go a long way. Better education and information within schools from a younger age to get them interested and passionate - One Council runs a fabulous program for young leaders that gives them a great idea of what councils do and how.

Better explain the benefits, childcare, transport, facilities - how councils support you to be an elected member. You are not affected because you have to stay home and look after your kids, or you live on the outer perimeter and find it hard to get there!!

Improve the work conditions of Councillors by paying them as a professional. Meetings during business hours, perhaps a responsible area of focus, such as business development, community engagement, safety, sport and recreation. Attract younger Councillors looking at improving their CV, and near retired or retired professionals who have much to offer and is a resource not well utilised.

In my experience, people either are ignorant of the role of local government, or are critical of it because they disagree with decisions made, or feel they are being treated as idiots.

Increase in the allowance, there is quite a lot of work to do.

Is it the problem we are making it out to be?

It is imperative to acknowledge the dynamic nature of the role of councillors within modern local government frameworks. In today's complex landscape, councillors are entrusted with making strategic decisions that impact budget allocations, social policies, and various other intricate matters, paralleling the responsibilities of managing a business.

This paradigm shift necessitates a corresponding adjustment in how councillors are compensated.

By adequately remunerating councillors for their expertise and dedication, local councils can not only attract a more diverse and qualified pool of candidates but also ensure that they are equipped and rewarded to effectively address the multifaceted needs of the community.

Such recognition not only enhances the professionalism and efficacy of local governance but also fosters a stronger sense of commitment, competence, and accountability among council members, thereby bolstering the relationship between councillors and their ratepayers

It should be about quality - not quantity. I would like to see energy directed to ensuring the quality of candidates is high and meets the needs of the community rather than measuring success based on the number of candidates. A smaller pool of candidates is fine if the quality is high. Too many candidates may muddy the election process - spread the votes thin, additional reading etc. for voters making it more challenging to engage in the process.

Keep it Simple!

Less Elected Members, better abilities to manage / remove poorly behaved members, increase allowances (but only IF less elected members)

Less legislation from Adelaide. Allow councils more autonomy. If people can't bring about change then they will spend their time in other ways and not waste it by standing for council

Less woke ideology and focus back on basics... we have had enough of that woke gibberish

Let me repeat: minority councilors should be able to speak freely against council policies.

Council should not be able to make laws to hush them.

Limit the number of candidates from a single household or family to assist in creating greater community involvement who are currently disillusioned with the current paradigm.

Local government should be abolished and if not, councils should be amalgamated eg Eyre Peninsula should be one council. Some rural councils have less than 3000 or so people but about 50 or more "staff", most of whom are on over \$80K.

MAKE IT COMPULSORY

Make it compulsory.

Make it illegal for any politicians office to assist with supporting a candidate, doing printing for them, assisting with letter box drops , many candidates who are not connected to political parties don't proceed due to feeling the effort will be a waste of time.

Make it more attractive to young professionals by fixing remuneration Issues as above

Make it simpler, less bureaucratic and more equitable as those on low incomes cannot afford to keep up with spending thousands of dollars on a campaign and/or compete with candidates backed by political parties or local business people often running to promote their business .

Making voting compulsory!

Mandatory voting

Maybe publicity promoting the need to have all different ages, ethnic and cultural groups represented. For example If there is a significant population of a particular Aboriginal or ethnic group in a Council there should be a concerted effort to ensure some of these groups are represented on the Council and part of their responsibility is to consult and inform their particular groups about how Council affairs affect them and can be affected by them.

Maybe the media could run some positive stories about achievements rather than 'councillors misbehaving'. I understand it happens and it makes for great click-bait, but it's constant council bashing. Doesn't make it sound like a great environment to work in.

Mentor program. Promote to business and sports groups (female and male sports) Promote to Cultural and Linguistic Diverse group leaders

Metro areas have plenty of people standing. I don't even understand why this is something being considered. Regional councils require a slightly different approach but if nominations are live then they won't experience the same problems they had last election

Modernise the meeting structures and rules to make them more user-friendly for community members to participate.

More core business, less virtue signalling. People don't engage well when things that don't interest them are forced upon them. Religious, cultural and social agendas are a massive deterrent to the average person.

More marketing.

More people might stand if they were able to have a bigger role in the decision making process. At the moment it appears that Council staff (especially CEOs) have an undue amount of influence.

More promoting.

More promotion from the council

More promotion of how individuals can impact their council. Make councils apolitical and only Community service and maintenance based.

More support of councillors

More transparency about requirements and processes

My responses have been comprehensive so I trust I have contributed well to these election issues of which I am passionate about.

No political party members can run.

No, the questions are very relevant

Offer a "how to become a councillor" brief overview and share with groups and individuals, people need a clearer idea on how to apply, what is involved and how to gain support within their local area. This should come down to the individual's passion and community engagement and not based on *education history *who you know or *money/payment ever!

Our council has wards, and I really want our ward to be represented - why not half representing a particular ward and half representing whole council? At last elections, some nominees had whole of council platforms.

Pay higher allowances to get quality people and make them pass mandatory training prior to nominating.

People go into Local Government elections for various reasons relating to a community issues, representing their faction / group of people, or rising through the political ladder. To have truly independent candidates, electoral information must be displayed in facilities, with resources for upskilling any member of the community.

People see how much time and work goes into being a councillor. There's a feeling of who would want it?

There needs to be a way of decreasing the work load. Our Agenda documents are often over 500 pages. It would not be practical for a person with English as a second language or young people who are establishing their place in the world. Those who do would be very welcome, diversity is highly desirable but I cannot see a simple solution.

Potential Candidates are often concerned about the difficulty of running a campaign since most may never have done that before.

I suggest the Council should run a section of their main website where every Candidate has a place to add their own details and election platform even if some of those details may be derogatory to Council.

This section of the website should be capable of being updated as regularly as requested with photos and stories.

Election events should also be advertised on this main website and all Candidate and election events pages should be visible from a clear, large format link from the main page.

Potential Candidates are often concerned about the difficulty of running a campaign since most may never have done that before.

I suggest the Council should run a section of their main website where every Candidate has a place to add their own details and election platform even if some of those details may challenge/ confront the establishment members in Council. This section of the website should be capable of being updated as regularly as requested with photos and stories.

Election events should also be advertised on this main website and all Candidate and election events pages should be visible from a clear, large format link from the main page.

Promote the opportunity for council membership as an avenue to wider or higher levels of governance and/or political representation. For example, through universities, professional associations, unions and other known sources of political candidates.

Promote transparency and the goal of justice. Acknowledge past failings such as dev projects that have been appallingly managed with NO RESPECT for existing residents. Councils have been inappropriately draconian and secretive in the past - 15 minute city style street /public cameras and hyper surveillance is a feature of totalitarian regimes or surveillance states. It should be all be considered only through a harm minimization lens and RISK MANAGEMENT. The degree of secrecy is unacceptable. We should have privacy for people /public must have rights respected and privacy - and we must call for greater and essential transparency for Govt and for govt PROCESSES.

STOP installing cameras and unapproved (by the broader community) EMF towers, problem lighting & other concerning health hazards. Consult the community so that people - PEOPLE - would not feel alienated , excluded and even alarmed - by mysterious drones, helicopters /planes emissions and other forms of pollution - i have seen comments by people on council websites asking about many things including the drones at dawn etc - but cant recall many comprehensive answers.

Provide an act of parliament that gives Councils the ability to make decisions and to provide councilors with opportunity to have meaningful input that is not ignored by council staff. The statement about the S.A. Act is that it was designed by CEOs for CEO's is very true. The New Zealand local government model is very good and deserves a closer look before making any move to change the S.A. Act.

Provide more help to potential candidates in regards running a campaign; perhaps having a section on the Council website where the candidate/s can add their details; this section should be regularly updated - as requested (with photos, stories, certain events etc)

Provide more incentive for diverse candidates

Provision of vehicles as part of the councilor's allowance?

Recent Australian research has demonstrated that as a proportion of the population, more people run for election in smaller municipalities, due to lower barriers to entry and to a greater level of engagement and sense of civic responsibility. What this says is that when the opportunity presents itself, people step up

(this is also seen in re-elections). This fact should be celebrated, and should be drawn upon in promotional campaigns to encourage people to nominate.

Larger municipalities may get more candidates per vacancy (up to a point), but nowhere near proportionately so - that is, they only get more candidates per vacancy because there are many less vacancies. What I am trying to convey here is that amalgamations will not increase participation at all - they will decrease overall levels of participation substantially. Fewer people will see it as feasible to run for council and fewer people will be actively involved in our democracy.

Rather than taking away opportunities to participate, there are other ways to prevent uncontested elections, including better promotion/candidate support, real-time publishing of nominations, removing council meeting barriers, and establishing at-large elections in small municipalities. What we shouldn't be doing is taking away opportunities for people to represent their communities, and limiting service to an ever-smaller cadre of people.

Reduce rates by discount for training and nomination, free for councillors,

reduce the number of council meetings per month - make it that Councils meet monthly only,

Reduce the number of councillors for every Council - max 6 + Mayor.

Reduce the responsibilities to an advisory group rather than policy and finance

Remove the amount of reading required.

Remove the wards

Remove wards so there is not the impression that someone 'controls' a particular ward

Remuneration and clarity on exactly what the role is (and what it isn't).

Residents/ratepayers are often very naive on how Council manages how ratepayers are spent.

Reverse the decision that prevents Councillors not being able to have input on so called 'Operational decisions'! It is used as a 'Blocker' to prevent Councillors having input into the operations of the Council. It is often used to obscure what is happening.

Same as councils having trouble getting Staff. Councils need to sort their Out. it is embarrassing read the newspaper. So who wants to be involved with that.

SA Gov / Council group need to audit councils operations regularly!. !not! leave them to it. Staff seem to ignore council policies/procedures go around meetings/reviews /motions wasting everybody's time.

Monetary Fines them on laziness, as listed in SA acts. This will give consequences to action, increase structure, increase standing in the community. making it an honour to be a councillor.

See spending documents and objection and types of Council wants but not told to the public

Shorter terms for Councillors and Mayors would encourage more people to stand. If people can see long time, entrenched councillors and Mayors can be moved on and out, then it might restore some faith and hope in the system working .

Significantly better remuneration and a proper training program equivalent to a Company Directors course with proper competency testing. The ability to receive proper qualifications (funded by Council) as well as proper remuneration may attract better caliber candidates.

Small \$'s of funding or opportunities per person for advertising/marketing of their candidacy profile.

So long as South Australia's councils remain free of party politics, I think we'll have a much better time of attracting competent candidates. I would be tempted to ban party political affiliations at a local level. But I doubt that would ever be workable or democratic.

Social media and better information about the bread and butter of Council.

standing for council can cost a reasonable amount of money there is little recognition with tax deductibility etc, for those who have less financial capacity to nominate.

Start promoting what councils particularly in the regions have achieved and develop a campaign which shows a variety of people who stand up and say proudly I'm a councillor and I make a difference in my community or I help my community grow and prosper or my community speaks through me or I represent my community's plans for the future

stop choosing ppl for a popularity contest bc theyve got mates that will vote them in. there should b a tiered approach, if the first incumbent is not performing give the position up 2 the 2nd. We dont want ppl who have got up & u dont see or hear from them aftr a month in the position

stop using divisive campaigns about gender and race, focus on attracting people who are community driven and not part of lobby group.

Subsidy on campaigning such as \$500 each candidate and \$1000 for city of adelaide or regional councils such as printing and postage but not spending on social media and suppliers outside SA but no subsidy for Mayors nomination

Take back some of the State Government's responsibilities to refocus decisions on the local area. Minimise mandatory training so it more accurately reflects the training completed by State politicians.

Tax law needs to be changed to allow for more than \$1000 worth of deductions. I understand this law has not been changed for many years and does not reflect the increased costs of goods and services. This is a significant factor in why potential candidates don't run or have limited success - they can't afford the outlay if they lose.

The 2022 Council elections saw the inclusion of the question "Do you live in the ward" which was published in candidate information distributed with the voting papers. This question in my mind must be changed to "What suburb do you live in" or "What suburb is your rateable property in".

The vast majority of residents do not know what "ward" they are in. For them, the wards are largely irrelevant. They do however, know where suburbs are in relation to them. Changing the question to ask about suburb, will allow residents to get more local representation, something that is especially critical to voters and is one of the most common questions asked during door-knocking.

There are two examples I want to provide for this to support my argument.

#1 - My Own Nomination. My current ward covers 90% of the suburb of Belair. Boundary changes at the last election put me in the 10% of Belair that moved outside of the ward. Despite this, everything that I do in my local area, occurs in the ward that I currently represent. In fact, I could have written in my candidate information "I have lived in Park Ward my whole life" - technically correct, followed at the bottom by "I do not live in the ward", as the ward boundaries changed after the election. Everyone locally, knows that I live in Belair. The ward question simply unnecessarily confused people. At the same time, you had people running who lived in suburbs on the other side of Mitcham, who were still made to look as 'local' as I was by this question.

#2 - Business Nomination. The Local Government elections allow anyone to run as long as they have a rateable property in the area. Once again, this question of "Do I live in the ward" is actually misleading. A local business owner is a Councillor. They run a business in Blackwood but live at Cherry Gardens (in the City of Onkaparinga). This question is therefore, totally irrelevant to why they are running and how they are able to run. Once again, they had to say that they "Do not live in the ward".

The complexity - depth and breadth - of local government is not respected or known. Greater education in high school about how the local government decisions get made. More training and support.

The notion of having more candidates for citizens to choose from during elections, and having a greater diversity of candidates is supported in principle. Local governments should be broadly representative of their community, which includes a full spectrum, not just a majority 'type'

The principle of harmonisation between tiers of government should be strongly considered when considering these matters. Ideally, any innovations adopted at local government level to improve diversity and civic engagement should flow up to state and federal levels to improve governance outcomes across the board

The State needs to empower local government to make decisions, rather than gradually eroding its powers and outsourcing unpopular decision making and revenue collection.

I think mandatory voting in council elections makes sense.

There are indeed elements within council business that could deter individuals from nominating for positions.

Overregulation and fiduciary risks are among the primary concerns that existing councillors often grapple with. These complexities create significant barriers that divert attention away from policy matters and towards navigating regulatory frameworks and financial responsibilities.

The time commitment required for serving as a Councillor is excessive and demanding, requiring a significant investment of time and energy.

Consequently, potential candidates may be discouraged by the daunting prospect of managing these challenges, detracting from their ability to focus on shaping impactful policies for their communities

There is the possibility of a mixed council - potentially some 'general' positions and some local ward based positions. I do think there is a benefit to retain wards.

I don't think that people generally understand what local councils do or why they should run. Improve understanding of the general public regarding what local councils do and how members can have an impact.

Dissuading factors:

Lack of time - e.g. work commitments, caring commitments

Lack of resources - e.g. little to no money to fund election campaign, lack of access to transport

Lack of understanding - e.g. not being aware that can run, not understanding role of local government, not understanding nomination process because is too difficult with too many restrictions and rules, don't know how to go about campaigning.

Having to win based on votes rather than ability - e.g. feeling like because you are in a minority group or look a certain way that you will not be able to get voted in due to discrimination so there is no point.

Anything to level the playing field would help - currently system is weighted in favour of richer, Caucasian, older, straight, cis males, which creates a lot of blind spots and decisions are made to continue to advantage people from this cohort. Could consider quotas (e.g. number of women, number of young people, number of Aboriginal people, number of people from other disadvantaged groups). Could consider LGA grant process to help fund election campaigns for people from under privileged/less well represented communities.

They need to be able to see that they can make a difference for their local communities and many non-Anglo people are not elected because they do not get support through the voting process and party politics drives outcomes. Diversity of age and culture is important, but people are so time poor, so we do not get enough well informed or diverse cultural people elected. The two biggest age groups in our community are aged 12-19 and 45-49 and we have only one from 13 from these represented on our council.

They need to be empowered to get community issues resolved, the Council is run by the Executive, but the true power must be in the elected members. A great example of this is the rates and budgets, the council offer services that are not in their charter, they also need to have accountability for productivity targets to reduce the rates. Our rates are ridiculously high, they just keep going up and up and there are very few services in our community, our councilor is powerless over this, its a serious problem but it appears the Executive want to build a bigger and bigger organisation the has no service levels and the community is powerless to stop it.

Too many councils have a largely older/male representatives. Councils need to be more reflective of their population.

A lot of council services are accessed by women (particularly library services/community centre programs).

Council should be promoting elections directly to these active service users.

Undoubtedly, there is a wide spectrum of initiatives that could be implemented, which may attract candidates from historically under-represented groups. Operational tactics such as increasing allowances, changing meeting times and increasing electoral promotion (by the LGA and ECSA) may be useful but will still require a high level of local contextualisation. It is questionable whether such tactics would make a significant difference across the board, or only in pockets.

We are the view there is an obligation to ensure diversity in the age and gender of elected representatives.

We are of the view the best way to ensure more diverse candidates in elections is best achieved when the position of elected member becomes a full-time paid position

We don't need more people to stand - we need less

We should get rid of the councils then we would have no need of these trumped up over paid nobodys.

We still need to do more work to achieve gender equality. Whilst things may have improved, there is still a long way to go!

Weed out the political interference now evident in some council areas

what is the LGA doing if they are not already doing this? Surely that is core business for them.

yes

1. forcibly amalgamate and have less councils
2. allow councils to have real power on local issue, for example, whether you agree or disagree with the ACC is not the point, but the State Govt overriding them on multiple issues indicates councils have no real purpose (e.g. Hospitals on parklands, Casino on parklands, Botanic High School of parklands), multiple other examples exist with local/regional councils who get overruled on housing developments (e.g. Mt Barker), or State gov't doesn't listen about local transport needs (e.g. train to Barossa, train to Aldinga/Cape Jervois, train to Mt Barker)
3. At other times Govt chooses not to get involved to let councils look like the bad guys to local community of state, e.g. Crows proposed move rebuild aquatic centre, ACC blocked state gov't didn't get involved, the Crows proposed move to Thebarton, delayed by months /years as the council seeks to appease a small local group and State Gov't again doesn't use its major project powers to assist the project to move forward quickly

So the question is clear, why do we really have local government - as regardless of Labor or Liberal, State Govts really have more sway than local representatives when they decide to support or not support issues

Having 5 out of 11 representatives from one ward was bad enough but to have 8 out of 11 representatives using one town as their service centre was simply an unfair and unbalanced representation of the Council area. My previous ward that I was representing had no affiliation at all with the township that had 8 councillors calling it "their town ". Our community felt that it was almost a foreign country to the local Council. This simple fact made the attraction of standing for the local ward was by far a major factor on why our ward felt disillusioned.

Collaborating with local community groups and leaders to identify and encourage potential candidates can broaden the pool of participants.

As with higher voter turnout within regional areas, I would suggest that regional council members have a stronger link with their communities – and this may be due to the lesser sense of anonymity ie council members are generally known, visible, and accessible.

Diversity can be encouraged by discarding the 'closed nomination' process of the 2022 election. Potential candidates didn't know who was standing, until after nominations had closed. 'Ward Shopping' wasn't eliminated, it was merely transformed

Candidate Diversity is a reflection of the structure of the community that those candidates wish to serve. You can't legislate that x% of the total candidate pool will be of a particular racial background, sex, age or employment status. Apart from Equal Opportunity legislation banning such a move, it may well be impossible to achieve and further discourage candidates and voters who don't want to see Council become a 'numbers game'.

- Councils operate under a democratic system where the ECSA accept & approve candidate

nominations based solely on that nomination meeting preapproved standards re content etc.

- Community Members will self-assess against those standards and decide to nominate or not. The process is self-determining.
- This list of Candidates at the close of nominations reflects the existing diversity of the community and cannot be altered to suit a desire to 'lift the profile of any group or address perceived imbalances'.

What are other factors that might encourage-or dissuade-people to stand for election to their councils?

- Perception of a high-pressure culture for Council Members
- Adversarial nature of debate
- Public scrutiny
- Time commitment required
- Not knowing that training and support are provided for members to do their role
- Understanding of local government
- Lack of support for the campaign

What ideas do you have to increase nominations?

- Link to promotion - understanding of the role, making known the support available
- Pre-mentor program started well before the election cycle
- Mid-term programs promoting the role of the Council Member

There must be better incentives to attract more candidates where nominations fall short. Perhaps varying the times of meetings, supplying meals before meetings, assisting elected members with transport to meetings and offering new members of council training in public speaking. There are a range of sensible measures which can be pursued to encourage more nominations, without resorting to boundary changes

Nominating for Council – checks and balances

The Council resolved to express the importance of a cross section of people being representatives and nominating for Council. That it should be accessible to the everyday resident, and no accounting or governance experience be required.

The Council also resolved to support strengthening the criteria for individuals seeking candidacy by requiring a Working with Children clearance and that they be fit and proper.

The nominations for local government elections are unique in there are no checks and balances carried out on candidates, the onus is on the individual to ensure they are eligible to be a candidate.

Currently the only eligibility criteria are that the candidate must not be:

- A member of an Australian parliament (including any state or territory parliament)
- An undischarged bankrupt or person benefiting from a law for the relief of insolvent debtors
- An employee of the council.
- Disqualified from election by court order under the Local Government Act.
- Have been sentenced to imprisonment and are, or could become, liable to serve the sentence or the remainder of the sentence

There are no provisions in the Local Government (Elections) Act to disqualify a candidate from being elected should they become ineligible after the close of nominations. For example, a candidate could be sentenced to imprisonment or declared an undischarged bankrupt after the close of nominations. There is also no requirement for candidates to declare if they have been a member of a deregistered political party within the last 12 months.

We would strongly recommend that provisions be enshrined in legislation to strengthen the criteria for individuals seeking candidacy by requiring a Department of Human Services Working with Children

clearance and that candidates be considered fit and proper as a minimum standard. Diverse communities should be further encouraged and consulted to determine any barriers to nominating for council.

LGA

We believe the excellent number of nominations and higher participation of women was due to the long lead-time and many informal conversations held long before the election period commenced, rather than a targeted promotion for a period over a couple of months.

Greater emphasis and information about the importance to the community of serving on Council, and on the interesting variety of Council business, might encourage some other candidates, particularly if this occurred at the time when nominations are being called for. Councils could become more proactive in sending articles to journalists in the printed and digital press, radio stations and TV channels and posting blogs informing residents and ratepayers about Council activities and decisions. Our group notes the promotional activities supporting the elections and notes that there could be an improvement in encouraging potential candidates and engagement with Councils. Perhaps greater public recognition of the work done by Councillors would encourage a wider range of prospective candidates. For example, Councils could conduct public ceremonies for newly elected Councillors and to thank outgoing Councillors for their contributions to their community. It is not suggested, however, that this be mandated by legislation.

Publicity about rude behaviour by some Councillors and attitudes and conduct that the mass media press have described as “factional warfare” is likely to discourage able people from standing for election. Complaints are sometimes made to the Ombudsman about the conduct of Councillors. However, according to mass media reports, this has not been sufficient to prevent some Councillors from behaving badly during Council meetings, or at other times, towards fellow Councillors. Perhaps compulsory training for all new Councillors, and also for any continuing Councillors whom the Mayor considers has behaved inappropriately, would alleviate this problem to some extent.

Ward Councillor running for Mayor should be able to maintain their seat if they have a quota of Ward votes. This system of “Mayor at large” is not readily understood as many voters assume their Ward Councillor will still be insitu. Many Elected Members do not want to risk a safe seat and thus incumbent Mayors have a distinct advantage

The current law strongly discourages a sitting Councillor to run against an incumbent Mayor who seeks re-election. Given the risk a Councillor runs in contesting a Mayoral election, generally that doesn't seem to happen until a Mayor decides to not seek re-election.

I have seen instances in the past where Councils have lost the benefit of retaining an experienced Councillor who had decided to challenge an incumbent Mayor, and been unsuccessful.

That leaves the field restricted to non-Councillor Mayoral candidates, which I believe has been a retrograde step (due to lack of experience if elected).

This issue was canvassed in the 2007/08 Independent Review of Local Government Elections Review. Given the strong support in favour of dual candidacy (with Mayors less supportive and the LGA “strongly opposed”), it is unfortunate that this has not been revisited in the current review

Improve the provision of comprehensive civics and citizenship education and embed democratic principles and practices into schools

1. The public struggle to differentiate between EMs and council staff therefore more education needs to be given as to EM's roles and responsibilities

2. Mentorship programs offered by former or current EM's and prospective candidates
3. Target Community groups and high schools to identify people with strong leadership and advocacy skills
4. By Making it easier to nominate

What is the definition of diverse? Rather than trying to control the make-up of councils it is better to respect that local government areas are already diverse.

There is no evidence that more diverse elected members make better decisions and run better councils than those with less diverse members.

Sometimes outside social engineering can have disastrous consequences and bureaucrats need to accept that communities are different historically, politically, socially, economically, and environmentally. Prior to the last council elections in November 2022, the Adelaide City Council was very culturally diverse but was riven with conflict. Many members either left or were not re-elected.

We don't ask for plumbers, electricians or doctors to be culturally diverse, so what is the obsession with making elected members more diverse? New ethnic communities will take their time acclimatising to the Australian culture and will gradually take up opportunities that are available

The biggest factor that discourages competent candidates from nominating is the time commitment that must be made. Most people already have busy lives and lack the time to commit to more activities. This is especially true for the modern family with two wage earners and children to bring up, leaving little quality family time

Greater emphasis and information about the importance of serving the community on the Council and the variety of Council agendas might encourage some prospective candidates. Perhaps greater public recognition of the positive work done by Councillors would assist. Inappropriate behaviour by some Councillors and attitudes and conduct that the mass media have described as "factional warfare" will likely discourage able people from standing for election

Many of the issues raised by the Review appear to affect regional councils rather than the metropolitan ones. I was elected out of 8 candidates for 2 positions, which hardly signifies a lack of interest among potential candidates. So, some of the proposed solutions (such as abolishing wards, for example) can be considered for smaller regional councils - but the "one size fits all" approach for all councils should not be used.

The Review also notes that the current trends show an increased number of candidates nominating, as well as more women nominating – so we see that these processes are already happening organically. In my view, this means that it is not necessary to consider significant changes to the current system just to "speed things up", as we risk creating unintended consequences along the way

Topic 2: Increase council members' allowances (2.1)

1. Ensure that council allowances are competitive relative to the time commitment and responsibilities involved. This may involve periodic reviews to adjust for inflation and cost of living.
2. Provide allowances or support services to help council members with childcare or accessibility needs, ensuring that a wider range of individuals can participate in local government.

23 candidates stood for election in one Council. That's because they care for their community, not because of the allowance. That passion should never be overshadowed by a price tag. If you want to spend more money, use it for education for the elected members. Give them the opportunity to offer better representation for their community.

A balance needs to be reached on this. There needs to be a sufficient allowance to compensate councillors for their time and other lost opportunities. However, if the allowance is too high, it has the potential to attract people for the wrong reason, that is, a money-making pursuit rather than a community contribution.

A base allowance and then additional payments for attendance at non council meetings and training. \$16,000 is not a lot of allowance for the number of hours spent. We only attract those who don't need the money and have a sense of public duty. Serving as a councillor takes over one's life to a fair degree - we are always on duty and often taking the flak for community perceptions of what the Council is doing or not doing in their opinion.

A complication arises where some Councillors do next to nothing and collect their pay while some Councillors get paid an amount which is abysmal for their time commitment. I think that increasing the level of payment, creating a proper pay scheme with fortnightly pay, superannuation, etc, reducing the number of Councillors to a maximum of 10 per + 1 Principal Member per Council and increasing workload is an appropriate way to move forward. This opens avenues for people who would otherwise be required to work jobs and fall into those demographics where financial barriers are a real limitation on one's ability to run for Council.

Office space for Councillors would be greatly appreciated. Having to work from home is such a nuisance especially for those in shared living, without reliable internet and those with young children (the exact people who are underrepresented). Having a small, shared office space available at a central location such as a Town Hall would be of great assistance.

A council member is more of a volunteer position not a paid job. We need people who are interested in the whole community not a narrow interest or a stepping stone to a political career.

a family member is a councillor and the volume of reading and agenda items they receive is frightening. A lot of the bureaucracy is a turn off for potential community members

A higher remuneration would certainly have the potential to attract more candidates, but there would likely also be flow-on effects to the type of candidates that are attracted and reasons for running might become more fiscally minded than community focused.

Currently, the EM allowance is not realistically enough (with the exception of the Mayor) to be the sole source of income for someone, particularly when you take into account that it is taxed but no superannuation contributions etc. - it is not designed to be an income. This means that many EMs also work in other roles. This has both positives and negatives - in our instance, I see that the elected member body is diverse and bring a wealth of knowledge and experience from their various backgrounds and working environments. A higher allowance might mean that EMs can choose to dedicate more time to their EM roles but could result in a trend toward having more EMs with their EM role being their sole 'job'.

I am in two minds about it as I see benefits and negatives both ways.

A review of Elected Members' allowances is warranted given South Australian Councillors are one of, if not the lowest paid, as compared to other Australian states.

An increase in the allowance may enable a more diverse range of people to be attracted to the role as an increase in remuneration would allow people to consider a reduction in paid working hours to better support the requirements of being an Elected Member.

Advertised disclosure

ALL council members including the mayor should receive the same amount of money. Only increased on performance. Currently elections come around and if we vote we are seeing the candidates for the first time. They no longer seem to be out in the community.

Allowance should be linked with common KPIs and should be paid after attending each meetings

Allowances are appropriate

Allowances could be changed to a sitting fee. This will encourage Elected Members to engage more with Committees etc.

There is a huge discrepancy in the allowances paid to regional vs metro Councils. Increasing allowances will place a greater financial impost on smaller Councils, but it seems unfair that rural Elected Members are expected to fulfil the exact same legislative role as metro ones, but with a fraction of the remuneration.

Allowances could be increased based on the expected minimum amount of time commitment required or proposed. Being transparent and openly listing allowances ahead of public calls for nominations may entice different candidates to apply. Not all candidates would be interested in allowances, and some may opt to have this reinvested in their local park etc. if successful at election. Perhaps this could be an option.

Allowances only paid on attendance at meetings ie per meeting

Allowances should be abolished and so should the councils.

Allowances should be commensurate with the expectation. Many elected members spend considerable time in formal meetings. There is also an expectation that they read significant volumes of reports (although not all read them unfortunately). There is no doubt that we need a higher quality of elected member and a much broader pool to select from. Financial incentive is important but on its own, will not resolve the current issues of quality and diversity.

Allowances should be dependent on attendance at meetings and paid fortnightly.

Allowances should be increased significantly.

The allowance should reflect the minimum time required to prepare for and attend meetings.

Lack of participation and preparation in meetings should be grounds for an allowance to not be paid.

Not complying with code of conduct should be grounds for allowances not being paid.

Allowances should be sufficient to compensate Councillors for their time, but should not be set at a level that suggests that this activity is full-time employment. Out-of-pocket allowances should not be set at a level that allows incumbents unreasonable advantages over other candidates in an election period.

Allowances Should only cover direct out of pocket expenses for official role related function attendance with receipts provided.

Allowances to be paid on a monthly basis and only if meetings have been attended.

allowances to my Knowledge is low on the list affecting potential councillors

Although I do believe councillors should get a small allowance for their time, increasing this amount will lead to more people running for the wrong reasons. Representing your local community should be done because you are passionate and not for your own financial gain. A small additional budget for council related activities would be useful for the councillors that do more work within their community. The drastic difference in effort and community engagement I have witnessed from councillor to councillor within the same council makes me concerned about the idea of giving them extra financial compensation with no guidelines as to how it is used.

Am not an advocate for change to councillor rem. Having a 3rd tier govt. encourages candidates with political aspirations but do t have the backing of the community to become politicians.

An increase in allowances may entice more people to stand for elections but you may then see people there for the wrong reason. People may be there for the money instead of representing the constituents. I knew you received an allowance but had no idea of the allowance value when I ran for council. For those that have to travel greater distances in the electorate to attend meetings should receive higher allowance or supplement payment for travel.

An issue is Council members may do the same amount of work as Council members at other Councils however they get paid differently depending on which Council they are at. The workload is not necessarily different related to location nor size of council. The allowance should be tax-free for low-income council members. Councils have to introduce their own policies around the workplace because Elected Members are not seen as employees. This includes: Anti bullying policies, drug and alcohol policies, legal advice policies and other OH&S policies that are not mandatory. As a workplace Elected Members have less protection and or rights than volunteers. The Behaviour Code is not specific enough around sexual harassment and bullying.

Any significant increase in payments to council members or mayors should only occur if voting is compulsory. There is high risk of poor outcomes to rate payers if payments attract people to be council members without being held accountable for their actions. Too often, council members and mayors are elected on very small vote margins.

Apart from Mayors , allowances should be non taxable & not effect Centrelink payments. There should be regular comparisons between peoples actual expenses & what the allowances are. OR allow expenses along ATO guidelines Then allow an amount ON TOP as recognition of time spent . I'd also suggest that in non regional areas that some sort of 'weighting' happens. Its ridiculous that say, an LGA like Walkerville which has very high property values, BUT a very small number of residents AND a small footprint should have allowances anywhere the same as say Onkaparinga, or Salisbury, because they can afford to. PLUS LGA's DO NOT have 'one vote one value concept 'either, like State & Fed electorates. Perhaps the number of councillors should be tied to the number of residents with the cost 'shared' by the smaller, wealthier LGA's .NB Walkerville LGA has about 8k residents & Onkaparinga 178K

As in Western Australia, I believe changing the allowance to an income and providing superannuation benefits would help.

At present, it is difficult to run unless candidates are retired/independently wealthy/seeking political experience for other roles. However, making the position more of a paid/salaried one would expose it to greater pressures in some ways which would likely lead to undesirable outcomes. The attraction of political hacks to elected positions is highly undesirable.

At the current level of work, being a Councillor is closer to a part time job, than to a full-time job. Unless this nature of work evolves (in which case a higher remuneration is necessary), there should be a fixed rate of \$25,000-30,000 (taxed), to cover all expenses in this role. Increasing, and even just advertising this will increase participation. There are candidates who run who do not know that an allowance exists.

At the end of the day, ratepayers will pay for this, but the current remuneration means that a large percentage are retired or semi-retired people with time on their hands.

Pay peanuts.....hmmm

Awareness of allowances payable and expense recovery e.g. childcare reimbursement.

Being a councillor is seen as a volunteer position. But like any role, if you want the best people you need to compensate them for their time and effort. Increasing the allowance is one way of doing that, because the role of elected member is very time consuming, and for Mayors even more so with all of the activities and events they are expected to attend.

Being a councilor was once a voluntary position. Now it is mainly people with their own agenda. Usually for a career in politics

Being elected to represent your community is a privilege. The allowance is not a salary it's to cover expenses.

By adjusting allowances by offering performance-based incentives, providing training stipends, or introducing flexible compensation structures. Implementing transparent policies and communicating the value of civic engagement can also attract a diverse range of candidates. Additionally, exploring part-time or volunteer-based roles with reduced allowances might broaden the pool of potential councillors.

by increasing allowances would add a very small amount to the overall rating revenue of most councils, likely less than 1%. Increasing allowances may encourage people to take it as a part-time income and it could encourage younger people, people seeking family balance etc. As many meetings are at times outside of regular business hours it could suit stay at home parents very nicely.

Capped number of terms you can be elected. This would help reduce the number of people who continually populate the positions term after term.

Charge the existing State remuneration tribunal with the task of reviewing Council member allowances with a view to increasing them in an effort to attract more people to stand for Council.

Council allowances are adequate and not to be increased. Councillors serve the ratepayers and residents and should not be in that position for the money. My Council is in extreme debt and increasing allowances is not viable.

Council allowances are adequate as is no changes needed

Council allowances are adequate at the moment.

Council allowances are considered taxable income. Because elected members are not considered employees or contractors for tax purposes, no tax is withheld by council on these payments. Nor is super paid on these amounts.

Any elected member who has a full time salary and wage is disadvantaged by way of having to report the full 25k of council remuneration as taxable income with no PAYGW on that amount, meaning elected members owe thousands in tax back every year. Unless the elected member is retired or funded by their own wealth, meaning this type of role is typically more attractive to a retiree demographic rather than young professionals.

- Consider how elected members can have PAYG Withholding tax to be included in the remuneration package (increase the remuneration to cover this)

- Ensure that members remuneration also includes super. It is not fair that a mayor misses out on super unless they make their own voluntary contributions while they could be receiving the benefit of super if they were in any other employment. This is not appropriate when data tells you most females already have significantly less super due to family duties throughout their career.

- remuneration is a huge reason why people do not run for elected office, no one should be worse or better off from a tax perspective for choosing to take on a community focused position such as mayor or elected member.

Council allowances could be increased, but scrutiny should be such that honesty is ensured.

Council believes that nomination for Council should occur on the basis of one's genuine interest in representing, serving and furthering their community. However, with respect to the personal and professional lives of prospective local government representatives, consideration of increased allowances for elected members may assist in making the role and the associated commitment of time more attractive.

Council could encourage gender and cultural diversity

Council member allowances should be increased, BUT ONLY in conjunction with decreasing # of elected members - this will ensure cost impact on ratepayers is low, attract more people AND allow more effective council functioning

Council Member allowances should be made 'tax free', which would have the effect of increasing the allowance for those who pay tax. This would overcome some of the problems many Council Members encounter when they are elected to Council.

Council members are elected to make decisions on their community's behalf and should be supported in stronger engagement for council members to increase engagement with local matters and decisions while respecting operational rather than strategic council matters. Council members that are retirees and unemployed/low-income community members may be financially disadvantaged when paying for promotional items (printing newsletters, paying for venue hire and websites etc), especially those in large or remote council areas.

Support could be by Council providing:

- free venues and online meetings for council members to hold community meetings under agreed rules of engagement

- promote council member community meetings on Council social media
- promote Council member contact details including social media sites on Council website (with proviso that responsibility for this is the Council member's not Council)
- providing reasonable space in Council's community newsletters for Council member articles and photos
- providing a specific allowance with accountability for expenditure by the Council member to support constituent work set by the independent tribunal that sets Council member allowances like the State Elected Members. Some regional Councils are larger than the State Seat. South Australian allowances are the second lowest in the country (Tasmania being the lowest). Our allowances should be comparable to other states and a real payment would encourage Elected Members to dedicate more time to their constituents. An issue is Council members may do the same amount of work as Council members at other Councils however they get paid differently depending on which Council they are at. The workload is not necessarily different related to location nor size of council. The allowance should be tax-free for low-income council members.

Council members should be selected on merit only.

Council members should not be provided with a specific allowance to support constituent work, unless there is a formal 'selection' procedure undertaken to be an elected member

Council takes time. Most people have a day job. Working mothers generally are surviving week to week on the treadmill. It is unfair to think that there are no sociological reasons for women not to be more engaged in local government. I was one of them. But now that I am retired, I am a big contributor. Fathers are on the career treadmill too. Someone needs to look after the family, including grandparents. This may not be a soluble matter. There are real barriers to attracting a wider age range and a more diverse population that Councils cannot solve. It's a reality that is the elephant in the room. Requires formal research rather than speculative suggestions based on opinions.

Councillors should be able to dedicate their full time and effort to serving their community, and their allowances should be upgraded to a salary to reflect this.

Councillors should get paid at minimum the full time minimum wage. The mayor should get double the full time minimum wage. The current commitment of hours should be applicable for this payment.

Councils are the first area of Government and as such have an important role to play in everyday life. To ensure Councillors are recompensed sufficiently to attract a more professional candidate, allowances should be aligned with the position requirements. This will require a complete overhaul of the allowance structure for Councillors, which reflects the importance of the role, and allows Councillors to fulfill duties on a near full time basis. I would look at the approach in Queensland as a model

Create smaller numbers of elected officials and increase remuneration. The problem with the lack of nominations means you have unrepresentative councils. Due to low nominations, the agenda is set by who runs rather than who people would support. The number of elected officials needs to be at an equilibrium that people getting elected represent those constituents whether that be from more candidates or limiting positions.

Currently the roles (and perhaps allowances) seem to predominately attract retired white men. For the time commitment being asked the remuneration needs to reflect the skills and experience needed to run a council - such as business, finance, marketing, community engagement, etc.

Disband Council

Don't necessarily need to attract more people but people who are there for the right reason and not just to line their own pockets or push their own agendas.

Elected member incur costs that are not covered by the allowance paid. Those elected members who are not as well off financially struggle with this.

Many young people or people on pensions or government allowances like new start, don't stand for council due to costs of election and costs incurred during council term.

Encourage young and old. No discrimination. Encourage transparency and accountability. Honesty resonates and absolute integrity is the defining feature of excellent leaders. .

Fixed for the term of office and no extra allowances for sitting on committees which is a rort. You can't run for Council after 2 terms as the same old people get in and block new blood by relying on old blood Councilors. Advertise for new Councilors and be sure to legislate only 2 terms and your out permanently

For the amount of work required - Elected Member allowances is not sufficient. In order to attract more people particularly younger people - the allowances should be increased but it should be paid as income to elected members like Council staff plus Super. The amount of allowance need to increase to attract more people with diverse qualifications and skills.

For the commitment required the allowance is sufficient.

Further assessment required based on the legislative role and responsibility of Elected Members, time commitment with attending of meetings and in representing the community, and to ensure consistency across similar councils

Given that the workload and legal responsibilities of an elected member is equivalent of a paid board member then I strongly believe elected member remuneration needs to be reviewed to bring it into line with other states and boards. Superannuation payment should also be considered.

Given the level of expertise now required for Council representation, remuneration should probably be increased. HOWEVER, this should not be seen as a wage. Council is supposed to be about community service, not future political or business aspirations. A fixed amount for Councillors and Mayors needs to be legislated. One amount for metro councils and another for regional councils could be appropriate..? Regional Councils often have to do some much more than metro Councils with far fewer income streams, many of which aren't that large to start with.

Have less Councilors and amalgamate Councils

Have no info on what the time input is and any associated costs.

higher pay only comes out of rate payers pockets.

people should be more interested in doing it to help their community than to just take a bigger pay check, although they do deserve a reasonable wage

Historically we see governments awarding themselves higher remuneration, historically this has shown a drop in the quality of candidates. Reimbursement for expenses should be sufficient. There's too much money wasted now on CEO's and mayors, we don't need both

Hopefully these allowances are tax free. If not, they should be.

How about performance reviews like all companies do and have a proper job description for each role that is followed.

I agree that increasing level of allowances would attract more people to nominate, however we may run the risk of nominees who are particularly interested in the money and not the community they then represent. I understand this is an issue for smaller councils, but it is the rate payers money and all care needs to be taken to ensure it is being used wisely.

For larger metro councils the allowance could be seen as adequate.

I agree that raising the allowance would attract more people.
However I do not believe that this would improve the calibre of those people.

I am of the view that increasing the allowance may encourage people who are doing it for the wrong reason. I also believe it may attract those looking to be an elected member as a career move. We need to maintain the local volunteer approach we have now. We may be obsessing too much on how many people are prepared to put their hand. I also note that no one knows what they are getting themselves into.

I am supportive of increasing allowances, though if that happens, I would like to see candidates complete some sort of application / CV with skills. Everyone completes the same form and that form replaces their 100 word introduction which often tells us nothing about how they would manage complex decision-making.

I am supportive of the idea that all council members be provided with an increased allowance to attract a more, diverse range of people to the role.

I believe making the allowance a rate that one could conceivably live off of in a local area would make the potential labour put into the role more acceptable and to help councillors balance their role with their livelihoods without needing to sacrifice wages too much.

I believe that the current Council Allowance is adequate. Increasing the allowance may attract people to stand for Council who are only seeking financial gain, and are not really interested in serving the communities needs.

I believe the low level of pay means that the commitment to the role, as a community representative, is quite low.

I believe the problem with councils is, it would appear the the elected members are only there to rubber stamp what the non elected council wants done.

I did not know that Council allowances are all public knowledge

I do think increasing the allowance would increase interest but i think how it currently stands means it is passionate people who put their hand up. Maybe they can be exempt from rates? (for residential only)

I don't think allowances should be a motivation for serving on council. We already pay way too much for what we get.

I don't agree with your assumption that increasing payments would attract more people. Already many men apply to get the extra money.

We need more single mothers on councils. Women don't apply because they don't have time with children and work responsibilities and often discouraged by partners. So (positive gender biased) allowance for women to claim a house cleaner, and reimburse cost of family takeaway meals on council meeting nights. Could even consider job sharing of councillor, ie create more smaller wards which are paid less. Maybe hold meetings during school hours.

Advertising campaign aimed at partners, employers and community telling them to encourage women to apply.

Encourage confidence to apply, in women, by offering long term ongoing training on how to apply and why they need to apply. Provide childcare for the training.

I don't believe allowances are meant to attract people. If allowances are too high it could attract people that are doing the job for the wrong reason. The current allowance covers out of pocket expenses.

I don't believe councillors should be paid, they should only be reimbursed with receipts for costs to be on council, it should be an honor, not a job, there should be a deciding council with members of the community, whom have interest in the success of a community not success in the dollar.

I believe councils have too many paid employees pushing paper through different departments of council.

I believe councils should be as it was 50 years ago, when they were appreciated. Less politics.

I don't believe it's relevant. Most political parties fund candidates to run for Council anyway to maintain their power at the 3rd tier of Government level, so they are well taken care of. Residents shouldn't have to foot an increase in their allowances.

I don't believe you should be on council for money but to be able to contribute and perhaps to affect change

I don't know how people are asked to run but it seems often it is political parties or people involved in property development. And that is fine but it should be disclosed and other people should be encouraged - even people who turn up to council meetings with grievances - perhaps they are actually reflecting the community more than you think

I don't think money should be the driving factor in running for election. It needs to be based on the individual wanting to do the best for the community.

I don't think people should be motivated by allowances. I fundamentally believe in more devolved, participatory democratic models, but if we must continue with the current representative model, then at least let's not make money the draw-card for engaging in civic service. The imposition on elected members' time is marginal in comparison to doing a full-time job (or volunteering to run community groups....) and getting the equivalent of a modest sitting fee for meetings attended is more than reasonable. I believe that salaried professionals should do the research that underpins decisions, and then the whole community should take responsibility for making decisions. If the allowances are increased to the equivalent of salaries, then they should be accompanied by minimum education, or skills and experience qualifications. Taxpayers should not pay any un-qualified Tom, Dick or Harry who is attracted to salary and has good political connections to earn a living off them (and yes, nothing that does happen at State and Federal levels - let's not replicate existing problems in local government too.)

I have to honest, I am unsure of the commitment as a local councillor. I feel in a position where decision making affects local community we need the right people for the community, I do feel many elected do have their hidden agendas not necessarily with the communities best interests in the fore front.

I imagine most counsellors don't enter these types of roles for the money it is more community based.

I suggest a considerable increase/ doubling of the 'allowance' which will give more groups the economic ability to nominate as candidates

I suggest to leave them as they are. If candidates are enrolling with allowances etc in mind they are probably not there for the right reason, which is to serve their constituents.

I think if you want top talent, the reality is you need to pay for it. Are the rates benchmarked? I also think the increase in online meetings may lower travel costs.

I think it is more important to have potential candidates meet certain criteria before being able to nominate and/or ensure that the mandatory training is delivered as a sectorwide program rather than individual councils.

I think it's more likely a question of time than money, and the money is a function of whether it is worth the time.

I think keeping the current allowances the way they are but then also requiring an hourly rate for time worked would sufficiently attract people to run. Other things like providing rebates/tax incentives for costs incurred would also help.

I think people's lack of understanding of the way councils – and all public institutions – work is more of a barrier than money.

I think that people need to have more of an understanding on what both Elected Members do and Council Administrations responsibilities, getting this transparency out there will I believe attract candidates that want to be involved in the decision making processes.

I think the allowances are appropriate. It keeps councils focused on the community. Some regional councils should be paid more however. Superannuation could be a consideration.

I think the current level of allowance discourages younger people and those working full-time from nominating, as the allowance does not reflect the workload involved. I feel the same for Mayors, which could be paid more to attract better candidates. However, I also believe that the Mayor should probably be elected by council, rather than on a separate ticket, as this often results in inexperienced Mayors and a level of disconnect between the consensus of council and the beliefs of the Mayor.

I think the fact that there are allowances and what they would cover is probably unknown by most community members ... so there could be a perception that it would be a large financial and time impost to be a councillor.

I think the structure of council allowances should be changed to suit people who already work part time or full time, rather than pensioners who want a boost to their income. It is not necessarily about the amount we receive, rather it is the arrangements for which we receive it. It is incredibly discouraging for

full-time professionals like myself to take the leap into running for council, when the allowance we receive creates several tax and HELP debt repayment implications. As it is not considered a salary, it is a headache trying to navigate how much extra tax and HELP debt repayments we need to pay, to avoid a tax bill in the 10s of thousands at tax time. Basically, 65% of my allowance goes to the ATO in tax and HELP Debt repayments in one big lump at tax time. The remaining 35% that I actually get to keep doesn't seem worth it, given the time and effort you must put in as a councillor. I know this is a big reform to make, but I would like to see whether its feasible to consider it a salary, or explore other options that would make remuneration more attractive to young people who also work, rather than unemployed people who are just after the money in the form of an allowance.

I think the time has come that Councillors be completely removed from their outdated role, and replaced by contracted private advisory firms, who with the power of Ai, can soundly make decisions based upon financial position, population numbers, and economic viability, investment outcomes etc yada.

I think they are adequate.

I think this information needs to be made more public, because I had no clue what the allowances were, and even on a quick google search I'm not sure.

I understand that being a councillor involves many hours of work, with all the reading, talking with staff for background and preparation for meetings plus other subcommittees and also the time necessary to respond to residents. I don't think increasing allowances is the answer because the remuneration is not a disincentive as much as the hours of work involved and that some residents are abusive and blame councillors for evrything the council does (or does not) do.

I work for myself, so I can fit my Council work in quite well. If however, you have a family, work a 9-5 day job, then I have no idea how you have time to manage Council related affairs. Most people running for Council currently are not concerned over how much they get in their allowance. However, if the aim is to get a more diverse range of people running for Council, then increasing the allowances must be looked at. Alternatively, the allowance should be tax free. This would reduce the burden on ratepayers to pay more to fund their local councillors.

Given the time requirements to do the role 'well', it is clear from 2022 periodic council elections statistics provided in the discussion document, that the role of a Councillor tends to be occupied by people with the time, or without significant financial pressures. I would argue that to perform my role 'well', it is borderline a part-time job. I spend a significant amount of time doing more than the bare minimum (reading the Council agenda) to engage with my local community, seek feedback on consultations, follow-up on resident requests and more. A lot of Councillors do not have the time to allocate to this and I believe that this is reflected in the general communities broader lack of interest in Councils and therefore at elections as well.

I would think people should stand for council as a public service and not expect a greater allowance.

I wouldn't think that increasing allowances is necessarilygoing to increase cultural and language diversity. However, being more targeted in the design of allowances to respond to barriers (eg. allowance for child minding) might be more effective.

Identify how many hours of work on average is required to be an effective councillor and then remunerate accordingly at at least the wage of a entry level public servant.

If allowances are the only driver to participate then that person is not suitable in my opinion. It has to be the desire to do something for the community. The thing to tackle is removed bureaucratic obstacles to getting anything achieved.

If councillors are expected to read and prepare for meetings, work in the community getting opinions and information from constituents, use their own vehicles on council business, use telephone and technology etc. they need to be compensated for all these expenses so they are not out of pocket and get some recompense for their time and energy

If it was able to be a full-time salary then they could devote attention to the role. It could also then come with requirements for training, qualifications, and other benchmarking. This would also attract younger candidates.

If remuneration for sitting Councillors was higher it would be more likely that younger people and business owners would be able to become Councillors. In rural areas at present this contributes to a high percentage of semi retired male farmers becoming Councillors. The lack of diversity can stifle progress

If the amount is increased would attract wider variety of age and experience

If this allowance was increased I think it would allow successful candidates to reduce their paid work hours and allocate more hours to their elected role. An increased allowance would also allow more candidates that are still in the workforce to nominate increasing the number of younger nominees. I would like the increased allowance to come with increased training/professional development requirements for Elected Members.

If you dangle \$ in front of people to nominate for Council you sure will get more candidates but I want quality, too.

Start up a mentoring program.

If you genuinely want the best people for the jobs you need to compensate them for their time and skill, unfortunately the reputation of local council is such that more money will just attract the wrong people for the wrong reasons.

If you pay peanuts you may get a monkey, but if you double the payment you may get a greedy monkey. It's clear to me that most candidates enter politics on an issue that concerns them personally. It then follows that the type of person that continues duty after their particular issue is resolved is also often attracted to power and glory.

That is a dangerous mix and contributes to disfunction.

Payment for public duty is appropriate but each candidate must submit to psychological tests, plus declare their political and pecuniary position.

In other words selection for the public position of councillor must be rigorous and transparent, as is fundamentally the case for most positions of employment.

If this practice worked to the benefit of the community then I suggest a significant remuneration to attract the right candidate would be appropriate, subject to scrutiny by a government select committee.

I'm the only under 60 year old councillor on my council, with an increasing compliance rate and the need to be informed of issues ahead of voting on them we are spending a day a week on workshops and

Council business. As an employee this is a significant issue. Being asked for a day a week at a stipend that equates to 1/10 of my salary the math is difficult with a young family. I still do it because I love it though.

In order to attract more 25 to 45 it needs to be more especially in regional areas to offset the loss of income. This way you are more likely to attract better candidates other than those retired or looking to moving into politics and using councils as a stepping stone. There needs to be greater age diversity on councils

Incentivise attending events that are considered important to council

increase allowances

Increase allowances and decrease the number of Elected Members per Council

Increase council members' allowances is not supported

Increase in allowance is agreed; however it would need to be in conjunction with a selection process based on skill sets and experience

Increase stipend for Councillors based on tiers of participation (number of committees or advisory groups attended, submission of Councillor reports) reviewed annually. (Note: some councillors participate and contribute more than others)

Increase the allowance and Add superannuation. This happens interstate. This way you would get a better quality candidate and more diverse

Increase the allowance for those under 50. Decrease for retirees. Ban multiple people from a single household running as candidates.

Increase the pay rates

Increase the rate to attract diverse range of skills and accurately account for time attending community events.

Increase them but also ensure that when they are absent from meetings or take leave that the allowance is ceased.

Increasing allowances could attract the wrong people.

You're here to represent residents not to receive a 'salary'.

IMPORTANT - NEED FULL DISCLOSURE of Political ambitions and party membership.

Increasing allowances for Councillors would encourage younger candidates who currently find it difficult to participate and work. Allowances could be graduated depending on the level of engagement Councillors undertake, i.e. those involved in committees could receive higher allowances.

Increasing allowances has the potential to attract those they are simply looking for a job, not those who have a passion for their community.

Increasing allowances may not change the diversity or quality of candidates that nominate for elections.

Increasing allowances may not provide the outcome you are seeking as it shifts the motivation for those who stand. It shouldn't be about the money but for genuine passion and interest in local government area. Acknowledge a lot of time and energy is needed, so allowance should appropriately reflect this.

Increasing allowances will attract more people to nominate - but they won't be nominating for the right reasons. They will be motivated by the money.

Increasing allowances would not be likely to attract more candidates or a more diverse range of candidates and this approach should not be adopted

Increasing elected member allowances may attract more candidate but I feel the strategy may not attract the diversity of candidates that is lacking. For example, it seems that retired people are motivated to nominate for council to supplement their income. We don't need more retired people to nominate we need a more diverse range of candidates.

Increasing remuneration is likely to encourage more people to be involved but would raise the question of their motivation.

Increasing the allowance and making it tax free might assist

Increasing the allowance will attract the wrong type of people.

Increasing the allowance would likely attract a greater range of people, including people who are just in it for the money. Local government would also become a lot more politicised and partisan. The lure of earning more money may possibly make it harder for genuine community advocates and regular local people to be elected. Also worth considering that if you are already heavily involved in community activities and member of organisations, boards, committees etc, there ends up being lot of things you can't actually exercise your vote on due to conflict of interest, unless you leave your community work. So a lot of local community leaders don't stand for election for these reasons too.

Increasing the allowance would only attract young and inexperienced councilors who go there just for the money.

That creates a bias against financially-established people who do not need that money but are rather short of time.

Is money the best enticement? Perhaps it's the council culture

It depends on the extent to which the role is professionalised - a full time Mayor should be compensated accordingly, while the allowances for members whose involvement are limited to attending meetings should reflect the cost of their time to prepare and attend.

It depends on the nature of the responsibility and time commitment required to fulfill the role. Those with a strong corporate background would be able to contribute to Council in many different aspects than a person without this experience. Therefore I would consider that it is reasonable that allowances should be tied to a candidate's experience and time commitment to Council.

It has to be changed from "allowances" to a wage, people aren't very interested in standing to serve a community, when voting in voluntary, where only going to council meetings is compulsory and you don't really have a incentive to give it your all if you need to work a full time job to survive and get caught up with the day to day Councillor activities at a minimum

It is a fine line. Being an Elected Member is based on wanting to serve and represent your community. If allowances are increased, then individuals may be attracted by the money rather than service.

It is about representing people for the right reasons to provide a service that benefits all people for their wellbeing and to maintain a standard of care that is appropriate to your code of conduct. It has nothing to do about money. It is a duty of care. Change the mindset to encourage the well being of humanity.

It is not the level of allowance that attracts people to run for council but the desire to serve their community. Having said that, some people on low incomes may be dissuaded from running for council if they are not compensated for their time, at least at a low level. I think that there is room for increased general allowance to a level based on an expected time commitment (e.g. 5 hours a week) at an hourly rate expected for an equivalent worker (backbench state MP?).

It isn't affordable, particularly with current cost of living pressures for many people to become an elected member. To do the job well takes a significant investment of time. To attract younger employed people we need to reimburse them for their lost income.

It should be a taxable income. To attract younger/working candidates, it should be a taxable income. As it is taxed for them in the end if they are working anyway.

It shouldn't be about money, it should be able the best representative for the people, it should be seen as a privilege to represent to people and their families in the local community.

It shouldn't be about the money. One particular Council is seen as an old boys club, the 4 or so members who have been on there for generations ;) just put down new people, bully them, and while pretending to take others opinions into account, agitate behind their backs to ensure that the old boys club get what they want.

It's not about the money, it's more people wouldn't know how to get started.

It's possible to add other incentives like free access to all council amenities. Use their status to assist charities access council resources for fund raising while removing red tape

Keep politicians out of the decision, as they will always pander to the anti-fat cat sentiment that the media whip up. The Remuneration Tribunal should make a fair decision based on evidence and every one else should butt out.

Keep State and Federal politics out of local government

Knowledge of what the commitment is in hours per week is required to be on council. I work full time but it is flexible so could take part in council depending on commitment required.

Less tax burden, or more associated rights (i.e. super)

Local Government has the closest interface with the community. While raising allowances may bring more interest, particularly by those seeking an entry level political career start, it will not influence significantly, those who are seeking to benefit their community by providing the time, knowledge and experience in support of the community in which they live.

I don't believe more money will lead to better candidates.

As to diversity, in my Council area at least, I believe that we are an embracing and encouraging

community. More may be needed to underscore this at election time, but one the strengths of local government is exactly the diversity of knowledge and experience that comes from people of all backgrounds participating in guiding and representing their community.

Lower them, increasing allowances will increase councillors seeking those allowances. Low allowances attract councillors who are seeking to improve their community despite the allowance (or to improve their political careers)

Make it a liveable wage.

Make representation voluntary only.

Make the allowances dependent on attendance

Make the allowances wages so they pay super. Not paying superannuation locks out many low income earners.

Make them tax exempt, as they usually tip people into next tax bracket,

Make visible allowances to support child care, respite if caring for an older relative, higher allowance to enable role to be attractive to more than those who are retired or on incomes that enable them to participate, also increase allowances for fuel and cost of participating. Understanding it is an allowance is one thing, but the workload is real in large councils and it is a real barrier for people who have to make trade offs with other forms of employment.

Many Years ago the elected member roll was voluntary. Note that some members are only in council to gain a supplementary income and really do not have the interest to serve the community.. Only a few elected members are out in the community and available to talk to their constituents.

Maybe yes. with the proviso that smaller Councils may both be able to pay more than the current amount.

For many people (especially women) it is difficult to put aside family duties and unpaid work (caring, parenting etc) for Council without sufficient remuneration. One women council member's response was "I generally dedicate at least 2-3 days' work a week into my role as a Councillor in addition to working four days per week, and being a parent to two children. Being able to reduce another day at work would make a big difference in allowing me to engage better with constituents."

The current allowance is not commensurate with the hours, duties and responsibilities of the role, if determined under any role review/productivity program/app/system. i.e. Mercer etc. It is almost impossible to work full time and fulfil the responsibilities as an elected member.

Maybe if the allowance increased it would attract the following:

- women - full time or part time women, mothers with children under 18, older women
- quality of candidates (this is questionable)
- diverse candidates, underemployed, students,
- more men, possibly of a different age bracket

South Australian allowances are the second lowest in the country (Tasmania being the lowest). Our allowances should be comparable to other states and a real payment would encourage Elected Members to dedicate more time to their constituents. Potential Elected Members with leadership skills

will be looking at corporate board roles and comparing the hours and fees and thus the sector is losing talented leaders.

Means test allowances and ensure that wealthy people and people with business interests are discouraged from seeking election to feather their nests

Million dollars, not practical

Money should not be the motivation

More allowances mean greater rates, I feel I pay far too much as it is I don't need to be funding a greater increase

More attractive remuneration may attract higher quality nominees

More information that it's an option

More money might attract people for the wrong reasons. Councilors have to want to make a difference in their community, it just make a buck.

More people might be attracted to stand for council if they felt their ideas and actions would be treated as worthwhile and relevant.

More value added perks. Perhaps increased allowance

Most council members who I know apply for the position to advance themselves in their careers or gain status in their communities. An increase in allowance would exacerbate this problem.

Most councillors do little for the allowance they receive. Increasing this allowance will not make any difference. There are numerous other factors deterring people from nomination.

Most nominate for council without being aware there may be allowances

My rates for 2023/2024 from Gawler Council is \$2523. My mum and dad's property at Salisbury Nth are only \$1700, with both properties valued at \$520000. How can there be an \$800 difference? Something is seriously wrong here at Gawler! What should happen, is that all councils in SA should be abolished and the SA government become one big council! People can't afford these blood suckers anymore. Thays what I think about Councils!

National parity

Need to limit political party involvement for candidates to become council members

no change required - it is not a salary and that really should not be the motivation

No I don't, and running for council should be about community mindedness and community spirit-not money. It used to be but as our communities have become more fractured and less connected, people do not have the same sense of civic-ness. Perhaps rebuilding a genuine sense of community and belonging would be a start. And getting rid of the toxic power plays in Councils that seem to be in the news. Hardly makes one want to be part of it.

If council elections were held at the same time as State elections it is likely there would be a better result

and more representative councillors.

Councils have become huge and politicised and have lost their grass roots volunteer and community spirit AND the CEO (who is really not accountable to anyone-technically the Mayor but in reality no-one) can usually lead councillors around by the nose

Management teams run councils these days and the big anonymous bureaucratic staffing structures do not engender a sense of community spirit or ownership. They're just another arm of government with no real oversight as far as I can see

Maybe if councils are going to get even bigger they should just be merged into State government and we don't have local government anymore, it's more lip service than reality anyway. Lots of big fishes in small ponds using councils as stepping stones to their political career or higher level management job in a more 'desirable location'

No. The stipend or allowance for Councillors is entirely proportionate to their Council area. The problem is more about the effort a committed Councillor puts in to their local community yet the CEO is the arbiter as to whether a particular claim made for reimbursement depends entirely to the discretion of the CEO. I would spend 3 hours a month of my time in my local community to assist ratepayers with whatever matter they wished to raise with me. I would then approach the relevant director/office to raise these matters. One ratepayer said that he was over 80 years of age and his meeting with me was the first time he had done this. I was definitely offering a local and much needed community service. My attendance at the same venue each month was advertised in the local media and electronic media by the local Council yet they wouldn't reimburse me for the time and effort I went to. My role was simply to be an official conduit between the community and the Council yet they didn't like the initiative that I had set up...by myself.

No. We receive more than adequate payment for being an elected member. No change needs to be made...this is ratepayers' funds that should be put into the community. Some elected members are clearly involved because of the dollars.

Not have councils unfortunately

not keen on more wages unless having to, I want people to represent the people and not for the money that can be earned or gained or political party

Not sure about allowances. What exactly is required as a councillor? How many hours a week? Doing what? Is allowance to be used for council business? Do councillors have to account for how they spend the allowance?

Obviously increasing the rate would attract more people, though I do not believe that remuneration is the primary motivation for most who choose to stand. The current system is probably adequate though allowances could probably be increased slightly.

Offering more money might increase those looking to participate, but if this is local government then it should be reimbursement for costs incurred, not a quasi salary.

Often business people can not afford to leave their business to be an elected member. Higher allowance would allow them to employ temp staff to assist them. But I am also mindful that some business people (depending on the type of business) did not want to become an elected member due to back lash from the community affecting their business after controversy or hard decisions being made.

On page 46 of the 'Local Government Election Report 2018' it reported;
'The age group with the greatest change in proportion of elected members since the 2014 elections is the 65+ age group with increased from 6.3% to 30.4%'

If government seriously wants more community engagement they should be welcoming the increased participation of our senior citizens.

On page 46 of the 'Local Government Election Report 2018' it reported;
'The age group with the greatest change in proportion of elected members since the 2014 elections is the 65+ age group with increased from 6.3% to 30.4%'

If government seriously wants more community engagement they should not be lamenting the increased participation of our senior citizens.

The government belly-aches about old white men but these 'fuddy duddies' find it easier to serve as they don't have to rely upon any meagre allowance for Councillors. If government is so concerned they should increase the 'allowance' to be something like a living 'wage'.

I think that striving to get more diverse candidates shows an underlying racism.

I suggest an immediate doubling of the 'allowance' which will give more groups the economic ability to nominate as candidates.

One of my council members is very active, even 'though they work fulltime. The other is not active in the community very much at all. The work ethic of council members is very different. I think allowances are OK, but it tends to favour those with other means to support themselves, so is skewed to retired people.

Opinions amongst Members varied regarding the impact of increased allowances. Some believe an increase in allowance would result in a greater number of candidates as well as a more diverse range of candidates. Others raised concerns regarding the effect of increase in allowance would have on the motivations of candidates, whether it would result in people nominating for financial gain rather than for the benefit of their community

Pay peanuts - you will get monkeys. There is an urgent need for the councillors to have business acumen and business knowledge. The only way to attract these people is to pay accordingly. Third tier government is now a large dollar experience. Councils these days can have budgets going into the \$100 of millions - yet many of the elected members may have no capacity to govern over such a large businesses.

Payment of allowances should be stopped. We had a better quality of candidates when the positions were voluntary and the mayor was elected by the councilors. To often filled by party hacks looking for some exposure or people only after the extra cash

People could nominate that a percentage of their allowance will go to a charity.

People don't apply as they feel their Councils don't listen to the community.

People should not be standing for council election for the money.

People shouldn't purely be motivated by money as this may attract people who want to just supplement their income without wanting to provide any service to their community. The people I want to stand for council are those who are passionate about their community and who will engage actively with council staff to make changes for their residents. Also, a prime requirement would be a council which is well set up to provide open and honest conversation with its residents and is seen to be working in the interests of its residents.

Perhaps additional allowances can be provided to reimburse councilors for additional costs eg extra training, study

Professionalising local government and paying more would not necessarily improve outcomes but needs to be considered. Paying more could attract as many inappropriate candidates as good ones.

Providing more pay incentives will only attract the wrong people. Stop this nonsense about diversity. The best person gets the job end of story... it's a democratic process anyways or have you forgotten that?

Refer to State Government Boards remuneration process and consider time commitment.

Reimbursement of any appropriate actual expenses.

remove the negativity associated with Councils. The bad behaviour by Councillors and Mayors which prevents the community from applying to run for Council as who wants to be involved with a toxic environment.

SHOULD BE COMMUNITY MINDED PEOPLE REGARDLESS OF ALLOWANCES

Should be voluntary so people who actually care about community will take the roles

Should look at the Queensland model.

Simply increasing allowances to attract more applicants may attract more people to nominate however their motivation may be misguided. The cash benefit rather than the desire to serve their local community might be the catalyst for nomination. I do not think that this will help smaller rural councils and people nominating will not have the financial skills to adequately manage community assets.

So far from what I have seen no councillor, and certainly not the mayor, can justify the allowance they currently receive. Before you look at money STATE GOVERNMENT should be setting appropriate and relevant qualifications for the role. In a recent major expense, which has been passed onto ratepayers, no more than two councillors had the appropriate education and experience to analyse the proposal professionally.

Standard allowance with the ability to have extra if a certain amount of hours or meetings are exceeded.

Standing for Council should not be money orientated.

State or Federal Funding is really the only way to increase the allowances - our regional council could not afford to pay more, so as such only older / retired people tend to nominate

Stop using our hard earned money 2 pay copuncillors that dont do anything, its money for Jam for some of them, if you dont provide value for money u should be out. We have 2 put up with ppl that get a either

a nepo or so called mates vote bc they hav a business in area or friends, then they do nothing except a couple of photo ops. Just like the Lord Mayor, There should also be a set term, no comebacks, & repeat terms, You do it once & thats it, its not your personal piggy bank moment.

Studies on the barriers that councillors face demonstrate that it is the workload, not the allowance per se, that is the biggest challenge. But in any case, an insufficient allowance would be reflected not foremost in a hesitation to run for council, but in a hesitation among incumbents to run for re-election. There is no evidence of this.

Indeed, rather than increase levels of participation and diversity among candidates, higher allowances are very likely to disincentivise participation and harm diversity, because a larger 'prize' will encourage higher election expenditure (potentially among those who are less civically minded), which will place a barrier in the way of less wealthy candidates.

Substantially reduce CEO salaries, allocate the savings to the councillors. Use a per capita ratio to determine allowances. Merge small councils to increase the council allowance.

Tax exemption may help.

However, if people are standing for the money, they are probably not the best candidates.

The allowance could be made in a way to be able to gain better interest in getting involved in council.

the allowance is acceptable.

The allowance is enough. Cut the red tape for people wanting to run. It's far too hard unless you have a team already behind you or a lawyer

The allowance should be increased to consider being an elected member a 0.2-0.4 FTE job and then paid competitively. at present only individuals who can functionally give up 0.2-0.4 FTE of their income, who are already retired, or who are independently wealthy can afford to stand. This further biases the role to the wealthy and the older members of a given community.

The current allowance is not commensurate with the level of responsibility, and time committed expected of an elected member. Speaking as a HR Manager for my day job, if there was some kind of job analysis conducted for the role (similar to Mercer), I would anticipate that it is under compensated. I advocate for a review of the role and responsibility, with a critical Lense on remuneration. I am also very conscious that a higher allowance may have unintended consequences of attracting well funded political parties and possibly losing the community intent/feel however I don't think the current structure is sustainable.

The current structure is not fit for purpose to attract the cross section, of people it is elected to represent. I am happy to provide more information id required.

The current model for banding of council member allowances (based on population) does not necessarily reflect the level of commitment, effort or workload of members, which do not necessarily decrease with a smaller population and in fact often covers a larger geographical area. Consider reducing the financial disparity between country and city representation, noting a balance with the ability to pay.

The core reason people are attracted is to serve the community with a sense of purpose (not financial).

The current model no doubt excludes the likelihood of certain cohorts to consider nominating, which reduces the potential for better diversity. There is an obvious difference between the time availability for a person with work/business commitments versus someone who is retired. But a wage subsidy does not necessarily reduce the burden - many people employed full-time may not have an opportunity to move to part-time work.

The current system of grading Mayoral and councilors on the size of the council does not take into account the higher level of stress encountered by regional and small councils who are in contact with their electorate more frequently than those in larger councils.

The allowances should not be treated as income by either the ATO or Centrelink.

The Government needs to decide which LG model they want to follow, increasing allowance payments may not be financially viable for some councils, additionally does an increase then mean that Council Members have portfolio responsibilities like in Qld LG, will it be seen as a full time role?

Allowances seem important to those council members who are retired and use them to supplement their superannuation/pension as income. For younger Council Members who have full time jobs the additional income causes taxation implications for them.

The level of allowance may well attract more people but there is no guarantee of competence to do the job. I'm interested in community-focussed Councillors not those who are financially-focussed

the role should be viewed as more a voluntary role and not semi-professional.

attract more people, ease upon the formal meeting structures and procedures that can be used to stifle discussion and not encourage debate.

The ward councillors or "elected members" have little say in the running of the council, that is done by the executive employees. I dont understand why each council has such a heavy executive presence, CEO, CFO, CTO etc. No private company could carry such an over head and this is restricting and strangling the ability to make decisions.

The whole subject is leading with a pre-determined desired outcome. Councillors are redundant - get rid of them. I have never heard from ours (except at election time), have never had to contact them, pointless. All that is required is a communication portal with Council, and that can easily be achieved through their website.

The work of a councillor takes at least a day a week, and should be properly compensated. The time comes either from their full time job, or free time, making it even more precious. Compensation should be at a level to allow councillors to cut back on other paid employment.

There is a large time commitment required by Elected Members for scheduled meetings, other Council committee meetings and out of meeting community engagement and as such, remuneration should reflect this.

Mileage reimbursement is also not paid if you travel from your usual address to attend council meetings. eg: you are on holidays and return to attend a meeting. This does not encourage commitment and is a cost to the Elected Member.

There is an internal contradiction: on the one hand the interest in Council elections is poor/very low and on the other the role of councillor is relegated to a very 'part-time' role with very low allowance. This is

the result you get when voting is non-compulsory, that is officially regarded as of lesser importance than State or Federal. Having lived in a State for many years with compulsory local voting, I know the difference in 'engagement'. I am now living in a Council which had a 25% turn out - this is not democracy in any form.

There is no guarantee that an increase in allowance will attract more people, or a more diverse range of people to stand for Council.

There should be a requirement for those standing for election to meet a requirement of skills and knowledge of their council not just the ward they are elected from . I can understand why people are put off running for Local Government as the work loads are huge and relate to a full time committment [IF they are doing what they were elected to do] Local Government have huge budgets and will continue to increase as the population increase and more housing and rates increase.

These comments apply to all councils not just the metropolitan councils. The allowance should not be dependent on size of council budget or perceived workload.

The allowance should be viewed as an income rather than an expenses allowance. Reimbursement for travel should be provided for any councillor travelling more than 20minutes from home. Being a councillor is a part-time job and should be viewed as such. It should not be seen as a voluntary service to the community.

They could be set as a percentage of state parliamentarian remuneration and scaled according to the size of a council. The minimum rate should equate to say the average community remuneration level (average wage) plus a margin.

They could get paid for the time that they put in, not just a flat rate.

They could possibly be income assessed to attract more than the privileged and entitled to stand for Council.

They need be at least double what they are.

They should not be paid.

To some extent there are issues with the term "allowance", I think that payment should be made to Councillors for their time as Councillor based on the amount of meeting they attend. If they do not attend they do not get paid a portion of their allowance.

To supplement a half working day per week of an average person to dedicate to the role.

unsure I have anything meaningful to contribute on this topic although I do think higher allowances may encourage people to run for the wrong reasons.

Unsure of current allowances

Value a variety of lived experiences.

Varying views have been expressed:

- Possibly but not necessarily
- Probably, look towards Queensland.

Definitely superannuation and the unreasonable amount of tax one has to pay on their allowance. If it is taxable then it should be subject to superannuation. Noting: Taxation and Superannuation law fall within the Commonwealth, not State, jurisdiction

Varying views have been expressed:

- There could be public perception challenges in increasing allowances, the effectiveness of council representation is not solely determined by financial incentives. Skills, experience, communication abilities, and a genuine commitment to community/well-being are also critical factors.
- Allowance for being on Council is not for survival/to live on, but for community service.
- Categories of Councils (i.e. different tiers/allowance values) should recognise that ALL Councils have the same base responsibilities, regardless of budget, population or area/size of Council. Could be argued that Members in larger/metropolitan Councils should receive lower allowances than their smaller/regional counterparts due to greater administration support, with Members of smaller/regional Councils more accessible and accountability to their community.
- Potential for a hybrid allowance/fee structure (part allowance to account for fixed workload applicable to all Members / part sitting fee in recognition of actual attendance at formal meetings)

We are in a space where for some, Council allowances are fine, but for some, it is nowhere near representative of the time and effort put in. At the same time, I do not support salaried elected members, but at the moment, many Councillors in the big city Councils can make a very poor paying career from being an elected member due to the workload. This is not sustainable and losses will occur, and increase.

We don't need MORE we need LESS Councils and LESS Councillors. They need to be bigger to be better resourced and stop wasting money on allowances and administrivia. It is far too inefficient. Get rid of half at least.

We have lived in our Council area for 10 1/2 years. In that time I have never heard what the remuneration for a Councillor is, nor the Mayors remuneration. I am sure I am not alone. Simple communication of this fact to Ratepayers may well improve the number of Candidates for election. Also it is well known that Councillors have little clout within Council, they are simple yes men/women. Decisions are made within Council departments, then presented at meetings for ratification.

We have NO elected councillors - just a series of 'administrators' who have no knowledge of, or interest in, our community. They seem to be entirely motivated by their fat pay check, have no imagination or new ideas, and appear to be lacking in attention to detail.

We literally have a council member telling people they are only there for the money. Please don't raise it. We need people who genuinely care about the community and not the dollar amount. If you are planning on raising it, I would be getting firmer on elected members attendance!

We need to shift to a demonetised gift economy using deliberative democracy. Representative democracy has deep flaws

When I was first elected to council 13 years ago, I did not even realise there was an allowance. I stood for a particular reason and was encouraged to stand on that one matter, but soon realised how much I could contribute to decision making having grown up and lived my life in the area and have had great involvement in it in many different ways. We need more diversity, but more importantly we need people who are connected with their communities and are there for the overall benefit of the community and all of its diversity and diversity. They should have a police check before and be involved with some basic

training or clear understanding of their role as a member and what skills they need to have or be willing to acquire once elected. They need to know that they make decisions on behalf of their whole community, and not just the small section of it that elected them. They need to understand more about their communities BEFORE they stand.

While any amount may be beneficial for a retired aged bracket, those who have to juggle regular employment, family commitments and other community participation may not find the amount as enticing. It may also provide more attractive if the allowance was provided at a higher frequency

Without vetting the quality of candidates I would have strong concerns about raising the council allowances. While raising the rates may attract more candidates the focus should be on quality candidates who contribute to their community with accountability. This does not happen in the current system.

Workloads differ from councils, some have weekly meetings, some fortnightly etc. The allowance should reflect this. At my Council we are required to be in attendance at least once sometimes twice a week along with daily requests from ratepayers and expectation of community groups that we will attend their meetings.

Many councillors are professionals or self employed so for them they lose most of their allowance in tax, which makes the allowance even less of an incentive.

Many councillors were surprised at how big a demand the role was on their time. Once councillor resigned after only 3 months.

To attract people to stand there needs to be a fair remuneration on their time. this can be hard as some councillors do way more than others.

Wrong assumption. Councillors should only be paid a sitting fee for formal council meetings in line with any other semi government board.

Yes, I agree they could be paid slightly more, BUT I am wary that raising this amount too high will encourage people to run only for the monetary benefit, so don't want to see it too high.

You should be committed to Community, not for the money

Tax issues already discourage many potentially good candidates; until those issues are addressed the situation won't change. Increasing the allowance will only increase the taxation situation. Professional payment levels for Councillors may simply attract professional candidates who care only for the pay packet, rather than the community

Other factors which may attract more people to the role include Insurance, Health Benefits, Super and Tax

Council does not believe a specific allowance to support constituent work is required. As a small regional Council, many of our Council Members are known in the community and 'constituent work' is a part of their daily lives.

Council believes the key driving factor for nominating for local government is a desire to work for and on behalf of the community – not financial motivation. While Council believes a larger allowance may be useful to attract people (i.e. it may allow them greater flexibility to manage their work / council

commitments) it does not believe this is necessarily the answer for attracting candidates. Council would, however, like to see consideration given to the large disparity between allowances for metropolitan and regional councils. Is it fair and reasonable for such a large difference? High performing Council Members spend significant time liaising with constituents no matter where they are located, manage the same issues on behalf of their constituents, undertake the same training etc to be a Council Member.

Position: Yes

Yes. While the allowance is not intended to be a salary, it does not reflect the amount of time, responsibility, or public scrutiny that members are faced with in performing their roles/duties. This would be a large factor in an individual determining whether to nominate for election, given the cost vs benefit analysis.

Position: Greater equity across councils

Taxation implications, superannuation implications etc all have the ability to impact whether a council member allowance is viable given the dedication of time needed for the role.

A comprehensive review of the council member allowance framework is also needed (refer comments below). If an elected member role is essentially a volunteer with an 'allowance', consideration should be given as to whether this should be taxable or superannuation should be applied. Currently the allowance is taxable, with no superannuation entitlements.

Diversity of functions and services

While Council members have professional staff support to guide them through decision making, in comparison to other comparable entities, the scope, complexity and diversity of the services managed by councils, is quite unique. Unlike many state or federal government, not for profit and for profit bodies and organisations and their associated boards (which generally have a key singular or limited focus), councils are responsible for an extremely diverse range of functions and services. This means that the functions and duties required to be undertaken in councils can be complex and quite varied. While sections 6-8 of the Local Government Act prescribe the role, functions and principles of a council, these are extremely broad in nature, and therefore many services councils offer can greatly differ between councils depending on the social, economic, demographic and regional factors of each council area. The current allowance bands (while not a salary) do not necessarily take into account the large and diverse range of services, programs and infrastructure that the elected body must make decisions on. Council has over 180 services / functions which are spread across a broad range of areas including:

- Infrastructure development and asset management – responsible for providing infrastructure for the community and for development within the area, as well as responsible for providing and coordinating various public services and facilities. This is across a wide range of assets such as buildings, public toilets, transport (roads, bridges, footpaths, kerb and gutter, bus stops and shelters), stormwater, public lighting, playgrounds, recreational facilities including sporting fields and areas, swimming pools, cemeteries, fencing, recycled water, wastewater, and IT (including security systems and CCTV).
- Waste management – responsible for the collection, treatment and disposal of multiple waste and recycling streams.
- Open space management and environment – responsible to manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment in an ecologically sustainable manner, to improve amenity, and responsible for managing and, if appropriate, developing, public areas vested in, or occupied by, the council; including managing assets such as parks and ovals, trees, creek and wetlands, verges, and irrigation systems.
- Community development and recreation services – responsible for providing for the welfare, well-being

and interests of individuals and groups within the community; and responsible for encouraging and developing initiatives within the community to develop quality of life and community wellbeing. This includes services such as homecare assistance, community support and development programs, community transport, youth services, reconciliation activities, justice of the peace, community awards and grants, volunteer management, sporting and recreation facilities and programs, performing arts, events, visual arts and exhibitions, library programs.

- Planning and building – responsible for planning at the local and regional level for the development and future requirements of the area, including heritage requirements.
- Economic development – responsible for promotion of the area and to provide an attractive climate and locations for the development of business, commerce, industry and tourism.
- Community health and safety – responsible for preserving, protecting and promoting public health, including providing programs that reduce or eliminate public health risks, such as animal control, pest and plant control, immunisation programs, food safety audits and investigations, supported residential facility licensing, complaint investigations (noise, squalor etc), emergency orders etc.
- Emergency management – required to exercise, perform and discharge powers, functions and duties and take measures to protect its area from natural and other hazards and to mitigate the effects of such hazards.
- Corporate services – responsible for supporting the services that councils provide through information technology, financial management, customer service, communications and marketing, risk management, insurance, strategic planning and leadership, human resource management, civic and corporate governance, procurement, project and contract management, records and information management, continuous improvement, corporate performance reporting, internal audit, facility lease and licensing management etc.

Current Council Groups

While Council recognises the logic of the allocation of allowances based on 'Council Groups' that reflect the size of councils, relative budget of each council, and respective number of electors represented by each elected member, a review of the Council Grouping tables could be beneficial with the inclusion of more detailed data to determine which council is placed in each group.

Specifically in regard the division between Group 1A and Group 1B the "line" that divides Group 1A from 1B requires further consideration. As can be seen in the table below, Council is mid-way between the councils in 1A and 1B in regard population, elector numbers and land area data (apart from the City of Playford that has significant land area). Council's revenue is also mid-way (together with the Cities of Playford and Marion). Council has a much high representative quota (greater than two of the councils currently sitting in Group 1A), currently the third highest in the state. Having analysed the data contained in the table below, Council consider that it is more appropriate to classify Council together with councils of similar population and elector numbers, representation quotas, land area and total revenue rather than being grouped with those with significantly less than Council (compare the Cities of Mitcham and West Torrens). A more appropriate classification would be to transfer Council to Group 1A or change the framework altogether.

Revenue

While the revenue of a council could be used to assist in guiding the allowance bands, care should be given in aligning Council member allowances to factors such as these, as it has the potential to limit the incentive for Councils to investigate and implement more efficient and effective service delivery methods. It is also important to note that Council has been conscious of future rate capping considerations and have managed practices to keep council rate increases at a minimal level, by consistently reviewing expenditure and operating budgets.

Allowance Considerations to Encourage Representation Across Demographic Groups

Council member allowances, while not a salary, should be sufficient to attract a broad representation of candidates for local government elections from across the community. In a number of councils, younger persons and working families may not be equally represented in local government in comparison to other demographic groups. This gives rise to a potential risk that Council as a decision making body is not taking into account perspectives that are reflective of the broader community. Consideration should be given to raising the Council member allowance to address this.

Increasing council members' allowances may encourage a more diverse range of people to nominate for council and may provide the option to reduce employment hours depending on the individual circumstances of a nominee.

Assistance similar to 'working conditions' could be considered with the following options being explored:

- A council members assistance program which provides counselling and support to protect the wellbeing of members.
- To ensure council members are provided a break, an expected period of leave should be taken each year, for example a minimum of two weeks.
- A percentage of council members allowance could be contributed to a superannuation scheme or similar.

Yes, the Council is of the view that an increase to the Elected Member Allowance would attract more Candidates and a more diverse range of Candidates.

The council members' allowances played an insignificant part in our decision to nominate as a candidate. In fact, many of us were unaware of the council members' allowance when deciding to stand for council.

We recognise that for others an allowance is essential to enable them to serve as an elected member, and that it is especially difficult to encourage younger people to nominate for Council. However, we believe that this is ultimately less a question of insufficient allowances and rather the result of insufficient time.

When considering our age structure, the Australian Census groups our population into 'service age groups'. From 'babies and pre-schoolers' (0 to 4) to 'elderly aged' (85 and over). The age groups underrepresented in council elections are 'tertiary education and independence' (18 to 24), 'young workforce' (25 to 34) and 'parents and homebuilders' (35 to 49).

These are the age groups where education, work or family duties are usually full time and participation in community groups and community service often take the form of volunteering in sporting groups or parent committees, leaving little spare time to take on an additional, time intensive responsibility like participating in local government. To free up time in any meaningful way would require an increase in allowance to the equivalent of a full-time salary. Not only would this be cost prohibitive without significant increase in general rates raised, or reduction in Council service levels, it likely would not have a significant effect, as priorities at this life stage would remain around the establishment of a career and/or family.

Local government may also not feel as relevant to younger people, and the intersection of council services with their daily lives be less well understood.

Allowances should not be increased – candidates choose to stand for Council and it's not an income stream, it is about being community minded

Council is of the view that the current allowance enables Council Members to engage with their constituents, but would welcome more support from Council administration to facilitate engagement. During the lead up to the 2022 election, Council held a widely attended forum to 'meet the candidates'. This highly successful format could also be adopted for the purposes of bringing Council Members together with the community, as a 'meet your Council Members' forum.

Creating a new allowance for Council Members to meet with community members does not overcome the main problem for Council Members who are 'time poor', particularly as there are already many calls on Council Members to participate on Council committees, undertake training sessions and participate in community organisations. Additional allowances would also place a financial burden on many Councils, including Council, which are already struggling with financial sustainability. The existing allowances for Council Members assist with covering costs associated with their individual engagements with constituents.

However, if increasing allowances is further investigated, the Council submits that the degree of accountability and responsibility now with Mayors following the most recent changes to section 58 of the Local Government Act 1999, warrant an increase in the Mayoral allowance.

The proposal to increase allowances as a method of attracting more candidates is unlikely to succeed. Allowances are not necessarily a significant factor in attracting more and more diverse candidates. A number of Members at Council advised that they were not aware, when they initially stood for Council, that they would receive an allowance at all. It was not a factor in their decision to serve their community. The key problem for many people who may wish to stand for Council is insufficient time to commit to it and the potential to be a target of abuse. A number of business owners in the Council area decided against standing for election on the basis that Council decisions could adversely affect their businesses if their customers were unhappy with a Council decision.

Council Members' allowances have, however, led to a number of difficulties over many years. The allowance is deemed by the ATO as a taxable income, but is not a salary. This means that Councils do not deduct tax from the allowance or pay superannuation on it. Many Council Members have been caught out by the taxation implications of the allowance. In addition, the allowance potentially impacts on Centrelink support payments and adds another level of complexity for many. The removal of the tax liability would assist in dealing with some of these issues.

Most people who stand as candidates in local government elections are sincere in their commitment to their local area and seek to genuinely improve the places they live, and often work and play in. They are accessible to their communities at a level that federal and state representatives are not, and while they are supported in their decision-making by professional administrations, they do not have teams of advisors or large bureaucracies to draw on. They do not enjoy Parliamentary Privilege when deliberating, nor are they commonly endorsed by political parties with significant resources behind them. As a Council, they are entrusted with significant budgets and complex decisions which they must deliberate on in full view of the public, without the ability to arrive at a position of Cabinet solidarity. They take on these challenges and responsibilities not as a professional job, but with a modest allowance and the expectation that they will be accessible whenever their constituents need them. As such, they deserve the grace and support to serve their communities as efficiently and effectively as possible, and with due respect from their federal and state peers

A more diverse range of people may or may not be attracted to the role if Council allowances were increased recognising that currently allowances are not meant to be a salary. There has to be a balance between payment that attracts those only interested in the money and promoting their own

businesses and causes with the community benefit.

There could be grants with simple guidelines and accountability for incorporated associations to provide statewide information for diverse communities. e.g. building on the successful workshops & publication for Australian Local Government Women's Association SA (ALGWA SA) to attract women candidates in conjunction with LGA SA. ALGWA SA currently funds these activities from its own funds. Also grant funding could be available for local associations such as resident associations, community centres to be more involved.

Whilst the allowance is not supposed to be used as a salary, this could be challenged as it is not congruent with the modern tasks of the Council member and responsibilities. All people should be remunerated for the work they perform, and the task and duties that are performed as a Council member should be viewed this way and remunerated accordingly in line with the Remuneration Tribunal. This is regardless of someone's political ambitions, motivations and business undertakings. This would also increase the level of respect for the elected member in the eyes of the community.

No, a more diverse range of people would not be attracted to the role if the allowance was increased; you might get the wrong people with the wrong intentions.

Helpful if it was a Tax free allowance

Council believes that nomination for Council should occur on the basis of one's genuine interest in representing, serving and furthering their community. However, with respect to the personal and professional lives of prospective local government representatives, consideration of increased allowances for elected members may assist in making the role and the associated commitment of time more attractive.

Agree; more people would be attracted to the role however an increase in the allowance may not result in a more diverse range of people.

There is considerable time involved in this role, and an increase in allowance would be of benefit in attracting interest amongst potential candidates. Those committed to a fulltime working arrangement (possibly lacking time for Councillor commitments) may view an increase in allowance as a financial incentive to seek alternative working arrangements. For example, if people in high-paid professions are required to reduce their usual work hours to meet councillor commitments, then perhaps an increase in the diversity may occur. Available time and the timing of council activities may impact candidate diversity just as much as increasing the allowance.

Possibly more, but potentially not more diverse. The only exception to this may be the median age of members, as the current allowance would not substitute a wage / salary. It may attract people for money rather than for purpose.

Taxation of members allowance – make an honorarium rather than an allowance.

Consideration of introduction of superannuation for Mayors allowance as considerably greater time is demanded of the role.

Increasing allowances might potentially draw a more diverse pool of individuals, but this is uncertain. Anticipating the motives of numerous people is challenging, and the decision to stand as a candidate is likely influenced by various factors beyond monetary considerations alone

Parity with other Government Agencies e.g. Local Members of Parliament; linkage to State legislation.

An increase in allowance may attract more people to the role, but Council has reservations about the following:

- Whether it would attract people who are motivated to improve their local community or as a source of income?
 - How much of an increase would make a difference to whether someone stood for election or not?
- Council supports the allowance being made a wage which would attract superannuation and has different tax implications.

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 - How much of an increase would make a difference to whether someone stood for election or not?
- Council supports the allowance being made a wage which would attract superannuation and has different tax implications

Potentially, although it would be dependent on the increase. Need to move away from the payment of allowances - "honorarium" type payments. Council Members should be paid superannuation, this would result in more diverse candidates being attracted to the role. Currently Members pay tax on the allowance received (if the receipt of the allowance pushes a member's earnings into a threshold where tax is payable), but do not receive superannuation.

An overarching, holistic review of payments made to Council Members should be undertaken

Simply increasing the allowance paid to Council members may attract more people nominating however their motivation may be misguided. The cash benefit rather than the desire to serve the local community may be the catalyst for nomination.

I do not think that this will help rural councils and the people nominating may not have the financial skills to adequately manage substantial community assets and debts. This is particularly important given that some Council are currently in a precarious position operating deficit budgets and placing unsustainable financial burdens on rate payers. Members need a clear understanding of the Financial Dashboard for their council

Reviewing councillor allowances prior to every nomination and election cycle is an important consideration for attracting a diverse range of quality candidates.

The Property Council acknowledges the importance of setting competitive allowances. Allowances should be set at a level that acknowledges the time commitment and responsibilities associated with the councillor role, while also being mindful of the financial sustainability of councils.

Benchmarking allowances against other states or councils with similar responsibilities and budgets could be an informative way to determine councillor salaries.

If councils are to attract nominees who, although possessing a strong desire to serve the community, may be either working full time or having many other time-consuming commitments, there must also be a financial incentive to attract a strong quality of candidate.

With regard to this, a clear and transparent framework for determining and reviewing councillor allowances is essential. Public disclosure of allowances promotes accountability and builds trust with the community.

\$money should not be the incentive to attract candidates

1. The tax paid and actual cost incurred can make it a financial burden to the individual. The council calls it an allowance but the ATO treat it as a second job.
2. The Mayors allowance is less than the equivalent role in the open job market. Why would anyone leave a fulltime job to take on a fulltime Mayor position that involves out of hours/ weekend work and incurs many personal expenses? hence why it mostly attracts retirees and under-employed people.
3. By making them tax free
4. Increase by 50%

Would more, and a more diverse range of, people be attracted to the role if allowances were increased?

- Potentially, yes
- Support a review of the construct of Council Member allowances, considering what the allowances are meant to be used for, and the expectations that community members have of Council Members.
- Benchmarking should occur against interstate jurisdictions.
- Awareness of what other reimbursements candidates are entitled to (such as babysitting, mileage etc).

Some people may be more interested in applying for a higher monetary amount. However, the people who generally apply to be on a council have the community at heart and are less interested in the allowance. The drawback to increasing of allowances is that it may increase politicising amongst candidates.

Allowances could be expanded to allow for reimbursement of other types of expenses.

It might be useful for the community to be surveyed to assess how much the allowances affect the decision to apply for Council. The public might have a negative view of an increase to the expenditure of public funds on councillor allowances

We don't want people to be attracted to local government for the money. We want them to care about the local community. In any event we don't think that increasing allowances will necessarily attract more diverse candidates or less diverse candidates. The council allowance is not a living wage and should not try to be.

It is important that local government attracts good quality people in what is basically volunteer work for the community, with some payment/allowance for reasonable costs incurred in this work. This does not mean that only rich people stand for election to council, as people from all walks of life become councillors

An elected member of local government ought to remain on a voluntary (non-employment) basis and entitled to an honorarium, which should not equate to a salary, wage, payment, or allowances payable for, or commensurate with, employment (i.e. not contract of service).

We do not believe allowances attract people. The principal driver ought to be, and remain, community mindedness

Money should not be the driver. Although we welcome a diverse council body, there is not much point in seeking to attract candidates who are not at least conversant in the official language or permanent residents of the applicable council. Councillors should be able to read and converse in English

Councils need to ask their local communities what they expect of their Elected Members, how they would like things structured to be able to get the most out of their Elected Members and increase engagement with this level of government. A regional community's response to this will be very different from a metropolitan area for example. Arrangements will never suit everyone but they should be reviewed each term and community consulted in regards to it.

I have a supportive Council that were open to my newborn attending meetings so that I did not have to take an unnecessarily long extension of leave. The standard procedure for the leave that I did need to take associated with the birth of my second daughter is that my fellow Councillors 'voted' to support my leave of absence from the Council. I should not have to ask 'permission' for such leave. This is an example of how Councillors lack clarity on basic rights that are well recognised in other parts of life, such as formal employment. Reimbursement is available for care of dependents at our Council but I have no idea if this is standard procedure across local government. If it isn't, it should be. Again however, I have observed in the past that there may be a 'culture' of not accessing such reimbursements due to fear of public or peer perceptions as draining the public purse. Such cultures are not acceptable and fear of such culture could be a deterrent for people with parental or caring duties not accustomed to challenging stereotypes and confident in the importance of diverse representation within a Council chamber. No super or formal leave arrangements for Mayors, when this is their full time job, is also an issue that needs addressing in order to encourage more people to put their hand up, particularly women

Elected members should remain voluntary and not be a paid employment or public office role – it should not become an occupation.

Voluntary service should not depend on payment, but reimbursement or allowance for reasonably expenses is proper – but not sending people off to management courses – if anything should send them to integrity and consultation courses.

Council supports the increase of allowances for Elected Members, especially those in level 5 councils. Current allowances are ineffectual and do not represent value for the role and personal investment that is required. Mayors in level 5 councils are in the same position. The role is significant and has pressures that larger councils do not have. In effect it is a 24/7 position as the mayor is always seen as being in that role, and the public spotlight. Consideration should also be given to the funding for extra allowances being provided by the State and not required from the ratepayers within the relevant Local Government Area.

There is a disparity in Elected Members allowances in respect to the considered equality of remuneration when comparing a Deputy Mayors' allowance to that of the Chairperson of a prescribed committee which currently sits at 125% of the standard Elected Member allowance. The role of Deputy Mayor is not suitably compensated both in comparison to the chair of a prescribed committee and in total when comparing to the elected body as a whole. The Deputy Mayoral allowance should be reviewed in respect to the remuneration in line with the responsibility of the role. This may differ in Councils and consideration may need to be given to these individual aspects.

In addition, there needs to be taxation incentives attributed to the payments or further, as an allowance it should not be taxed at all, acting as a disincentive especially given it is exempt from superannuation requirements. The current taxation requirements are unfair and yet expenses cannot be claimed i.e. suits/clothing, newspaper subscriptions, professional memberships (AICD), training expenses etc

Council does not feel that an increase in member allowances would attract more people to the role. There will still be certain demographics that will face the same current challenges in finding the time to commit to what is quite a demanding role.

However, a review of the categorisation of mayor's remuneration may be warranted – at present, mayors of councils in the smallest remuneration categories are entitled to a much smaller allowance in comparison to larger councils. This does not account for their effort and hard work (which would remain on par, or even extend beyond their colleagues in larger councils).

We do not think that an increase in allowances would necessarily attract a more and diverse range of candidates. We are open to the concept of an additional allowance to specifically support elected members to spend more time engaging with their constituents, which would result in an overall increase in remuneration.

Councillors should receive increased remuneration for special meetings outside of the ordinary council meetings.

I believe that increasing councillor allowance in any significant way is not necessary. As it stands now, the allowance is meant to compensate councillors in some way for what they do out of passion for their community, which is not dissimilar to volunteer work. I believe that the current level of allowance reflects the proper way of approaching the issue of compensating councillors for their time and effort. Also, increasing allowance would place additional burden on ratepayers

Clarity required around whether it is taxable - make it exempt

Topic 2: Lack of nominations trigger for boundary reform (2.8)

1. The infrastructure within a council's boundaries, such as transportation networks, can impact a candidate's ability to connect with constituents. Areas with limited infrastructure might make it harder for candidates to campaign and engage with voters, potentially affecting the range and type of candidates willing to run for office.
2. Smaller councils might foster a stronger sense of community and more active local engagement, potentially encouraging a broader range of residents to consider running for office.
3. Economic characteristics of a council's area, such as employment opportunities, business environment, and economic stability, can impact the candidacy landscape. Areas with vibrant economies and diverse opportunities might attract a broader range of candidates, including those from various professional backgrounds.
4. If a council's area is too big, with diverse geographic regions or communities, it might be challenging for candidates to campaign effectively across the entire region. This could deter potential candidates who lack the resources or time to cover large distances. On the other hand, a smaller, more compact area might be more accessible to a broader range of individuals.

A balance is needed here. Insufficient nominees is problematic and broadening the council area could be a solution. But, council should be serving their local communities and if the boundaries are too big, the community is the loser. I would prefer to see other approaches such as informing the community (particularly regional communities) about the need for councillors and improving the flexibility for them to participate (eg via a video platform from their tractor while harvesting).

A complex issue so can't really say.

A large part of a Council may feel unrepresented as the majority of electors live in one small area and more rural parts would feel unrepresented

A previous Federal Minister for Local Government made a substantial contribution to giving greater opportunity for Local Government to make decisions representing their community needs. Numerous

debates have taken place on amalgamations however some of the strongest advocates against it are the appointed staff of councils and individual political parties who have a factional interest .

A state-wide review of Council boundaries with short, medium and long-term recommendations of prospective amalgamations would assist Council's in long-term planning and community engagement. Council notes that compulsory amalgamations may be necessary in some areas, particularly metropolitan areas, where population densities make a cohesive and coordinated approach to voluntary amalgamations unlikely.

The current process of amalgamation or boundary realignment for local government is often confusing and off-putting for Councils and communities alike. The process would benefit from simplification, with special consideration given to small rural councils facing financial unsustainability.

Amalgamate councils - too many and not financially viable/prudent

Amalgamation can be a disincentive for people nominate as they see the decisions they make further removed from their local area. The refrain becomes 'what's the point of nominating?'

Amalgamation is essential .

Amalgamations aren't the answer. The position has to be more desirable. Casting the net wider is not going to fix the issue.

The problem is with councils image, not a lack of people. Fix this and you will get the nominations.

Amalgamations will cause more disengagement.

Amalgamations of current councils may help the range of candidates, mainly country councils

Any boundary reform should ONLY be initiated if demonstrated public support exists - prior to any formal action. ie: if the public do not want boundary reform, then boundary reform IS NOT initiated or progressed.

Anything that reduces the number of councils is a step in the right direction in my opinion.

As long as you get rid of the TOP HEAVY ADMIN AREAS, Traffic, Regulatory Services ,CEO & Admins

Bad amalgamations, is why my council is having problems (not just with Councillors). Work teams travel (more time on road than work), council asset monitoring not happening. 70% of our council residents live more than 45 minutes away from council office. And like a previous question, Ordinary Council go in to the night with so much to cover. People living at the farthest towns from the council office have no connection to council other than a bill in the post. let alone driving 2hours to a meeting and another 2hr home late at night/now early morning home.

Breaking up councils in half some where between population/Area. A lot already have 'And' in the name. Will open up more positions for councillors closer to home (inaction & location). Towns in my Council area have a 'town committee' already picking up local councils slack (assets, roads, facilities, services, ...), paying out of their own pocket. Watching council rate disappear.

Bigger councils mean a bigger pool of candidates. If a council doesn't have competition for councillor positions (including at ward level) and mayoral positions, they're too small. Failure to have competition should trigger an immediate review by the boundaries commission. Pretty easy.

Boundaries are not the problem. Changing them is expensive and rarely yields a beneficial community outcome.

The whole idea is a simple State Government vote grabbing exercise that exacerbates the 'stick the boot into council' narrative that is unhelpful. Show me data that tells me the optimum size and shape of Council and I will withdraw my argument; but that doesn't exist.

Boundaries are not the root cause; it's community engagement. So more focus is to be allocated to attracting candidates by ECSA.

Boundaries exist to ensure that an average number of people have a representative. This question wrongly suggests there should be reform to allow boundaries to have more nominees, ignoring that they are as equal as possible. A greater focus should be on developing education and supports within those areas.

Boundaries have nothing to do with candidates.

boundary changes could end up with more constituents to councillors

Boundary changes should only be considered if there are fewer nominations than needed over a time period - ie 2 electoral cycles.

Boundary reform is likely to be ridiculously expensive, why not consider whether the amount of Elected Members should be reduced to match what the community is willing to put forward?

Boundary reform should be done on a holistic basis considering all relevant issues, not just whether enough people have nominated.

Boundary reforms are not necessarily tied to lack of nominations. There are many reasons why there are lack of nominations that may have nothing to do with changing boundaries. It may be a knee-jerk reaction without research

Boundary reforms should be considered on large councils where it is not possible financially to meet the ends of all ratepayers

Call for more nominations

Changing boundaries is overreach and drastic. More efforts should be put into seeking candidates for those councils.

Clarify what compensation should be paid by a council to another council in the event of a boundary change. Reduce the number of failing councils where the rate base is too low.

Community of interest issues may arise as a consequence of boundary reform processes being triggered by a lack of nominations

Comparable to State and Federal elections, there should be regular reviews of the population numbers and the demographics of the constituents (eg age, mobility, education etc.) to ensure that Council areas are balanced so that they have the financial resources and capable councillors to represent the constituents to a very high standard of competency.

Consider other ways to fill vacancies before triggering a border review. That could be a last resort....

Continual change of boundaries to accommodate elections is ridiculous. There is a lot of work involved with boundaries - having been at council during a boundary review the work is phenomenal and doesn't happen quickly enough - the effect in 4 years might be completely different again. Housing, population and even demographic growth are always changing, and the issues may be solved in that 4 years.

Council amalgamation should only be undertaken after a thorough review of the purpose and roles of council, and the functions they fulfill. The review should apply to all councils. Not due to a temporary lack of candidates.

Council amalgamations are a further tool to disenfranchisement of the community, adding to the various steps taken by successive State governments over past years, most notably in the planning space. More amalgamations increase the argument that local and State Governments should not both exist.

Council boundaries should not be depicted by range or number of candidates.

Council notes that compulsory amalgamations may be necessary in some areas, particularly metropolitan areas, where population densities make a cohesive and coordinated approach to voluntary amalgamations unlikely

Council's areas and boundaries have little to do with having a good range of candidates at each election. Having candidates who believe that they have the appropriate skills and have something to offer the community by nominating is far more important.

Councils are too big. My council is not able to understand our community as the area it covers is too big - the mass of communities under its umbrella all have differing needs which the Council is unable to understand and address.

Councils do not necessarily take any notice of the boundary review process recommendations, even after they have been out to community consultation. The review should be recommended and decided by the local community, not the council. They do not want to reduce the number of wards because their ward may be the one that is lost and hence they do not get elected. It was recommended in the review that we reduce our number of wards and the community told us we should, but the council voted against this reduction.

Councils need to be efficient, councils such as onkaparinga and port adelaide enfield are too large, where a lot of the regional councils are unsustainable due to the ratepayer base. Councils need to be optimal sizes to ensure they are not too small so they can operate effectively but also not too large so they don't need to listen. Merging city councils such as mt gambier and port lincon with the surrounding rural councils would see more sustainability spread over a greater area.

Councils shouldn't keep being merged. They become too big and unmanageable. Instead, more work should go into finding candidates.

Disband Council

Do away with councils altogether and establish a different structure that meets the needs of the community

Do not accept the premises of the argument that a lack of nominations is an indicator of insufficient community engagement in a council. The LGA does not support the establishment of any formal relationship between nominations for councils and council amalgamations.

EMs would be better being advocates for different areas of council ...ie sport and rec, community programs,

Even though Council's go through Elector Representation Reviews, I personally feel the number of Councillors is too high.

Expanding the boundary of amalgamation can cause a myriad of issues, particularly for smaller rural council's. To capture new population centres in an electorate you could be adding 100's if not 1000's of kilometres of roads.

Eyre Peninsula is a classic example of small Councils situations - long term elected members, not enough nominations to fill vacancies, or just enough nominations to fill the vacancies (no elections held), organising who basically stands for election (community status arranging) Basically there are 11 Councils on EP when 3 would be ideal and much more efficient and effective.

Factors that could discourage individuals from nominating for their local council include inadequate policing of unauthorized electoral material, a lack of understanding of the functions and importance of local government, constituent abuse, an aggressive or toxic culture within the council, and the demanding workload and time commitments associated with the role.

Feels somewhat heavy handed and unnecessary- let's try the other things before trying more amalgamations

Fewer. "if there are fewer nominations than vacancies". Perhaps if the situation occurs at consecutive elections it would be the trigger.

Forced boundary reforms don't take into account the nature of the area. I do see the political issue where Councils such as Walkerville probably should be amalgamated but can't be.

Forget about using number of candidates as measure for council amalgamations. Any person with the slightest bit of commercial sense knows that almost no council has the critical mass / number of ratepayers to burden to survive. For example my council is far too small to survive without a continuous increase in rates AND THAT IS NOT SUSTAINABLE!!. Councils MUST merge to achieve an economy of scale. BUT there is not one council who will agree to amalgamation because, not to put too fine a point on it, their noses are in a trough protected by an out of date ACT

Gerrymandering is the greater risk of boundaries can be manipulated in such fashion.

Get rid of councils all together.

given that candidates do not have to live within a ward boundary they are artificial boundaries which cause issues when members are elected when other council members are seen to interfere with another ward. abolishing wards for small areas/populations would simplify the number of elections held. it would not have any effect on the candidates for election, it would allow electors a wider range of candidates to vote for as they would not be limited by geographic boundaries

Great idea, especially for rural areas. I wouldn't consider this for metro.

Hard for poorer candidates to cover expenses

having one council wide election would maximise the filled positions and make councillors accountable to the whole electorate rather than potentially the sectional interest of only one small portion. councillors decide on behalf of the whole city not just their ward.

I am not against amalgamation. However, it needs to be a carefully considered decision, incorporating feedback from the community, local and state government. Boundary reforms and council amalgamations should not be a knee jerk reaction to a lack of nominations for elected member positions.

I am undecided about this, but personally do not believe it is appropriate for someone to reside in one council area and represent another council area due to a lack of nominations. Nominees from outside the Council area lack connection to that area and its community, and would not have the best understanding of that council area.

Trends regarding the numbers of nominations could be looked at to determine if this is an issue, and strategies developed to support and encourage more nominations, excluding the adjustment of boundaries.

Perhaps there may be some thought given to amalgamating some Councils.

I believe the size of the boundary and travel would be the biggest impact on people standing. Amalgamations would only increase the size of the area in most cases.

I can't comment on this, other than to say, for very large LGAs every effort to engage the electorate by streaming and zoom needs to bring the whole process into the current times, not the 1990s of the current Act.

I can't see as it would have a bearing. Boundary reform should not be considered solely on nominations, there has to be more areas to consider. Publishing nominations immediately, and calling for more if required can be done using all social media platforms. Recognising the role and improving recompense would also assist.

I disagree that the lack of candidates should trigger a boundary change. Boundary changes or mergers should be considered in future community outcomes not political

I do not have a major issue with this. I am not sure how it would practically work though. This would seem to have a much more significant impact on rural councils than metropolitan ones.

I don't think this is a feature at all and it feels like an opportunity for the state to exercise further control over local government.

I don't think there is any connection between boundaries and the volume/quality of candidates

I don't think so.

I have a personal belief, irrespective of this circumstance that we have too many Councils (especially in the metropolitan area). We pay a high price in duplication of services and the differences between

Council areas. Case in point, Mitcham Council indicates it cannot have as many recreational facilities as both neighboring Councils (Marion and Unley) because of the terrain of Mitcham that makes provision of recreational facilities far more challenging and expensive.

I would love to see amalgamation of Mitcham with one or both of these Councils.

I have not given this any thought and need to deliberate longer before making comment.

I know it's a sensitive topic, however I am astounded at how small some councils in SA are and wonder how sustainable they must be. A lack of nominations appears to be a sign that would question a council's sustainability.

I somewhat agree, but think this is a drastic measure.

I strongly believe that wards are important and that if two candidates nominate and they are elected unopposed, then that is actually a very good thing. One perspective is that residents in that ward are happy with those two nominations and don't feel the need to have another candidate.

I strongly oppose any movement towards amalgamation on the basis of lack of participation/nominations. Australian and international research (including my own) is definitive on the point that participation reduces as municipality size increases (and participation here includes candidate numbers, voter turnout, and every other measured form of local citizen engagement). Therefore, I caution against the idea that we should amalgamate councils in order to increase participation and interest in local elections – the inverse will be true. And – it is important to note – no concomitant economic benefits should be expected, as an enormous repository of Australian and international research has proven that larger municipalities are not more economically efficient than smaller municipalities.

As noted in the discussion on wards vs at-large elections, the prospect of amalgamating councils in order to tap into a larger candidate pool will have certain consequences for candidate/councillor diversity. Larger jurisdictions will favour wealthier candidates, those backed by political parties, or those who are otherwise famous amongst a wide proportion of the electorate. This is an important way of thinking about the issue, because wherever an amalgamation occurs, a young and aspiring applicant will inevitably miss their opportunity to have a go and to rise through the ranks.

What we should be doing, therefore, is striving to increase participation, not reduce opportunities to participate.

I think reducing the number of Council Members through legislation for the size of a Council is key. You can then pay more for each Council Member and have more competition for seats. Mid sized councils really only need 6 plus a Mayor. Many have 12 plus a Mayor. Term limits and less councillors please.

I think that if there are not enough votes, there needs to be a review of what went wrong/challenges as clearly civic partnerships

I think that this is too simplified of a question for a complex idea

I think there's more important issues that need to be taken into consideration than the number of candidates. Possibly the Council numbers need to be reduced. Anyway, I think forced amalgamations are a political nightmare for everyone and justifying the need to do so on this one factor seems to me more likely to impact on regional Councils where communities are becoming smaller and older. Maybe

you could alleviate the pressure of this problem by making available more housing and services to impacted areas so the region attracts new residents who will be willing to participate.

I think we have too many levels of government, I would like to see more councils amalgamated, surely this would reduce operating costs?

I've only ever lived in 'non regional' areas. So I can't comment on the best way to deal with regional areas... BUT how I'd like the issue of boundary reform to work in the metro areas is to link the trigger to IF the percentage of people living in an LGA's is less than a certain percentage of the total number of all metro areas LGA's... THEN the trigger is met. . I believe Walkerville & Prospect might be a good place to start. . However, I know this is a thorny issue as both councils are in affluent areas & not short of money to run two lots of infrastructure. BUT from memory, the inner city LGA's had a reasonable number of candidates due to the small area covered & the higher educational levels of residents . So perhaps Q 15 might help with 'online meetings' allowable .

If a council's geographic area becomes too big, that in itself can impact on the candidates who nominate - transport may become an issue (there may be someone who would be excluded from nomination purely because they lacked transport or could not afford the costs involved in travelling km's for council meetings or events), also the travel time involved may impact on family and/or work responsibilities, and also people may feel that the council does not represent their needs or the needs of the community they would represent - eg if a rural area becomes part of a urban council then the rural population could feel that the council is focussed on the needs of the bigger population represented by the urban community, rather than the needs of the rural residents. A candidate may have good connections with the rural community and a good understanding of their needs, and be highly respected, yet not be voted onto the council due totally to the population difference between the communities

If a council is not able to achieve its minimum number of nominations (with nominations being displayed publicly during the nomination process) I think the first step should be to look at removing wards before considering boundary reforms.

If a Council is too small they will never have a diversity of candidates. Some regional councils have only a few people who are willing to do the work of a councillor

If Council has wards, then the change should be to remove wards in the first instance, not boundary reform.

If councils clean up their tarnished images candidates will come.

If few nominations, it reflects a poor advertising campaign by the local council and the mayor. The reasons for few nominations should be considered. Women need to be strongly encouraged to apply in such areas as often women are discouraged by men and often have strongly needed skills but lack confidence in their skills. It would be good to advertise and provide opportunities for doing skill assessments, to match women's skills against the councillor skills set. Making wards smaller and specific so the work is more manageable, is needed not making them bigger and harder for councillors to work the job.

If lack of nominations received could then trigger a boundary reform at that time. If nominees are published in real time could support this matter.

If the council's areas and boundaries are too small, I can see how that will affect the range of candidates.

If the problem is persistent (two consecutive elections) then amalgamation seems an appropriate response.

If there are fewer nominations than vacancies - council are not therefor sufficiently encouraging enough members of the community - to feel inclined to PARTICIPATE ! people need to feel VALUED and INCLUDED - Please then Call for further nominations.

Amalgamating or Increasing the sizes of council - when some are already massive - sounds awful- please NO !

Grass roots and community initiative requires smaller bureaucracy - not bigger !

If there are low nominees in the council it may be an indicator there is issues within the leadership and such issues then need to be addressed to before the election takes place.

If there is a significant number of unfilled vacancies, the council should be placed under State Government administration.

The excessive fragmentation of local government areas is a bigger issue than availability of candidates - there should be less than 10 councils instead of the current more than 60. This would greatly improve efficiency in service delivery and decrease costs.

If, for example, there is only one candidate for two vacancies in a ward, then consider engaging the one successful candidate without boundary changes.

I'll cautiously agree with this ... but there would be potential for, say, a shortage of one candidate in one ward of a metropolitan council to trigger a frivolous investigation by the boundaries commissions which would never realistically recommend amalgamating two very large councils, for instance. It would be critical, critical, for local communities to have the ultimate power to decide on any amalgamation. If a shortage of nominations simply triggered a report and non-binding recommendations, however, it would likely light a fire under prospective candidates in the given community and, let's say, stimulate closer engagement with local government.

I'm not in favour of huge local government areas in the metropolitan area.

In our Council there are no "Wards" and this leads to the smaller communities being virtually excluded from having elected representative members. The "mantra" that all councillors represent all areas is a complete nonsense and consequently people who would like to run for election become discouraged as they are unlikely to defeat candidates who are supported from larger communities. People vote for someone they either know or who comes from their area. Our community has not had anyone on council for over 12 years.

In rural areas, gerimander election weighting disadvantages town and low income ratepayers. Make gerimanders illegal

In the case of amalgamation or boundary reform, a ward structure should be compulsory, especially in rural areas with multiple towns/communities, to ensure fair representation across the various communities.

Increasing the size or wards/councils means it costs more and takes more time to get elected. Fewer people will nominate.

It already does, especially in rural/remote communities. Some Councils cover huge areas involving hundreds, even thousands, of square km's. Asking folks to drive for hours to attend regular meetings - Council, policy, business committees etc, is unlikely to encourage people outside of the main town to get involved.

It is up to voters to mark in their ballots: "no candidate represents me", only then should the matter be brought to the boundaries commission.

Its called local government for a reason

It's just in the past a fair few mayoral races and wards had no elections and I think that's bad and unhealthy, also is no one really interested in standing?

Just have less Councils. Bigger is better

Lack of nominations being a trigger for boundary reform, unless it is a last resort after consecutive unsuccessful supplementary elections and undertaking a Representation Review

Lack of nominations is complex, with various reasons given as to why people choose not to nominate, e.g. the negative perception of Councils, Social Media posts, apathy (prefer someone else to it) etc. To link this to boundary reform has no relatable reference and would be seen to be a heavy handed approach. This should be the very last action in the event a Council is unable to adequately fill nominations after a supplementary election for example. A more productive approach would be to lift the profile of Councils and Elected Members as civic leaders.

Lack of nominations is complex, with various reasons given as to why people don't want to nominate, eg the negative perception of Councils, Social Media posts, apathy (prefer someone else to it) etc. To link this to boundary reform has no relatable reference and would be seen to be a hammer to crack a nut situation. This should be the very last action in the event a Council is unable to adequately fill nominations after a supplementary election for example.

A better approach would be to lift the profile of Councils and Elected Members as civic leaders. Perhaps it's time to investigate the benefits of a split "Board", ie part elected members and part appointed on skill and experience level in specific areas.

Lack of nominations is NOT grounds for a potential amalgamation. Rather it is a reflection of lack of interest and/or people not wanting to commit such a vast amount of time to a voluntary role. Amalgamations should be considered using criteria that has nothing to do with nominations for council roles.

Lack of nominations should not trigger boundary reform

Less Councillors per ward

Less Councils. Bigger councils, but with smaller districts for better representation

LGA boundaries should be reviewed periodically to ensure their appropriateness. Through time some towns and suburbs may more naturally align with neighbouring LGA's.

Linking the concept of the number of nominations to the appropriateness of council boundaries is the most ridiculous, ill-conceived notion.

There should absolutely be boundary reform but it should be on the basis of communities of interest, economies of scale, and financial sustainability

Local Government areas in the metropolitan area should have, as far as possible, an equal number of population. The inner metropolitan Councils are ridiculously small.

Local government should be abolished and if not, councils should be amalgamated. Some rural councils have less than 3000 or so people but about 50 or more "staff", most of whom are on over \$80K.

Make provision for councils with disparate demographics and population groupings. Ensure people in sparsely populated areas get fair representation

Maybe, instead of relying on social media, send information to every household by Australia post.

more appropriate in regional or remote areas than metropolitan

Most Council areas are too large. That is the case with my Council. Large area with a small population.....services are lacking. Bigger Council area's invariably mean less services to that area. It is the nature of the beast, cut workers to save money, then employ more over-educated idiots (bean counters) in the offices.

My council has a small ratepayer base but there should still be plenty of people to fill the positions available.

My Council has too many elected Councilors for its area and population. The number of Councilors should be reduced or the Council amalgamated with adjacent Council

Need to reduce the number of councils to improve quality of candidates e reduce costs

No nomination for a ward then split with adjoining wards until next election. Very rarely if ever hear from my representatives so could do without them

No, it is not clear what evidence there is to suggest that there is a correlation between a lack of nominations and the size of a council's area. There are many possible contributing factors and reasons as to why people may not nominate for election to council.

No, Lack of nominations is not a reason or justification for boundary reform

Often there are other reasons that people don't nominate for council. Usually, it is loss of trust in council or that there one vote will be meaningless against factions. Also, there is issues with Administration wanting to keep control over councils which most potential candidates don't want to deal with. Most candidates want to go onto council to make a difference for their community but end up fighting factions and administration over every issue voted on. Local councils have become too political unfortunately. People who belong to political parties should not be allowed on local councils.

One Council only!

Only candidates from our council area, other people do not love our Council area like we the people who live in it. I have lived in the area for many years and don't like or approve of what outsiders have done to our beautiful area. e.g. 3 homes on a corner block when maximum should only be 2 at least. Greed of developers from other council areas and States/Territory.

Please don't change the boundaries to make council areas bigger its bad enough now.

Reach out to the community groups in the area and general interest through conversations about running for council. No council area should merge with another based on low numbers of nominees, if there are low nominees then this indicates an inside issue with the leadership.

Reduce the number of wards

Reduce the size of council area, so they don't need as many councillors.

Will make it more locally relevant to become a candidate.

representation by ethnicity? Representation only by those living in a ward.

Rural area with only a single or small number of major centres may mean that the talent is concentrated in the main centres and not distributed around the council area.

Rural areas and communities would be severely disadvantaged by this, especially if there was no ward structure.

Small councils are ineffective and inefficient. All councils should have a minimum population as a proportion of metropolitan Adelaide or regional SA respectively. All small councils should undergo merging

small councils might not have the financial structure to support their needs

Smaller councils have better engagement of residents including a higher percentage of residents voting.

Smaller is better for good local representation. I'm not sure the area size impacts on the candidate range unless the area becomes too large to monitor and represent.

Some Councils are too small to function effectively and rely on other Councils to provide certain services to their community, which means these communities are forced to accept certain policies without having a say in how these policies are made. On the other hand, some Councils are too large and are not able to be responsive to every community falling under their jurisdiction. Regional Councils are quite challenging in this regard because of the low population densities, which means they can end up covering large areas and incorporate multiple distinct regional centres and still not have the population to support effective service delivery.

Some existing councils are stupidly small. There should be a minimum number of residents to warrant a council with all its administrative regalia being formed. Tiny councils are not an effective way to administer public policy or taxpayer funds.

Some larger Councils have struggled for nominations in the past so what happens to them?
Boundary changes should be considered based on population movements and financial viability.

sometimes confusing boundaries - ie. Callington is split in to two areas which is ridiculous - the town should be in one or the other (ie murray bridge or mount barker) - I am sure there are many more of these anomalies around the state.

State government should bear the cost of boundary reform

Statistics show that smaller councils have better engagement of residents including a higher percentage of residents voting. Smaller councils seem to be the answer to low voter turnout.

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On pages 79 and 80 of the 'Local Government Election Report 2018' it shows the percentage participation of all 68 councils. Clearly small Councils have around 2/3 (66%) of residents voting which is double the biggest Councils even going up to 81%.

So break up the large councils. If you are worried about increased costs there can be asset sharing and staff in the big councils which are to be split up can be shared between the new smaller councils.

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stop super councils all together as the become super monoliths

That's a separate issue, but reform is overdue. Sustainability of smaller Councils is a real concern

The 1997 amalgamations were as much a political one as they were practical. Port Adelaide Enfield (an amalgamated) is one Council that stretches from North Haven to Dernancourt. My experience indicated that the people of Dernancourt had little sense of connection with those of North Haven. The boundary question is, respectfully a Furphy, and more to do with people sense of connection to a place and engagement thereof.

The assumption that a 'diversity' of candidates is the panacea for good governance may well not be the case. Councillors make many economic, social and environmental decisions that require consideration of many factors and elements. The assumption that Councillors must be from diverse backgrounds to make such decisions will not necessarily guarantee the best outcomes.

The bigger metro councils end up as a behemoth ...unwieldy.
Is better to keep council manageable

The current process of amalgamation or boundary realignment for local government is often confusing and off-putting for Councils and communities alike. The process would benefit from simplification, with special consideration given to small rural councils facing financial unsustainability

The Minister should consider the option to refer a Council with insufficient nominations to the Boundaries Commission

The number of wards in the council could be too high.
Abolishing wards is a good idea.

The required # of elected members - this should be decreased across the board with wards removed, such that all councils have 6-8 members + mayor.

The risk of using a lack of nominations to trigger boundary reform is that there is insufficient evidence to indicate that existing council boundaries are even a causal factor for low nomination levels.

In managing the risk of low nomination numbers, council boundary reform wouldn't be considered an appropriate control to manage the risk (and could potentially exacerbate the risk on the basis that a council may no longer be considered 'local' or 'grass roots' level). Proposed boundary reform should be triggered only where the benefit of boundary reform outweighs costs. Same principle should apply for amalgamations. There needs to be a community benefit.

The State Government should stay well away and out of Council Amalgamation and should stay in their lane which is State Government. There is no need for forced Council Amalgamations and our local community hate this.

The way that the Elected Members can be attacked in the media just for doing their job is a discouraging factor for the role.

The whole concept of local government is that democracy works best when voters can see and meaningfully impact their leaders. Decisions should be made at the most local level possible so that communities can maximise their democratic autonomy. a lack of candidates represents a failure of the system to attract candidates, it should not be used as an excuse to take away a communities autonomy. Forced amalgamations are undemocratic and erode the very purpose of the institution

There are far, far too many councils in SA. Personally, I would get rid of either state governments or councils to have only 2 tiers of government, but considering that will never happen, let's at least reduce the number of councils. A city of 10 million people like London, has only one council. Brisbane has only one council for the entire city. Why do we have so many, for such a small population. Walkerville council has 11,000 rate payers for goodness sake. What needless and expensive duplication of council roles.

There are so many qualified persons that have been in management positions living in this council area that need encouragement to stand for council. Not a lack of persons more likely persons thinking that it's hard to have an impact with a group of persons made up of same members year after year.

There are too many Councils now so boundary areas should not be a major consideration in determining a candidate's suitability.

There could be merit in investigating the potential for a Council to have a range in terms of a minimum and maximum number of Elected Members based on population (similar to the Allowances), and if the minimum number of Elected Members is achieved through the election process, and the Council determines it operate with the number of Elected Members (provided the number is within the prescribed minimum and maximum range), supplementary elections would not be required.

There is no benefit to remove council wards as all wards are required to have equivalent elector and member ratios to ensure the 'one vote, one value' principle. Having a council wide no ward system does not guarantee opportunities for a much wider, more diverse group of candidates, by giving them much more flexible options to find their own community of potential voters. One group of disaffected voters could potentially come from a local group or a local street so the whole council would be not represented across the whole Council area and that would be undemocratic. Boundary reforms are not necessarily tied to lack of nominations. There are many reasons why there are lack of nominations that may have nothing to do with changing boundaries. It may be a knee-jerk reaction without research. When not enough people stand to fill all council positions at election time, the first action should be to ask the community why this happened and not jump to a conclusion (such as Increasing the size of a council's area, or making other structural changes,

There is only one winner

There is risk with larger councils that the the balance between income from rates/capacity/service levels is lost. Anecdotally, lots of larger councils seem to have lower service levels and also fall into debt. The medium sized councils seem to do reasonably well in comparison. There is also risk that local knowledge is lost when councils and wards become amalgamated.

There should be a prescribed mimimum number of residents per ward and an overarching number of councillors based upon total council population. Councils will never vote to reduce the numbers of members within a council area or ward due to self interest.

There will often be areas that are simply more connected to their Council than others. For example, one Council gets huge turnout in its "main" ward, but half that turnout in its other wards which feel less connected to the "main's ward" main street.

To some extent this is inevitable as (in regional areas especially) some areas that don't really share the same identity are just going to be arbitrarily stuck onto another Council to make up borders. Amalgamation is not a magic bullet there - in this example, the whole Council becoming one ward of another Council might smooth over the difference in turnout, but it wouldn't actually address the low turnout in the affected areas, who would continue to feel equally irrelevant.

These changes should only be considered if a lack of candidates is an ongoing problem across multiple elections

this can vary across the state and should be tailored as needed

This Council does not believe that a lack of nominations should be a trigger for boundary reform

This does seem like an extreme measure if there are not enough candidates.

This is a decision for local communities.

This is not a factor in having a good range of candidates.... In fact it's quite insulting to suggest smaller councils don't have a good range of candidates

This is open for debate but my personal view is that retaining wards ensures a good spread of nominations across our very large (area wise) Council. If it became a centrally decided decision to amalgamate I'm concerned that Robe and Kingston would be added to our boundaries and it would

financially break our council through 'gaining' those small debt ridden areas because of the addition of more boat ramps and coastal erosion. These factors would put an unfair burden on our ratepayers. Our Council has already suffered through the addition of poorly managed nearby Councils in our last two amalgamations.

This would confuse everyone, if the boundaries keep changing

Time for a radical change.

Maximum number of councillors 7 per council

Align council boundaries inside Goyders line to First Nations traditional boundaries I.E. reduce number of councils to about 14.

While Local Government is being about local, we have a situation where there is 10 times the elected members as the state government with 10% of the state governments budget.

At the same time local towns and suburbs could be empowered with the issues that are particularly important to them, parks, playgrounds and halls through the use of section 41 committees or similar bodies

Too many wards too many elected members.

Varying views have been expressed:

- Perhaps it should be considered for smaller rural and remote LGAs
- No. Have a provision that if no one stands then the Councillors that are elected are it / the Council runs for a term with CEO making decisions. There are safeguards such as ICAC, Ombudsman etc.
- The opportunity for amalgamation could provide pooling of resources both human and infrastructure, thereby reducing costs and providing efficiencies.
- Unrelated issues and should not be connected
- The State Government should bear the cost because they are the ones who will be calling for it.

Wards should have, wherever possible an even and balanced number of wards with an equal and balanced number of councillors. Having served in an LGA with 4 wards, three having 2 representatives each and one having 5 representatives out of a chamber of 11 representatives was biased and unhelpful in the extreme. When the opportunity came up with a facilitator from Adelaide came to represent our Council I was the only person to put a submission in to modify this inequity. Even the facilitator said it wasn't ideal! I was also mindful of the calculations to assess how a ward should be formed depending on the numbers +/- 10% for each ward.

Wards with long term councillors stifle potential candidates as they feel they have little chance of succeeding against an incumbent. Wards should have a minimum of 3 positions. Large council areas and big populations create a barrier to entry because of the perceived difficulty of representing the community adequately.

We are so over governed in SA. In Sydney they have approx 350,000 people in a council area with 12 elected members sometimes less. In SA we have 36,000 and less people in a council area with 12 elected members. Amalgamations and the reduction in councillors should be a priority for any well managed State Government.

We are well over governed in this country at many levels. The horse and buy days have now been well replaced and its now easier for councils to be amalgamated to reduce duplications and better sharing of assets.

We do not think boundary changes will make any difference to lack of nominations

We have NO candidates! Why can our council not be merged with Port Augusta or Roxby Downs, so we can get our democracy back?

We need representation for the whole council area. At the moment all representation is centered in port Broughton, this is no good for 90% of the council area. we need ward representation to be brought back.

We should only have 5 metro councils (central, North, East, South west) and 8(eyre peninsula, yoke peninsula, inner north, inner SE, inner West, outer west outer north and KI)... less council positions should result in more high quality councillors

What a silly idea.

When not enough people stand to fill all council positions at election time, the first action should be to ask the community why this happened and not jump to a conclusion (such as Increasing the size of a council's area, or making other structural changes, may support a greater number of more diverse candidates to stand for that council, giving its citizens greater choice and a stronger local representative body). Maybe candidates need to be more supported in other ways first before such drastic changes.

While this is an interesting proposition, I fear that it make lead to certain council areas coming to overshadow ones which contain people who may not be able to afford the cost of being a councillor given the remuneration is intolerably low

Why do we have this 3rd tier when we have state based electoral boundaries that move with the times however council boundaries remain rigid. A council operational organisation negates the need for councillors altogether

Without term limits it just encourages the same people from each ward to apply every term

Yes lots more consolidation of Councils we have to many.

Yes, lack of nominations should be trigger boundary reform

How is a lack of nominations relevant to boundary reform?

There would appear to be no logic in attaching a lack of nominations to triggering a boundary reform process.

If such a legislative process was triggered, the State should bear the cost of that process. If the State Government is intent on undertaking/implementing boundary reform, it should do so directly rather than indirectly through such legislative triggers.

Again, this does not appear to have any logical link of one action leading to another action. Would boundary reform guarantee positive outcomes from a greater number of nominations? In regional communities, representation is important and should be preserved – and perhaps the State could assess legislative change that would support /encourage alternative service delivery models across Councils, while retaining elected representation.

Considering Boundary Reforms simply because insufficient nominations were received is a knee jerk reaction to a problem created by the 'secrecy' involved in the 2022 election nomination process. Realigning boundaries without public support will create animosity amongst the Councils involved in the reformed Council. Many may oppose the amalgamations if they aren't involved in the process.

The existence of a Council relies on its community requiring it. If an existing Council consistently (say 3 consecutive elections) shows a lack of nominations then the community is signalling that the Council is not required & boundary realignment is required.

Reforming Boundaries simply because of insufficient nominations may result in fewer nominations as candidates may believe that a better candidate exists in the next town/suburb particularly if on line nominations are not allowed.

State Government, it's not the fault of council and Council's resources are already stretched by continued cost shifting

Council strongly believes boundary reforms should be undertaken only in relation to the performance of a Council (e.g. financial sustainability, ability to deliver asset plans etc) not on whether or not people put their hands up for election. Council supports the policy position of the LGA that amalgamations should only occur on a voluntary basis, where there is support of council and their communities and strong supporting evidence.

There is no evidence to suggest boundary reforms would support a greater number of more diverse candidates.

A lack of nominations could be for a wide variety of reasons. Councils should not bear the costs of any reform process on the basis of a lack of nominations: this would be unreasonable and an unfair impost on ratepayers

Council is of the view that lack of nominations is more likely to occur from a variety of other factors, and that existing council boundaries are unlikely to be the cause of low nomination numbers.

State government should bear the cost of boundary reform, as they would be the ones making the decision for this reform

Regarding boundary reform, it is unclear on how this was identified as an appropriate approach to respond to the risk of insufficient nominations in council elections. There are a range of other methods that have the potential to manage this risk in a much more effective, efficient and timely manner. For example, councils getting more involved in educating the community about lack of nominations in particular wards that are impacted (rather than in a general sense like ECSA would likely do) would be more beneficial treatment for this risk. Even educating the community about the risks of limited representation would be a better approach than boundary form. Having said this, any education approach by councils would require information sharing from ECSA (as councils do not currently have access to this information).

It is difficult to understand the direct correlation being made between Council boundaries and nominations. This may be more relevant for small country councils?

There was no overwhelming objection to the idea of boundary changes when a council receives fewer nominations than it has vacancies. However, it was noted that the amalgamation of councils has the potential to result in the loss of local knowledge and have a negative impact on the quality-of-service levels

While the lack of nominations is predominately a concern of regional councils, various strategies were discussed. These include improving public awareness of the role of local government with an emphasis on the potential positive impact a councilor can have on their community and increased funding and support from state government

Council believes that if a lack of nominations over all wards is received the size and structure of a Council should be considered for boundary reform. However, the publishing of nominations in real time may assist in a more even spread of nominations across wards within a council.

A lack of nominations may encourage smaller Councils to reduce their elector representation ratios.

No.

Investigations should be undertaken to determine a suitable process to respond to a lack of nominations in these situations. For example, there could be a mechanism in place for a Council to seek assistance from the Minister for Local Government and/or the LGA and a provision which allows a Council to seek an exemption under strict criteria to not fill the position.

The discussion paper suggests that a lack of nominations should trigger a boundary reform. In doing so it ignores one factor entirely – significantly higher voter turnout - in favour of another – nominations - to fabricate a case for amalgamations.

Voter turnout in the 2022 periodic elections was 34.5% across the state. As the discussion paper notes, this 'means that around two-thirds of people who could vote for their local council representatives are choosing not to vote.'

Except.

In regional areas, those the paper proposes to amalgamate, voter turnout is significantly higher - in the Tatiara voter turnout in 2022 was 61.76%. Though we were unable to access figures for individual councils following the last election, in 2018, the highest voter turnout for a metropolitan council was 32.6% for Prospect, compared to the highest for a 'country' council with 70.4% for Orroroo Carrieton. Only a quarter (25.7%) of people who could vote choose to do so in Playford!

Considering that the number of voters is significantly higher than the number of candidates, surely this should be the measure of engagement in their local government? And therefore, if any link were to be made between community engagement in local government and boundary reform, it should be for those councils with a voter turnout of less than 30%, rather than based on a small number of candidates.

As the above shows, the argument made in the discussion paper is deeply flawed and appears to only serve one purpose: to introduce the potential for amalgamations once more in the community's mind for political gain. We oppose the suggestion in the strongest terms.

No, a lack of nominations should not be a trigger for boundary reform.

The Minister may also wish to consider requiring the Council to carry out a representation review to determine whether the Council should reduce the number of Council Members on Council

The recent Ward boundary changes in Council was decided on 16 constituents' responses. On an issue as significant as this, there should be greater input – even mandatory voting. The result has been an untenable situation in the West Ward that is not working well for the Elected Members nor the constituents.

State government should bear the cost of boundary reform - which we do not support

State Government should bear the cost if legislative changes are introduced that commence a boundary reform process following a lack of nominations

Definitively not. Nominations should be visible in real time to ensure this is not an issue.

Forced boundary reform has numerous risks, including resourcing, financial sustainability, organisational cultural, loss of community identity, loss of representation (particularly regional), debt shifting and loss of trust in local government. Local Governments long held position is no forced amalgamation.

Community should not be burdened with sustainability of other less financially performing Councils.

State Government should concentrate on incentives and funding supporting speculative amalgamations where two or more councils' consent.

Funding should be better divided to support local regional representation, bigger is generally not better.

Lack of nominations should not be a trigger for boundary reform.

Generally our comments related to boundary reform are:

If boundary reform is initiated by State government, it needs to be funded by State government.

If boundary reform is initiated by an adjoining council, that council should wear the cost burden for both impacted councils (i.e. preventing a council being required to divest community services and fund an externally initiated process which is not in the communities interest).

Ideally if initiated by negotiation, all participating councils would share in the costs appropriately.

The correlation is not relevant. If nominations are made public, generally nominations will occur within councils with full take-up.

No, a lack of nominations should not trigger boundary reform

We have seen a series of differing models and approaches to amalgamations over the years, each of which suffers from a serious democratic deficit. The most recent of which presented a fig leaf to local decision making. The State government gave consideration to an amalgamation of Mt Gambier City Council and the District Council of Grant, and held a single combined plebiscite of both areas risking one community forcibly absorbing another against that communities wishes. We have also seen determinations on council boundaries made by an unelected commission, with public consultation and plebiscites held to guide these decisions. It is our view that communities are best placed to determine who should govern them and in what manner

Supports the establishment of a dialogue between state government and the LGA, to examine how council amalgamations can be explored, where supported by local communities, based on clear evidence

No, boundary reform would not necessarily resolve a lack of nominations particularly in rural or regional areas.

In smaller regions a lack of nominations can mean residents and ratepayers think the incumbents are doing a good job.

There are additional factors that affect a nominee's decision to stand in local body elections in rural areas. People are

either interested in standing in local body elections or they are not. Boundary reforms will not change this.

Not being able to display the nominees as they are accepted may also affect the lack of nominees.

Councils that do not have wards should not have to consider wards at each elector representation review unless or

until council supports reviewing a ward structure

I do not agree that lack of nominations, in isolation from other more important considerations (e.g. communities of interest), is a valid justification for boundary reform.

I also question the suggestion that amalgamations would overcome lack of nominations. What might occur is that the residents in a Council taken over are even worse off, with the Council being dominated by Councillors not familiar with or sympathetic to the community "taken over"

I am definitely not in support of forced Council amalgamations and do not think that this will benefit rural residents at all and maintain existing services. As such I am not in support of potential boundary changes being referred to the South Australian Boundaries Commission when a council receives few nominations for vacancies

If lack of nominations is the problem, then address the reasons why. Not compensate for it by reforming boundaries

No. Efforts to increase advertising and awareness of nominations should be considered instead of triggering boundary reform

There may be a lot of backlash from forcing a boundary reform due to lack of nominations. There would also be a large cost associated with a boundary change

The State Government should bear the cost

Typically there is resistance to boundary 'reform' due to a sense of loss of connection and identity to the region

No. The process of electing people as Councillors is independent of the need for council boundary adjustments and amalgamations.

We think it is most unwise to consider making a council larger if that council does not attract sufficient nominations. Country councils already suffer from having to provide services to a large geographical area. Long travel times for elected members may already be a disincentive to serve on a council. To make a council area even larger seems counter-productive to us.

We are not aware of lack of nominations being a major problem for councils in SA, except for the last election when the Electoral Commission, in its wisdom, decided that it would receive candidates' nominations and not make them available to the public as they were lodged. Consequently, potential candidates were kept in the dark about which wards and/or positions lacked adequate nominations.

Is it better to have a single nomination in each of two wards, or to have one ward with no nomination while another has two potentially good candidates vying for the one position?

While there are disadvantages with people moving their nominations around from ward to ward, and having political parties seeking to game the system, these disadvantages are small compared to the major disadvantage of an inadequate number of candidates for any ward or position.

We do not believe a decision should be made after only one election. The current periodic review of council boundaries process where Council boundaries can be changed through a representation review process seems to be working adequately. This is only an internal review process where the ward structure boundaries can be changed due to population changes such as infill development. This ensures that wards have approximately the same number of people in each ward. The Electoral Commission can ask for one if the wards become unbalanced

It is timely to further consider structural changes in local representative elected government to meet not only contemporary concerns, but especially anticipated future challenges; we need to consider people

and liveability of future local communities. It should not just all be about money; it must be about people and the environs in which the future will live.

This is not supported by Council given the associated costs and the potential for amalgamations to result as a part of this process. It is noted that when things are going well (based on Council's performance) nominations tend to be less in comparison to when there are more contentious issues being considered. This is not a sound basis for triggering boundary reform which is felt should result from a level of other considerations as opposed to lack of nominations.

Consideration needs to be given as to why not enough nominations were received. This risk is that boundary reforms will commence at a significant cost where the reasoning is not related to the number of electors in the area or ward. It could be as a result of a less engaged community that do not desire to be on Council which can vary as part of any electoral cycle.

The costs associated with these reforms will need to be considered in respect to why the process is needed. Many smaller Councils will not have the capacity to cover this cost. Traditionally this legislative change would trigger boundary reforms in smaller regional Councils who have less capacity both from a financial and resourcing perspective to undertake this process. Boundary reforms can also lead to amalgamations which should be considered in a much wider context than the lack of Council nominations at any one election.

A deeper understanding of the lack of nominations should also be considered. With the recent findings of the Ombudsman restricting employee recognition and gatherings in general culture building is also being restricted. Social interactions set up a strong basis for a more cohesive, collaborative and informed Council and whole of organisation which filters out into the community making Council a preferred organisation in which to be involved

No, I do not support potential boundary changes when council receives fewer nominations than vacancies because I would not want to be represented by elected members that are not close to and a part of my local community.

We do not think that boundary reform triggered by a lack of nominations is merited.

We do, however, believe that boundary reform is required within the Barossa region – we support the concept of one council governing the Barossa Wine region. The Barossa is an estimated \$1.2 billion brand, and we believe it is important to have one local council providing consistency in leadership, economic development, interpretation of planning codes, etc

Council needs to amalgamate with Peterborough

Topic 2: Make council meetings more flexible (2.2)

- Leave provisions.

Elected members need to have access to leave provisions, similar to the leave provisions provided for the new 'Voice to Parliament', See Commissioner Determination 1: Leave. AS from 24 March 2024, all elected members to the voice to parliament will have access to 15 days of special leave with pay, in addition to any other special leave with pay entitlements to fulfil the duties of the role.

Like wise, Local government elected members should have access to similar provisions. Certainly, all

Public Sector employees should have access to the same provisions which at this stage we do not. It will need to be legislated for all other elected members who are not public sector employees, to access leave provisions. The question is: who pays?

- The current system is not conducive for people with caring responsibilities to be an elected member.
- Psychological safety. The unsolicited bullying and harassment from constituents is not commensurate with remuneration. Psychological safety is paramount, especially in the light of mental wellbeing/safety and providing a safe work environment.

- * Higher Allowance
- * Fixed maximum terms as a Councillor (eg 2 terms)
- * Attempt to control single issue Councillors
- * Control frivolous complaints being made against opposing Councillors or Mayors
- * Set higher behaviour standards
- * Elected Members training should be spread across the full term not just the first 3 months of their term
- * Performance management of individual Councillors and the over all council should be undertaken and reported to the Minister - this could be undertaken by a panel of experts with a set of basic KPI and then others relevant to the Council district/area.

1) Less formal meetings and more working individually at councilors' own time.

2) Stop laws that prevent dissenting councilors from speaking publicly against council policies: when having to choose between council-service and freedom of speech, most will choose freedom of speech over serving in their council with their mouth shut.

1. Allow virtual meeting options to allow council members to participate remotely when necessary, increasing flexibility and accessibility.

2. Schedule council meetings at times that are more accessible to a broader range of individuals, such as evenings or weekends, to accommodate those with work or family commitments.

Agendas given to members at least 3weeks before meetings and not 4-5days beforehand so they can't make informed decisions and vote accordingly.

All Councillors and the Mayor have been elected by the people so only the people should be able to discipline or otherwise censure them, including a dismissal / bi-election process instigated by the voters/ratepayers. This will apply to all complaints against these elected representatives excluding criminal actions prosecuted by the police.

Elected Councillors retain the right to censure another Councillor in accordance with Code of Practice; Local Government (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations 2013 but always excluding any punitive action.

All Councillors and the Mayor have been elected by the people so only the people should be able to dismiss, discipline or suspend them.

Any disciplinary action against Councillors or the Mayor should only be possible by the residents/ratepayers, suggestions and reasons for the suggestions from other council members may be put forward but the final decision should be in the hands of the residents/ratepayers.

This will apply to all complaints against these elected representatives excluding criminal actions prosecuted by the police.

This means all other actions against elected members including those referred to in the Code of Practice; Local Government (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations 2013; Elected Member's Behavioral Management Policy and Behavioral Standards for Council Members will no longer be operative in any punitive capacity.

Elected members retain the right to censure another elected member in accordance with these codes and regulations but always excluding any other punitive action.

All Councillors and the Mayor have been elected by the people so only the people should be able to elect, discipline or otherwise censure them. Any disciplinary action against councillors or the Mayor should only be possible by the residents by undertaking an 'UNELECTION PROCESS'. This will apply to all complaints against these elected representatives excluding criminal actions prosecuted by the police.

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All members should be present to ensure effective meeting procedures and discussions are being had

All votes should be recorded as a matter of ordinary procedure and public accountability

As a local councillor, I think this is a good idea to be able to attend a certain percentage of meetings electronically. Also please consider offering more support for childcare during GC meetings and also other meetings that council members are required to attend e.g. committees, forums, community events and for us not to be penalised by 'looking bad' for asking for help. If meetings are during the day this is hard as often I am working at those times. I have had to take some days off work in order to attend council-related meetings and events and there is no allowance for this, I need to use my personal leave which is not ideal but at the same time I am lucky to have this (casual employees won't have access to this). At the moment it's offputting to ask for help (e.g. I don't have a car right now and I've been asked to attend a meeting today at council and I will be paying for my own Uber to get there as I feel like if I ask for a taxi voucher this will be put up on the website and possibly used against me somehow - like I'm overusing resources. The other option is public transport or cycling but this is not ideal if I want to ensure I get there on time and not looking sweaty as it's a hot day). As a single parent, I also have to get my parents to look after my child every Tuesday night so I can attend meetings - luckily my family is very supportive this way but it would feel really awkward to have to ask for childcare every Tuesday night.

As an active contributor to Council surveys, feedback to Council proposals, attendances at meet the Mayor and Council staff at 'Council Coffee Chats', reporting of hazards in the Council area, recommendations for improvement to health and fitness locations and events and many more

contributions, I would think that I as a proactive constituent that I would be invited to personally attend a council meeting as an observer.

Aside from payment increases, I believe that a preselection process should be incorporated into the election. At the moment there is no barrier testing to ensure suitable candidates. And - if there is insufficient candidates - then these untested (sometimes single platform) candidates go straight into the chamber. Third tier government is about community and not international or national politics!

Attendance via video-conferencing is strongly supported for all meetings, particularly Special Council meetings. Review of the restrictive process associated with the meeting regulations to enable constructive debate and consideration of agenda items

Awareness of Council business, what the Councilors are able to achieve (realistically) and how they are achieved. Keep politics out of the forum ie no party lines such as Greens, Libs, or Labor, this will enable more of community focus, not a party focus.

Being a councilor does not hold the respect it should, in fact its the opposite. Changing the meetings or business would not help. The time of life plays the biggest part, most are at Retirement age, time and expertise to offer which is in fact part of the problem. The younger people struggle to fit anything more into their available spare time. The Queensland local government has a different approach, it appears being an elected member is actually a career option therefore if a mid 40's person wants to get involved with local government they study and train or expand their existing vocation with local government training before becoming an elected member.

Being flexible about being able to put in views in writing beforehand would be useful. The reason it's all retirees on Council is because it's hard for working people to have time from work to be able to do these things. Perhaps a new leave allowance for people who are on Council, like we have for jury duty?

Being flexible to attend some meetings via Skype, Teams or any video hook up.
Having more open information sessions for anyone considering running.

Better education of the requirements of a Councillor. It would seem that many people are discouraged through hearsay from people and don't know where to go to gain a proper view of what being a Councillor entails

Better screening of candidates affiliations to ensure no negativity in crowds attending meetibgs

Build pathways to stand eg invite people demonstrating leadership to consider running - school leaders, sporting and arts leaders, cultural and church leaders, business leaders

Change the way that mayors are elected or employed, so that people with leadership skills and personal qualities who have the ability to contribute and facilitate to the short-term and long-term wellbeing of the community are chosen. Mayors should be able to run meetings without the need to bully and intimidate. Mayors should have the skills to reduce and eradicate factional voting of councilors and should not take advantage of their roles and call in favours. Staff should not be permitted to exert control over the councillors.

Changes to Council Meetings to be transparent. There have been issues with councillors not being transparent to the residents and ratepayers who live in one particular Council. A larger gallery to be

organised as this Council is a largely populated Council of South Australia and yet only about 34 residents have live access to meetings.

Clearer communication of the role of an Elected Member. There is often misunderstanding about the actual responsibilities and scope of the role.

Considering that ALL Councillors and the Mayor have been elected BY THE PEOPLE , therefore ONLY THE PEOPLE should be able to elect, discipline or otherwise censure them. Any disciplinary action against councillors or the Mayor should only be possible by the residents by undertaking an 'UNELECTION PROCESS'. This will apply to all complaints against these elected representatives excluding criminal actions prosecuted by the police.

This means all other actions against elected members including those referred to in the Code of Practice; Local Government (Procedures at Meetings) Regulations 2013; Elected Member's Behavioural Management Policy and Behavioural Standards for Council Members will no longer be operative in any punitive capacity. Elected members retain the right to censure another elected member in accordance with these codes and regulations but always excluding any other punitive action

Council Agendas are often too large and presented in too short a time frame.

Allowing some video/online type attendance may help to attract good participants. Many retired people travel for several months a year thus don't consider they are suitable candidates. By allowing say up to 3 virtual attendances may help.

Council meetings are based on a give attitude rather than a get attitude. What we give rather than what you get. Honesty and transparency goes a long way.

Council Meetings during the evening have a larger community take in, while day meetings take in more staff. From the community viewpoint, it is more sufficient to have these meetings in the evening, as most people who need to can access them at this time. Councillors should be able to zoom in only on health / communications reasons.

Council meetings should be flexible to allow people from all walks of life to nominate. E.g. night shift workers, people working full time etc.

Allowing digital meetings would also mean people who travel a lot for work can still nominate for council.

Council meetings should be less formal providing the opportunity for greater interaction between Councillors and community members.

Council meetings times are currently determined by the elected members after election and this may put people off nominating

Council members should be able to attend electronically

Council processes are complex and many decisions require an ethical aptitude and critical thinking. I believe that candidates should be assessed for pre-requisite competencies to be eligible to stand for election. Something similar to the AICD certification recommended for Board Directorship.

Council requires an fair degree of commitment, not everyone has the capacity to devote the time required. Decisions made by Council are not always well received. The potential for negative feedback may be very confronting or threatening to some people.

Council schedules its meetings outside of business hours to accommodate working councillors and address concerns from the community regarding access to meetings. However, the effectiveness of mandating specific meeting times to maximise community participation may be limited, as many individuals may struggle to find time amidst their work and family commitments to attend lengthy meetings that may not necessarily align with their interests.

Councillor roles to be given greater responsibility, and an expected level of professionalism. Therefore, Council meetings should be conducted during normal business hours. This allows Councillors the opportunity to engage with members of community groups, many of which have their meetings after hours. This increased level of engagement has benefits for both the Council and the Community Group.

Councillors routinely visiting community groups - including sports associations, cultural and arts groups - in person to explain what it's like being on council could assist in improving visibility. Upward mentoring (as noted above) could also assist - particularly if aligned with good quality data about unrepresented or marginalised groups.

Councillors should be able to attend the Ordinary Council Meetings by electronic means if they're travelling for work or due to illness.

Councillors should be able to deal direct with Council Departments. As it stands Councillors in my Council are FORBIDDEN from contacting anyone within Council, except for the Mayor, CEO and Director Of Development Services. If a ratepayer has an issue that needs to be addressed and contacts a Councillor for help, that Councillor should be able to contact the Department in question, not go through a chain of command that is so typically "government". Councils are there to serve the people, not be self-serving.

Councilors should be non-political

Councilors shouldn't be allowed to phone it in from their holiday house on the Gold coast, for three months of the year.

Councils are seen as too political. By focusing on core business at a service/maintenance level ie non political people may be interested in representing other residents on the Council.

Councils should be an advisory board only to provide input to the employees. We already pay professionals to do the business of the Council we don't need non professionals. Should be a clear process for the provision of information and feed back and recourse to review if councilors and public strongly disagree. No different to State Parliament where staff are in the business end and the minister and minders provide some policy and direction

Councils should be required to hold information sessions for prospective candidates and also organise "meet the candidate" meetings. The timing of these meetings should be decided prior to nominations opening and should be in the evening.

Councils should be required to live stream meetings and make recordings available, provided that Councils are also given more flexibility in relation to how to hold their Council meetings

Councils should not have the ability to change meeting schedules - it sbe mandated by govt

covering the cost of child care for elected members with children
auslan interpretation
ensure interpreters are available for non english speaking candidates

Create opportunities for community groups to speak with councillors (recorded) about the issues currently facing, and how they can assist and also possibly run for council.

Currently council meetings are largely a rubber stamp. Council business and decisions appear to be run by our Council CEO who is not accountable to the residents. It appears that Councillors have little influence in decision making.

Decrease # of Elected Members (suggest 6-8 + mayor would be an appropriate number, based on research regarding link between board size and effectiveness)

Disband Council

Discussing matters with some members digitally and others in person can be difficult and I believe limiting the number of times a councillor can attend not in person would be important. I also believe there should be no exception for the general council meeting, having members attend in person only but committees could allow digital attendance.

Educate people at town meeting

education on how council works

Elected members should attend meetings in person but there needs to be flexibility for some instances where they may attend via electronic means or instances when they might submit proxy votes on non-controversial/complex matters

Electronic attendance on occasion would be beneficial. Holding meetings late into the evening doesnt really influence attendance, and certainly doesnt lead to better decisions. If people are interested in a topic, they will generally find a way to participate. Lets not forget the Council Meetings are not really set up to facilitate input from the gallery of attendees anyway.

Engaging with the media to de-sensationalise coverage. Media coverage gives Councils a bad name, and deters people from running.

Ensure meetings all online, open and recorded. And trained councillors in how a meeting should work.

Every council should be required to run information or training sessions on how to apply and run a campaign for council. CoM does not run sessions.

Exclusion of all active political party members from standing for council and council focus on local issues only! ie NO Gaza, type discussions!!

Explain how council's support newly elected members.

For councils to be less combative and understanding with ratepayers concerns. Not to disregard what ratepayers have to say.

For new members, it takes some time to become accustomed to the role of a Councillor and the role of the administration. Council meetings need to deal with the important and tangible issues. This is not assisted by the State increasingly exercising greater control over local government decision making.

Freedom to stand on a position. The current rules basically prevent a councillor from standing in a position counter to the view of the council without potential retaliation. The rules for councillors' conduct on issues they disagree over match the rules of a non-civil organisation. It promotes democracy by allowing councillors to state their views without fear of retaliation due to their disagreement with majority council positions.

Further to the above panels and investigations on matters on code of conduct grounds should be handled in a more professional way with a standardised panel on all matters and directly. The requirement to incorporate the CEO of the council in the current complaint scheme does not work when the CEO has no interest in its resolution (or worse) and makes the current system nothing more than a method of control by the CEO over the council. The current panel that requires when things are sent to them should be the first and only port of call before the legal system and should take complaints from the public and individual councillors.

The current complaints process only provides cover for councillors in the majority clique and council staff aligned with the CEO.

From experience with e-meetings (during COVID period), while electronic attendance allowed business to continue, it did make genuine debate on matters much more challenging.

There is merit in some meetings (Committee Meetings or some Briefing Sessions) being able to be undertaken virtually, but the more formal Council Meetings should remain by attendance. This should remain a decision for each Council to make, and any legislative change shouldn't be mandatory.

General accessibility to council deliberations and decisions will encourage more interest in running for council and increase diversity. More needs to be done to ensure that people with commitments e.g. children, work, caring for family members can participate in meetings. This can be done by ensuring council and committee meetings are at times and are accessible to those members through ensuring they are outside of business hours, appropriate allowances for employing carers for dependants, travel allowances, phone, Internet, etc. Face-to-face meeting will always be the preferred method of participation but other electronic methods should be allowed and reasonable effort made to ensure that remote participation is of good quality sufficient to facilitate full participation in decision making and deliberations.

Get rid of factions!!!

Show respect for diverse opinions.

Deal with business and not faction warfare.

Include more women. Get rid of "old boys club" mentality.

Get rid of part politics from councils.

It is ok if someone is a member of a political party, from a personal perspective, but there should be no part affiliations or involvement in councils.

Get rid of the robes, and the formal speak (e.g. "your worship"). Get rid of pictures of kings and queens from the council chambers - they have nothing to do with local government.

Getting rid of the outdated ward system. Encouraging and ensuring elected members reflect the diversity of the community - gender, age, culture, political viewpoints. Do not allow more than one person per household to be elected. This would help avoid bias and encourage diversity of viewpoints being represented.

Greater opportunities to engage with question and answer sessions.

Have More Staff at a meeting. So when questions are asked, the relative person can answer. Not a vague excuse. fait accompli

Having a fair and equitable chairperson. Having ideas listened to, to be able to make a difference

Having meetings at a time when people with caring responsibilities can get someone to look after their loved ones

Holding meeting out of business hours enables people who work or study to participate. At the moment these people are either excluded or penalised (loss of income, use of paid leave, missed study).

Holding meetings during the day can detract from some people nominating for council due to work commitments. Large council meeting agendas are a disincentive

Hybrid meetings where Staff and Council Members who were challenged by the technology at home could come into Council to attend – this was difficult to chair as some rooms had four people in them – hybrid meetings work when there is one screen and the presiding member and minute taker are in the same room.

I believe elected members should attend meetings in person as the level of engagement and debate is better when there in person, plus you can better read the room/ body language. However there are times were you may not be able to attend in person and you should be able to request remote access in exceptional circumstances. As long as this doesn't get abused by elected members, I believe it will allow more participation in meetings. Currently we have too many elected members away all the time, which is noticed by the community who elected them.

I believe the biggest issue is a lack of clarity on the when of these meetings and that while outside of business hours does make it easier to attend, it also depends on what day of the week this is taking place.

I come from a regional Council that has a number of smaller communities within their LGA. These towns have a population in excess of 1,00 people. In my relatively short tenure on my local Council I requested that a monthly meeting should be held at least once a year in these other communities. This would definitely encourage these local communities to become more involved. This was the problem though; my particular township have a very fractious relationship with the Council. My research showed that the last monthly Council meeting was held roughly 12 years ago in that township yet it was the second largest town by population it the LGA.

I considered standing for council but was not sure about campaigning, how to raise money to support a campaign, what the work load might be

I don't love the concept of groups of people running together

I don't believe the general public know what is expected of them as a councillor and I think that education of this would be a good starting point

Many people myself included believe there is too much red tape to affect change as a councillor

I don't feel councils should promote election participation as it puts them in a conflicted position. ECSA and LGA play an important role in the promotion of enrollment, nominations and voting. Council should not be part of that. Proper remuneration and more training will potentially encourage more people to stand for Council.

I don't think so.

I don't think telling a council when meetings should be held is appropriate, for some councils potentially business hours would be appropriate for others after hours, I think ensuring when the meetings are held is reviewed by the incoming council after election and a consensus is reached

I don't think we need more people to stand - there are always ample candidates in my area

I had a baby during the period of time where Councils were able to hold meetings online due to Covid and benefitted from this change - I was able to participate in meetings still but also feed my newborn baby without having to take her to the Council office.

There are challenges to having people participate via online means and I feel the expectation should be that councillors attend in person where possible, but there are examples where having some flexibility to this would make it more accessible to people - other reasonable examples where there may be merit to permitting online attendance could include travel for work purposes, disability, caregiving/ carers etc.

I really believe that EM should attend the meetings in person as I feel they become disengaged.

I think being clear about what LGA's remit is, what they do compared to State and Federal Government

I think committee meetings could be changed to be there electronically however sometimes the technology doesn't work and that person is excluded. I think if you put your hand up you need to come in person

I think council meetings should be held in person and members required to attend in person, unless there are extenuating circumstances. I'm interested in whether it would be possible to have a maximum meeting length or number of items on the agenda per council meeting to ensure meetings didn't run late into the night. I think an increased allowance would increase people's willingness to dedicate the amount of time and effort required for the role.

I think for women it might involve help with child care, just trying to reach more groups and assisting people to get their message out - why they are running, what ideas they have

I think in most cases decisions are already made and the elected members have to either fight it or just accept it. For example, rate increases, no elected member is going to accept rate increases, but they are just forced to.

I think individual council should choose dependent on their elected members. I think perhaps attendance via tele-conference could be allowed but minimally

I think that the current system works well. I do believe however, that online attendance should be something that is looked at but only if there is a good reason for them needing to attend online. For example, if the Councillor is unwell or overseas but still wishes to attend. There could be a maximum number of meetings where this could be allowed each year. This allows for a lot more flexibility. I do not see the attendance of Council meetings as being prohibitive for people wanting to stand for Council, it is the minimum requirement and no time is ever going to be perfect.

I think the Councils could run information sessions for potential candidates to advise them how to go about standing for positions. I think at the moment it is assumed everyone just knows, however, I assume it would take quite a bit of money to promote yourself and become known well enough to actually get elected. I also understand in the past many people who nominate and become councillors had business interests they wanted to influence via their local Council meetings.

I was of the understanding that you had to be a rate payer to be involved in anything to do with Council in terms both running for the positions but also to vote - when any sort of publicity is undertaken it refers to ratepayers, of which I am not one.

I would love to be on Council however I don't believe in self promotion and campaigning etc.... Consider opening up additional positions that could be applied for (and either the incoming council members appoint or the council itself appoints or places vetted people on the ballot so that they can be included in the voting process).

If council elections were compulsory more people would be aware of the Council and therefore consider standing.

In my experience conservative views are not welcome as most councils have been infiltrated by woke far left ideologues who use censorship as a tool. But not for long...

In my time on Council, the government and the industry have been obsessed with meeting procedures, conflict of interest etc. We seem to be in a perpetual need to roll out change. It may be that it is time to hold off and allow the current set of rules to prove themselves.

Incentive grant for students/young aspiring Council Members to run for Council.

Increases to Councillor pay, better behaviour by elected members (probably through introducing mandatory voting), better private workshops (not having every information session/workshop be public because it creates an environment where people can't ask questions, etc.)

In-person attendance should remain a requirement of ordinary Council meetings. However, increased flexibility such as attendance at Council meetings by electronic means in those circumstances deemed exceptional by individual Councils, may assist Councils with meeting arrangements and availability of members.

Issues to be considered if conducting council meetings =electronically include:

Information Technology infrastructure

Reproduction of soundbites, or images out of context

Misrepresentation and possible defamation

Access to legal representation

It should be up to each elected body to set meeting times that suit the collective the most. This should be reviewed after each election, with the commencement of each new council. Legislation is hard to change - governing minutiae via legislation is unnecessary. Set the rules so that there has to be a unanimous decision and let people work out what suits them best. If meetings are livestreamed and recorded and people can attend remotely, there is plenty of flexibility to maximise accessibility for individuals, without the need to create a 'one size fits all' approach that becomes a historically-based norm, long after it ceases to be effective.

It will always be challenging to set Council meeting times that suit all, and this is a discussion for Council (once elected) to have as a team to ensure that as much flexibility is achieved as possible.

It would be good to promote the opportunities available, specifically through digital means.

It's sometimes unsafe to hold meetings in person. We need security and better hierarchies of control.

Its your community help make it better join the council and make it work for all

Keep meetings to a tight time frame. After 2 hours everyone starts to loose interest.
Somehow take egos out of the chamber.

Keep State and Federal politics out of local government. Require State and Federal staffers to disclose their employment arrangements at the time of nominating for local government

Keeping politics out of it. Fixed number of years able to serve would clear the deck and make more positions winnable.

Leave politicians out, we don't need parties running councils

Fair and equitable media - the way the media portrays people means sensible people think it wise to not participate as they fear they will be portrayed a certain way by the media

Less bureaucracy

Less Councilors

less formality during meetings, reduce, soften, the image of councils being a breeding ground for State or Federal politics. Councils need to be far more representative of local communities.

have a buddy, learning position for councillors that when the nominate they need a 'running mate' who can partner as a member and can be consulted during council meetings, and can act as a proxy when an elected member cannot attend a meeting/s.

introduce youth to meetings, so young people can play an active role in Council meetings.

Less formality. Less reports, more presentation. Perhaps a different model for involvement rather than being set up like a board. The absence of 'houses' is problematic as it creates space for dominant elected member(s) to hold court - which isnt very democratic. Perhaps local government should reflect state government.?

Less of the unnecessary bureaucracy in local government

Less pomp and ceremony and more inclusive structure with less British empire influence.

Let us have elections like normal citizens of a developed country, rather than treating like we live in a 'banana republic'.

Make council documentation much shorter, e.g. agendas

make it accessible for all, having it live stream and someone available to ask question via this option

make it apolitical

Make the decision making of Council high level and strategic. Too many operational level reports that should be dealt with by senior management go to Council. Use other mechanisms outside of council meetings to 'inform' elected members of council business.

Also reports need to be limited in length and use simple terminology (non-jargon) to make them easier to read.

Make voting compulsory and increase elected members allowances. Also, term limits might help to clear the field somewhat, as there are elected members that have been on councils for generations.

Meeting time limits, high priority items arranged early on agenda, after 2 hours maximum all items carried forward to the next meeting.

Meetings need to be accessible to candidates which is usually out of hours so they don't have to take time off work. Having meetings virtually for individuals who can't get there during the day won't fix the problem. Giving them more more money may not make the problem go away if the individual doesn't have a flexible work environment. The meeting times need to be known to candidates as part of the candidate info and the candidate needs to take this into consideration when nominating.

Meetings to be chaired by an independent experienced in conducting meetings. No loving the sound of their own voice. A chair who can cut short ramblings etc.

Minimise the petty squabbles that occur currently.

Monthly meetings would be better.

Less workshops in information sessions and instead more one on one communication between directors and individual council members. I believe a simple face-to-face or phone call from directors of a council to each council member would be effective and efficient.

Then a summary paper could be prepared by the administration, outlining the points raised, discussed or questions raised about the matter.

This would mean less evenings been taken up by council meetings, council, information sessions, and workshops.

More active communication of the issues under consideration by the council and its committees and the decisions made.

More autonomy and less interference from big brother. That is state government back off

More community friendly meetings outside of chambers

More drop in sessions in person to allow questions to be asked by potential candidates. Support on how to run and awareness of expectation

More information available at regional level as to the role and responsibilities and an elected member. AT the moment people have to travel to information sessions in the city which is restrictive.

More media coverage

More open access and engagement

more open and accessible meetings

More public support for Council members and less political infighting between varying levels of Government. Higher capability of Mayors to manage behavior.

My view is that the meeting arrangements have little impact on individuals' decision to run for Council. However, provisions need to be made for a changing workforce. Our workforce is no longer "9 to 5"; this is an outmoded view of the workforce. Evening (eg hospitality workers) and weekend (eg tourism and logistic workers) work and irregular shifts (eg doctors) are commonplace. Individuals also have parenting and other care responsibilities in addition to their work commitments, and this could be day or evening depending on their work arrangements. Attendance by a video (not tele which does not allow for sufficient interaction) platform would certainly assist individuals who may need to care for others, either on an ongoing basis (children sleeping in the evening) or occasionally (such as a sick child). This would also assist people with have irregular working hours or who are required to travel for work and may be elsewhere (regional, interstate or overseas) at the time of a scheduled meeting but could attend via a video communication platform.

Need much more deliberative democracy

Need to ensure councillors are better behaved and make meaningful decisions. The type of decisions that have been made recently by myCouncil should be outlawed.

No if you don't want to do the work then don't stand

Not in this council

Not sure

Offering mentoring to candidates to help them understand the role requirements. It seems that some candidates nominate on a platform to drive change that is unable to be achieved as they don't understand how local government works and what the role of an elected member is empowered to change.

Officers employed at Local Government level must be answerable to the Councillors, not the other way around. hopefully that would allow "dead wood" to be managed effectively.

Online attendance to allow for illness, family, disability and work priorities. Otherwise elected members are mostly retired or entitled.

our council meetings drag on. Start too late in evening.

More special meetings, to reduce load on an ordinary meeting. (if you can't talk about it in an ordinary meeting, put it off for another meeting, or just say it)

Reports verified before meeting, read out reports in full !before! motion. not losing time debating over motions poor grammar. than at a following wasting half an hour going over the report/motion fuck up.

Pay councilors according to their means and discourage those with business interests from seeking election

People don't stand for Council because they know it's corrupt and they don't want to become part of the corruption. If you try to make a difference once in Council - GOD HELP YOU!! You'd be on your own and need to watch you back or you may find yourself in Court.

Perhaps a more pleasant environment in which to make important decisions. Not a toxic environment!

Perhaps special interest areas would be better served with committees from the community with rotating membership that can be the advisory to the formal council in the same manner as a SA Governmnet Department approaches Cabinet. Areas of special interest in large councils that raises concerns on favourtism and spending would include Sporting facilities, Parks, Street scapes, Health, traffic etc

Perhaps the overall conduct of some councils, as an outsider there appears to be quite a toxic working environment at times.

Physically accessible council chambers and furniture.

Payments for Auslan Interpreters.

Access and inclusion training for Councillors and Council staff.

Two terms maximum for every Councillor and Mayor.

Playford gives the impression that it is run like a dictatorship. Anyone with a different or new idea is just shoved aside. New ideas should be published and explored and made transparent.

Possible video link to meetings for insights to what goes on.

Preparing Council minutes and communications is a number of languages might be helpful. In order not to create a huge increase in workload or expense, ABS stats could be used to identify the (say 5?) languages other than English spoken in the council area. Would be great if Council translated minutes into the local indigenous language too (if appropriate). Allowing folks to attend meetings on-line in regional/rural/remote communities is imperative as there may be many 10's or even 100's of KM's to travel for a prospective councillor. If they are involved in primary production, this could mean a day a fortnight lost just driving to & from Council meetings.

Provide marketing materials for nominees, assist with social media

Qu 15 only allowed for black and white response. e.g. if a person was ill or infectious they should be able to attend by electronic means. Also perhaps if business required personal attendance. Outside these, attendance should be compulsory as the quality of debate is better.

Reduce the level of requirements on elected members. As a regular attendee of council meetings it is blantanly obvious that many elected members do NOT read they huge agendas and there for fail to

engage in any debate .[Such elected members warm tthe seat but fail to express the views of their constituents. Their level of understanding of the issues is appalling]

Reduce the number of large local buisness owners allowed on the council

Registered training for council members e.g. company directors course.

Removing outdated or menial routines, such as religiosity (e.g. citing prayers) during meetings. Ensuring business is transparent and accessible, and easily understood.

Seems ridiculous that that we allow WFH BUT attendance IN PERSON for LGA 's is required . What about those with small children or disabilities?

Shorter meetings.

Some elements, like formalities and the structure of meetings, can be exclusionary. For instance, if someone is atheist, they might feel uncomfortable participating in an activity that involves the Lord's Prayer. Many commonly practiced conventions inadvertently create an exclusionary atmosphere. The formalities of procedures, including the complexity of understanding various rules and processes, can be overwhelming in addition to the significant breadth of actual subject matters that arise for debate. New members may find it challenging to navigate meeting rules, such as the requirement to stand, limitations on speaking frequency and duration, framing a motion correctly, or even how to ask a question when there is limited opportunity for debate on the given answer. It's not uncommon for elected members to initially refrain from active participation in meetings as they acclimate to the procedures during their first year or term

Some Mandatory training should happen before an election so people know more about what they are in for and they should attend a few or wStch a few council meetings to learn.

Some meetings throughout the year should be allowed to attend via zoom for elected members

Start earlier ay 3 or 5pm

stop making it a popularity contest, what they promise they should deliver on , if they dont thats it there out & the next highest votes gets in 2 prove themselves and so on .

Supports meetings remaining in person, expect in exceptional circumstances and have clearly defined limitations for those instances where online participation is acceptable.

Technology cost, reliability of technology, network connection challenges, inability to have assurance on confidential online meeting environment for confidential agenda items, distraction when attending online, difficulty to see all participants and chair the meeting, difficulty to run a ballot process for nominations, difficulty to process a division under the current process

That council meeting deal with everything on the agenda and dont push to much work to be done between meetings and a cut off time with matters not dealt with carried over to the next meeting. Meeting not to rushed through before the dead line each item dealt with at a reasonable pace

The ability to attend meetings via video link would greatly assist, with certain provisions regarding confidential matters. Certainly attendance at Special Council meetings should be via video link.

The ability to participate (at the Mayor's discretion) in meetings via Zoom or other electronic means is critical and essential in this day and age. It is archaic to not offer this as an option. Council's should have the ability to hold their meetings as it best suits: either during of outside of business hours. This may vary from month to month, depending on the availability of Elected Members.

The commitment to the position in terms of the time required to fulfill the role could be a deterrent for potential candidates.

The council could make people aware on when this takes place.

The formality and legislative requirements of Council meetings is a large deterrent to prospective nominees. To the average person, being an elected member can be quite overwhelming. My Council hold briefings and/or information sessions prior to our Council Meetings. In my first term (I'm now in my 2nd), my children were younger and it was quite a task to pick them up from school and then be at Council Offices by 4.30pm and often not return home until after 10pm. I did try to get support from my colleagues to stipulate no briefings prior to a Council Meeting but this was not supported and was even advised that if I could not meet my commitments, I should not have nominated for Council.

The increased professionalisation of councillors particularly through greater provision of training & accreditation (e.g. AICD director training), and the perception shift away from it being a post for the retired and independently wealthy would assist members of the public in viewing being a council member as a valuable step in their professional journey and career growth - rather than expecting potential candidates to forgoe career advancement.

The LGA runs woke campaigns about gender based elections , instead of looking for those people who want to serve community

the number of candidates mostly reflects the interest and concern of the local community. Community spirited councillors primarily concern themselves with direct ratepayer issues but the success of a council and delivery of services requires greater business acumen, people with those skills mostly don't get elected or are not motivated to stand because of the political environment at the local level.

The number of council meetings might put people off of nominating, as well as the committee and workshop meetings. Also the requirement to attend in person

The previous state government reduced the number of councillors per council, which dramatically increased workload. This has proved a major disincentive to people considering nomination.

the reason that people do not stand for local government is frustration. Elected members are not allowed to have much say or input into our local government. You have created a dynasty of local government. The elected people have very little say into the running of their council and are indeed threatened by the paid staff! It has been made too hard to hold paid staff accountable for their actions.

The reports of how badly councillors behave must surely put people off. So penalties should be imposed for poor behaviour, being intentionally offensive to other elected members.

The requirements in the members primary return is unreasonable. To ask for personal financial details of extended family members is definitely stopping people from nominating. Some councillors even resign when they realise what they have to disclose in the is return.

This needs to be pointed out to people before they nominate.

The seemingly archaic bureaucratic and restrictive nature of how council meetings are run and the amount of jargon is not conducive to attracting candidates in a modern society. There is still good rationale for face-to-face meetings but in regional areas it could be reduced to 50/50 to reduce costs (mileage, meals etc) and carbon footprint.

The structure of local government is such that elected council is symbolic. The head of the council controls council decision making not the mayor or elected members. The structure needs to more closely reflect state and federal government departments. The lack of professional skills or knowledge of elected members in many instances makes this impossible. Quality, well vetted candidates are needed.

The time commitments need to be outside of working hours, this allows representations from those working within the community that need to work to earn a living, but are unable to commit to meetings during business hours.

There are some specific customs that I want to change in my council, such as the formality of having to stand up when you speak in a meeting. I think this is unnecessarily formal and parliamentary, and may discourage people from speaking in a meeting if they are unsure or have mobility issues. If council meetings are seen by the public as more casual (while still maintaining structure and professionalism), they may be seen as more approachable and achievable if someone is considering running for council.

There need to be more women involved in local government. For some women the after hours nature of meetings makes it impossible, so it is a structural barrier to their involvement. Perhaps it is the civic minded people who are interested yet do not nominate that need to be quizzed about why they are not getting involved. As there are also negative ramifications to stepping up such as online trolls, threats etc. this needs to be openly discussed and there needs to be policy to protect elected members.

There needs to be a great ability for people to voice dissent, currently you have to support whatever the Council position is. Parliamentarians do not need to do this so why should Councillors? We should be able to voice our dissent as an individual Councillor. The restrictions on doing all written business through Council email makes it difficult in the days of social media.

There should be more protection for elected members (and candidates) from certain elements of the community. Whilst genuine democracy demands that no one be excluded, unfortunately there are some individuals who behave in a manner that is unacceptable. This includes conspiracy theorists, or individuals motivated by a personal grievance. Democracy should be robust, but the potential for elected members to be abused, threatened or asked to respond to simply ridiculous accusations would be a clear deterrent.

There should be the option for Council's to consider electronic attendance, accompanied by specific criteria and limitations, including:

- The requirement to be on camera throughout the session. If the camera is turned off or out of view, it should be treated as if the member has left the room, with the duration of absence recorded until their return. This applies to information briefing sessions as well, emphasising respect for other members, attendees, and presenters, rather than merely being recorded as present.
- Security and confidentiality of discussions held in confidence can be more challenging in a virtual setting. Therefore, electronic attendance should be limited to public agenda items only.
- If a mix of council members attend remotely and in person, potential disparities among members could affect communication and collaboration within the council.
- While a single member attending remotely is straightforward, complications arise when multiple

members attend remotely without dedicated technical equipment at the Council Chamber and each member's respective location. Issues with sound/camera priority and determining the point at which a meeting transitions from 'in-person' or 'hybrid' to fully remote need careful consideration

There will never be a system which suits all prospective candidates, for meetings or otherwise. This is best left to councils to decide which is the best fit for their incumbent team of members.

They need to be flexible enough to accommodate people's circumstances. For example: shift work, child care responsibilities, access to transport, disability inclusion, cultural considerations.

Time limits or at least notifying members of expected long meetings

Too long, too many operational issues, lack of respect for the Mayor, improve behaviour of Council Members

Training of younger people to participate. Maybe starting a youth council with minimal say, to learn to debate and understand local governance.

Transparency and honesty in how many hours are required and general expectations.

Unfortunately I feel like the perception is that councillors are a bunch of fuddy duddy's or angry advocates. That's not the case for many that I've met, but people in my peer group feel council is very irrelevant or insignificant (until something goes wrong!)

Unfortunately many potential suitable candidates with financial and business skills are busy trying to manage their own business operations. This has been made even more difficult during the economic downturn.

Unfortunately political parties have resorted to using local government to test run personalities before allowing them to step into state sphere. The many competing agendas other than the business at heart are a turn off to putting your hand up.

Unsure

Unsure - after being part of councils for 5 election cycles - not sure that there is anything that could change the people standing for council - they are either there to represent one issue only or want to do good for the whole community.

The lack of understanding between their strategic role and the day to day operations of the council is the main issue with most Council Members wanting to determine the paint colours of benches or where trees are planted is the bigger issue

Varying views have been expressed:

- There could be, but if you really want to participate you will do so.
- Information briefing sessions should be recorded so Councillors who work shift work can still participate. Noting: - Contrast with commentary that meetings should only be held in the evenings, in business hours means only retired and business owners can become elected members which means less representation.

Varying views were expressed:

- No

- Yes - to enable flexibility for shift workers. We want greater diversity.
- Some capacity for electronic attendance, but with criteria/limitations

Varying views have been expressed:

- Integrity matters.
 - For formal council meetings should be on camera the whole time (except toilet). When camera off should be counted as if you have left room (recorded in minutes until video is back). For information briefing sessions no need for such formal rules. Audio only should be fine.
 - Ensuring the security and confidentiality of discussions held in confidence can be more challenging in a virtual environment.
 - If only some council members attend remotely and the rest in person, it may create disparities among members, potentially affecting communication and collaboration within the council.
 - Complications increase the more members attend remotely without dedicated fit for purpose technical equipment. A single member attending remotely is relatively straightforward, second and subsequent members attending remotely creates issues with sound/camera priority, and at what point should a meeting cease being in-person/hybrid and become fully remote. What are the public's expectations to 'attend' a Council meeting in-person if ALL members and administration are attending/hosting virtually? Is it still a requirement to 'host' the public in the Council Chamber with all Members viewable on a video screen? Do staff/officers also need to be able to be seen and heard by the public, or only by Members?
- Varying views have been expressed:

- Yes, the community needs to know that their council members are physically present in their local area for the majority of time.
- A limit on the number of times a year (not subsequent as that doesn't work for people who might be travelling). Perhaps an electronic meeting attendance is counted as if you were not there for the purposes of the three meetings in a row you can't miss.
 - There should be clear guidelines and protocols for remote attendance to address technical issues, ensure security, and maintain the integrity of council meetings.
- online attendance not counted toward attendance (i.e. online attendance should be treated as absence without leave for purpose of s51(3)(d) – unless leave granted by Council at prior meeting)
- if 'not in 'seat' should not be entitled to vote (i.e. electronic attendance for information and discussion, but not to vote)
- Not for confidential matters
- must be visible AND audible and clearly express a vote Council's should retain the discretion to allow electronic attendance at s41 committees and s42-43 subsidiary meetings, and information and briefing sessions, but not for confidential matters.

Yes, • Members not paying attention as they would in a meeting. • Difficulty with clarity when voting is a challenge for presiding members. • Connection – clarity of picture and sound. • There are obviously challenges, but there are benefits which is increased involvement and Councillors remaining in the loop vs being excluded due to illness, holiday, work etc. • Hybrid meetings proved the most difficult from a technical (audio/video) perspective, as even those in physical attendance needed to be 'virtual' in order to be 'seen and heard' by other members and on the livestream. • Clarity in regard to legislative requirements (or there not being any/proposed) is necessary to assist with specifications, and ensuring investments in Chamber technology meets requirements and does not become redundant with a change in regulation.

When you nominate you should understand the commitment that will be required to fulfill your duties as a member of Council.

While live streamed council meetings is great for those with mobility or other reasons, to have councillors online and in the room can create issues with debate and even more concerning confidentiality during those items. This needs to be explored more for participation of councillors. For the general public it is a great idea - but you do miss out on the atmosphere and being able to see everyone's reactions to things - most streaming cameras will focus on the member talking. This encourages them to all talk more to get their moments of fame.

While there may be circumstances when Councillors cannot attend in person, attendance in person should be the norm. This allows the community to observe the conduct of meetings and the behaviour of individual councillors and judge this appropriately.

Who really cares. We need less Councils and Councillors and that way will get better candidates for the fewer positions. At moment it's rather like a whole lot of local little social clubs.

With the rise of groups such as Sovereign Citizens many people are cautious about standing for Council, allowing members to attend meetings via electronic means may increase feelings of safety. Electronic attendance would also allow members who are unwell or injured to attend online.

Yes, more visibility and more communication. More information on what is involved in becoming a council member.

Yes, remove councillors altogether.

Yes, see my notes above in Q 14. Also there are many active local volunteer organisations, with people experienced in local matters such as environment, social welfare, refugees, local businesses, and these organisations tend to attract diverse age groups and many women. But they would require seeing proposals that sit well with them and go beyond the remit of local sporting clubs etc. So cultural/social considerations by councils would attract a wider group of possible candidates.

Yes, there needs to a criteria and guidelines to regulate the number of meetings electronically. At the moment, technology still has its limitations There is still good rationale for face-to-face meetings but in regional areas it could be reduced to 50/50 to reduce costs (mileage, meals etc) and carbon footprint. Some older Mayors may struggle with technology so training would be critical to the success of this.

You cannot hold council meetings during business hours. You will rule out people who work fulltime. I know a council member using her RDOs and annual leave to attend meetings and events. Electronic participation by council members should not be allowed - you don't know who is in the room with them. Too risky for quorum.

I support the idea of encouraging flexibility in meeting times, and offering electronic options, as a means of lowering barriers to participation for councillors and constituents. However, I would caution against prescriptions in the Act for meeting times, due to the large distances faced in regional areas.

Less racism, less misogyny, less bullying, less focus on right leaning politics and smearing the reputation of community members who call this behaviour out

You need to hold face to face meetings to get appropriate feedback. Councils are grossly inefficient efficient and The Act is out of date so are pretty much rearranging the deckchairs. State Government MUST have more direct control over councils to give them better credibility before you will get better candidates.

The high proportion of activities conducted after hours i.e., in the evening or weekends is difficult for people with young families.

Elected Member allowance is not sufficient to reduce paid working hours which may result in people in full time paid work not nominating.

Elected Members are not afforded the benefits of being an employee including the provision under the WHS Act. Whilst Councils' can purchase insurance products through membership of the LGA MLS to cover certain Elected Member liabilities, they are unable to provide traditional employee benefits.

Council preference is that meetings are held face to face. This allows for better and more efficient and effective decision making. However, the option to meet electronically during extraordinary times such as pandemic, extreme weather, etc. is supported

I believe that in specific cases council meetings should be able to be attended electronically, for instance if a member is interstate travelling to work and has the ability and time to be on electronically at a specific time this will meet the obligation as an active council member.

Other consideration is for elected members home on maternity leave with a newborn.

During as previous, if having covid and at home isolating, basically special instances as these.

This if legislated should not be used as an excuse to find ways to electronically attend meetings and should have a capped limit on how many times one can do this,(include with the discretion of CEO/Mayor.)

It is highly recommended and important that council meetings otherwise be held in person in the chamber, this will help develop team building between the elected members and also assists the people in the gallery to listen to the debate and are aware how decisions are made in managing their rates as rate payers.

It is highly desirable that meetings be in the evenings, with most of the elected members having day jobs, it is at a time (7pm) to give them time to return home from work and head to the civic centre for the council meeting. I understand that some rural councils have their meetings during business hours, but that will not work in town as most elected members have day jobs.

Meeting Procedures need to be in place

Behavioural Issues

In relation to elements of council business that might put people off nominating, Council believes the issue is more likely to be around how 'time poor' many in the community are (due to work, family, volunteering commitments etc) – adding to that may be seen as an impost – rather than the actual time of the meetings.

In relation to the use of electronic meeting opportunities, while Council believes the preference would always be face-to-face, there could be some flexibility to allow for some meetings to be held electronically. A code of practice could be in place to ensure this is done appropriately.

There are WHS issues for Council Members and employees attending night time meetings, in regional areas in particular. Councillors in more remote areas can travel more than 50km to attend a Council meeting at night time in areas where kangaroos, deer etc often jump out onto roads.

At times of the year critical for Council Members who are farmers (e.g. harvest, seeding etc) it could also provide them with an opportunity to attend a meeting remotely rather than put in an apology.

Electronic meetings during COVID were not ideal but did run efficiently.

As described above, a Code of Practice should be developed around the use of electronic meetings. Consideration should also be given on ways in which to manage 'drop outs' from unreliable internet – a more common issue in regional areas.

Council believes that, ideally, face to face would be the norm for meetings and supports limitations.

Position: Yes, but in limited capacity

While electronic attendance of Council meetings provides for a much greater/flexible approach, there are a number of factors that can impact the effectiveness of a meeting. Consideration should be given to allowing limited circumstances for electronic meeting attendance to occur (eg. health/safety reasons). From the experience of Council, it is much more challenging to run a meeting (both from a technological perspective and governing the meeting itself) when held in hybrid form, particularly where a member may not be comfortable or fluent with technology. It is simpler to run a full electronic meeting, or full physical attendance meeting. Given the requirements of the meeting procedures, it is much more challenging to preside over a meeting or record matters required for the minutes (eg. when members leave the meeting without notification, how they vote etc), particularly when already needing to reference/access other documents electronically (eg. agendas, reports and meeting procedures). This becomes more challenging based on the number of members attending electronically. Having said this, it was achievable during COVID, but required greater staff resourcing to monitor online attendance activity.

Position: Establish limited circumstances for this to occur

Consideration should be given to allowing limited circumstances for electronic meeting attendance to occur, which may include:

- health/safety reasons (not illness) – that may impact the ability for a member to physically attend
- interstate or overseas travel – whereby a member may have the opportunity to provide the meeting their full attention at their location, while not being physically present
- minimum technical requirements (to be met by the member) – to allow for sufficient interaction with the meeting (eg. noting video heavily impacts bandwidth as was evident during COVID)
- acknowledging electronic disruption may occur that may limit a members attendance (eg. meeting doesn't stop to wait for them to reconnect if internet connection is lost)
- presiding members cannot attend electronically.

It should be noted that there are also other factors which are impacted by electronic attendance (should this be the primary mode for a members attendance). Interaction/building relationships with colleagues is a large part of being a council member and has the potential to be impacted.

From the experience of Council, it is much more challenging to run a meeting (both from a technological perspective and governing the meeting itself) when held in hybrid form, particularly where a member may not be comfortable or fluent with technology. It is simpler to run a full electronic meeting, or full physical attendance meeting. Given the requirements of the meeting procedures, it is much more challenging to preside over a meeting or record matters required for the minutes (eg. when members leave the meeting without notification, how they vote etc), particularly when already needing to reference/access other documents electronically (eg. agendas, reports and meeting procedures). This becomes more challenging based on the number of members attending electronically. Having said this, it was achievable during COVID, but required greater staff resourcing to monitor online attendance activity.

Some councils may need additional process support to establish appropriate systems.

Consideration of Councils' existing Code of Practice for Meeting Procedures in respect to hybrid Committee meeting processes could support legislation for this matter. Additional considerations that will need to be factored include investment in

further technology to enable partial electronic participation seamlessly and management of ensuring confidentiality that online conversations are not overheard by unintended parties when Members are not present in the Council Chamber.

Time commitments to undertake the role properly and the lack of privacy were the main elements discussed that could discourage people from nominating for council

The general consensus was that under certain specified circumstances, members should be given the option to participate in meetings electronically. The determination of the specific circumstances permitting attendance electronically should be at each council's discretion. It is noted that chairing meetings with some Members online can be more challenging for the Mayor. It is also noted that there is generally better meeting participation when members are physically present

The Council resolved to support the enabling of electronic Council meetings to be conducted in extra ordinary circumstances.

The Council encourages discussion on how the Local Government Act can be amended to create greater flexibility to hold online meetings in extraordinary circumstances. Whilst only one option, during the height of COVID-19 it was demonstrated that on-line meetings are an effective and efficient way to conduct Council meetings. Changes to legislation to enable these arrangements warrants consideration as a way to best protect staff, elected members and well-intentioned members of the public from the impacts of protests.

We are seeking further flexibility to balance the requirement for public meetings and to ensure a safe working environment. This could include the provision to conduct meetings online as occurred during COVID 19.

This Council does not support attendance at Council Meetings electronically. However, this should be at the discretion of individual Councils.

For those Councils who choose to allow Council Members to attend some Council Meetings electronically, robust governance systems would be required to be in place and Elected Members would need to provide assurance to abide by those systems.

Whilst this is certainly achievable, as stated previously the value of Elected Members meeting face-to-face and interacting with each other and staff prior to, during and after Council Meetings cannot be underestimated.

These interactions are crucial in terms of working together and building positive relationships.

We believe that the ability to attend Council meetings online if unable to be present in person would greatly benefit the Council and elected members.

The successful move to electronic meeting attendance during the COVID-19 emergency proved not only the importance of such an alternative but also communities' interest in a livestream/recording of meetings.

None of us like missing a Council meeting and we have in the past been disappointed to be unable to attend electronically when away on unavoidable commitments. Enabling attendance electronically would support good decision making, ensuring everyone's voice is heard. It would also support elected member relationships by working together in more meetings than would otherwise be possible.

We note the discussion paper's comments around assuring communities that their council members are physically present in their local area, for at least a good proportion of time and agree with the importance of this. We suggest that provisions around in person attendance at meetings could be similar to those around leave of absence in Section 54(1)(d) of the Local Government Act 1999, that is no more than

three ordinary meetings being attended online per 12 months period.

We have all participated in the virtual space since at least the global pandemic and are well versed in meeting procedure and governance matters. We have previously put processes in place to ensure that these can be maintained when meeting in the virtual space and are not aware of any actual concerns arising while the Act and Regulations had been temporarily adjusted to allow this to occur.

Although personal attendance at Council meetings should be the 'default position', Council Members should be able to attend a Council meeting remotely where there are impediments to attending in person. This option should be granted at the discretion of the Mayor in consultation with the CEO.

Elements of council business that might put people off nominating include:

Time commitment

Remuneration to time, effort and other sacrifices like family friends, fitness

Bullying and Harassment

Meetings at night time

Training and Support

If meetings are held during the day e.g.: Section 41 then Council Members should be compensated if they need to take off time from paid employment.

What happens is that the Council Members with full time employment take on less committees and the semi-retired or unemployed Council Members end up doing all the committees that meet in working hours. If Council Members were compensated for this extra time then it would reduce the resentment that some Council Members just turn up for a Council meeting once a week and do not contribute during the week. Payment for these Council committees should be equitable.

Yes council members should be able to attend some council meetings electronically. They should also be able to attend Committee meetings electronically.

Council members should not ordinarily attend council meetings electronically, however an exemption should be possible for certain circumstances – Council to approve each exception in accordance with an act provision, examples such as:

FIFO workers

Health issues

To ensure the enabling of a quorum.

Connectivity issues and expensive, yet unreliable technology, small councils do not have IT teams to resolve issues in a timely manner.

Lack of interaction is an example from COVID-19 council meetings that demonstrated a challenge

Yes, elements such as the timing of council business may deter people from nominating. This would largely be due to the individual's work/family/study circumstance. Barriers to nominating may include:

- In-flexible working arrangements in their substantive position that may preclude their attendance at information sessions or meetings scheduled within work hours.
- Inability to access to childcare for day-time or after-hours activities
- Limited availability due to the observance of routine transportation i.e. school pick up.
- Time of Council planned activities i.e. day time meetings
- Low pay for the hours required
- Inability to attend activities via livestreaming (i.e. Council meeting attendance required to be in-person_

Whilst the flexibility to allow participation by electronic means has its benefits, there are also challenges which arise where meetings are conducted entirely electronically (i.e. meaningful and timely debate, involvement of community in deputations etc). This decision is best left to individual councils to suit their needs.

Internet coverage is limited in regional communities.

Cost of IT assets, IT training and capability of individuals, internet reliability / access in regions, staff resourcing (skills), confidentiality implications, ability to work within meeting procedures, FOI and other impacts, recording of staff or members of public. Would need to modify meeting procedures to enable broader participation, confidential orders etc.

There should certainly be some limitations on electronic participation, however this should be left to individual councils to determine as appropriate.

Restrictions for electronic participation when Council considers confidential orders (to ensure verification / control of participation).

The benefit is obviously improved flexibility, members can attend even when physically away from the region, members of the public can view from home etc.

The challenges include a far higher burden on staff and presiding members to manage meeting procedures, facilitate debate, ensure smooth operation of meeting, at home behaviour in a less formal environment etc.

Whether the public (and other Members) have expectations of members being 'present' in the Council area and 'attending' meetings, either in person or virtually, raises important questions. If all members (and administration) attend or host virtually, does it still meet the public's expectation? Additionally, does the Council still need to maintain a public gallery in Chambers? If not, how can members of the public without computer/internet access access meetings, especially considering that libraries with internet access are typically closed during evening Council meetings? Lastly, should staff/officers also be visible and audible to members and/or the public in a virtual setting?

Key considerations for remote attendance include whether Members should be both visible and audible, with a clear expression of votes. Councils should continue to have the discretion to permit electronic attendance at Section 41 committees, Section 42-43 subsidiary meetings, as well as information and briefing sessions, excluding (or with particular requirements around) those involving confidential matters. In anticipation of any proposed legislative requirements, clarity is essential to assist with specifications, ensuring that investments in Chamber technology meet future needs and do not become obsolete due to a simple change in regulations.

When members nominate, it is crucial for them to understand the commitment required to fulfill their duties on the Council, whether that includes physical attendance to actively participate in debates with their peers.

Whilst acknowledging the needs for regional councils to be different, it is Council's view that presence in person is critical to be able to properly participate in the debate and have the best meeting experience. In addition, for confidential agenda items, online attendance can present challenges.

Council does not support electronic Council meetings as it presents too many challenges as listed above.

Meeting times and dates are a consideration for people considering nominating. Addressing this issue requires a localised approach whereby councils have the flexibility to tailor meeting times and dates to

suit the needs of their council and community.

Elected members training is a positive step to build core skills in civic responsibility and personal development and this training may assist navigate the lack of understanding about the role and responsibilities of elected members.

People with families will always have competing priorities and the significant lack of child care options rurally (including after school care) will impact those with families nominating.

Council does not support electronic attendance at council meetings. Attendance in person for council meetings is important for the integrity of the process and meeting and more robust and effective decisions are made when all members are in the same room.

Council does however note the ability of technology and suggest electronic attendance should be limited to extraordinary circumstances only, being when:

a) local or wider community emergencies are being experienced that require an emergency meeting to be held at short notice or the emergency restricts the ability of members to move freely throughout the district;

b) other extenuating circumstances are identified and agreed to prior to the meeting by the Mayor and CEO, with an explanation provided in the public minutes explaining the reasoning for that agreement.

Other issues for electronic attendance have been mentioned previously and are:

- Unreliability of the network and connectivity, particularly in rural areas.
- Inability to ensure security and confidentiality of public excluded discussions.
- In/Ability for members to be heard on an item in which they raised their hand when attending virtually

The timing of council meetings does have an impact on some, but the workload associated with the role of a council member, in addition to other commitments such as paid employment, family commitments, study and other responsibilities would have more impact on preventing people from nominating to stand for council.

The ability of unreasonable and vexatious complainants to target specific members deliberately and repeatedly needs to be reduced.

If you are a Council Member and you live more than 100km from the Council Chambers, you should be able to participate in meetings electronically e.g via Zoom

In certain, prescribed circumstances electronic attendance for council members should be permitted.

Some circumstances that may warrant electronic attendance being permitted could include:

- If a member has an illness or injury or caring for an ill family member preventing in person attendance at the physical meeting venue, but they are willing and able to participate remotely through electronic means.
- If a member is away due to travel out of the council area (council or non-council business) but has the ability to participate remotely.
- If you reside more than 100km from the Council Chambers

Only occasionally when reasonable circumstances prohibit them from attending eg they are interstate or in a regional area or unwell. Covid was an example requiring special decision making as everyone needed to attend but not infect each other so online was the only option

Stronger framework around behavioural standards to prevent bullying, subliminal coercion and cronyism behaviours

It shouldn't be generally allowable, but should be an option for councillors in certain circumstances. If attending electronically, the councillor's video should be on so that they are visible to the others in the meeting. In any given meeting, 75% or more of the attendees should be present in person

Visibility, cost of video conferencing technology and chambers layout, required criteria (code of practice) for attending via video link (notice requirements, and etiquette). Audience should be able to see all members. Bandwidth/internet connection or technical ability/limitations of councillors may affect the running of meetings.

Chairing the meeting and taking minutes can be more difficult in a virtual or partially virtual environment. Interruptions to the video feed may affect decision making and hearing what is being said, moving venues becomes more difficult when there is a technical set-up required

Time commitment for attending meetings, as well as being available to the public may influence a person's decision to nominate. The amount of reading and consideration required to perform their duties

There are positive and negative arguments that can be advanced with electronic attendance at a council meeting.

Yes and No.

There may be valid reasons why a councillor cannot attend a meeting in person, but generally it is desirable that all councillors attend in person to foster debate, discussion and inter-personal relationships.

The discussion of confidential matters would be difficult with electronic meetings as it would be impossible to guarantee that no one else was in hearing or viewing range.

However, perhaps an allowance of 2 or 3 meetings a year per councillor could be permitted for valid reasons such as parental duties or working away from home

Be livestreamed with effective audio, visual and documents or motions being contemporaneously published to enable public participation and understanding of proceedings, and the livestream record subsequently being publicly available

Be public and in person; held at times that enable the public to be in attendance and be informed as proceedings progress; and be structured to engender public participation and understanding of proceedings (extraordinary circumstances excepted; and a council in a remote area may be in a different practical circumstance).

Be outside of general work, business and home/household management hours unless there is unanimous agreement of all elected members for an ensuing 12 months

Be permitted to be held at other than a usual location within the area being governed

Rarely be permitted to be in confidence (i.e. circumstance must be extraordinary and outside of the usual matter, business or processes of the council, e.g. .corporation requiring a decision concerning personal finances, health or circumstances of a ratepayer or person).

We consider that hybrid meetings do not work, with some councillors meeting online and the rest in-person in the Chamber, other than in extenuating circumstances (e.g. a pandemic; inaccessible venue for an elected member). We also believe council meetings should be moved and rotated to different towns/suburbs from time to time to encourage constituents to attend and to reflect that within many councils there can be a diversity of local priorities.

We do not agree with being electronically connected and socially/community disconnected, which we believe would be the antithesis of effective and representative local governance. Meeting electronically may be convenient but does nothing for engendering collegiality, discussion, and debate that comes from community, elected members and administrative staff conversing in-person at the meeting place. We consider they should be at the 'same place at the same time' to engender face-to-face communication and discourse within a public context

Yes, there may be circumstances this is appropriate and should be able to be determined by the Council itself. At a minimum, it is an important step to improve inclusion of those wishing to nominate who may not be able to attend every meeting in person for a variety of reasons - for example, living with chronic health condition, living with disability, caring duties etc.

It is also important however that structures are in place to support leadership and 'acting' opportunities for fellow Elected Members. For example, if a Presiding Member never takes leave (chooses to join a meeting electronically if physically unable to for example), their Deputy will never get the opportunity to act in the role. This is not good succession planning and could lead to inequity of leadership and growth opportunities for all Elected Members.

It is felt that becoming an Elected Member is a semi-professional commitment, that will require attendance and participation in many daytime activities, including but not limited to, workshops, training, online sessions, consultation, ceremonies as well as official meetings. Diversity and inclusion is encouraged, but requirements of the significant position and demands that go with that role should not be ignored. For this reason, day meetings should not have a major impact on the nominations to Council. Evening meetings may also provide disincentive to small business owners who may already be judged by the decisions they make in smaller communities impacting their business as a whole.

Electronic meeting attendance should be an option available to Elected Members but only in extenuating circumstances and not as a readily available option when the Member can attend in person. It may also be an option for consideration when conducting a special meeting which is expected to run for a short period only and the travel required by elected members to attend in person becomes impractical. It increases attendance at meetings in the event someone is unable to attend in person because of extenuating circumstances for example inclement weather, or other urgent commitments.

Reliability of technology, software used, and internet/connectivity needs to be considered to ensure access is available if required to enable Elected Members to attend if choosing this option. Protocols should be put in place for an open and accountable process i.e., electronic attendees must be able to be seen and heard at all times when they are in attendance. Attendance electronically should be based on the circumstances as opposed to limiting the number of times a member can attend in this format although it may be worth considering a limit of face-to-face attendances required per year.

The meeting process is particularly difficult if the Mayor or Chair of the meeting is attending electronically. It is challenging to monitor both attendees face to face and electronically in a hybrid situation and ensuring everyone votes accordingly and has the opportunity to have their say. It becomes challenging when viewing items on the screen as part of the meeting process. Complications arise when the meeting goes into camera in how it is determined that no one else is in the meeting in the case of virtual attendance.

There needs to be specific guidelines in place if electronic meetings are introduced to ensure the integrity of Local Government is not questioned

Given the extraordinary breadth of services and activities councils undertake, and the time needed to be up to speed on multiple facets of the organisation, it is possible that people may be put off from nominating for council.

Council holds briefings with its members at least twice a month, which generally take up the majority of the nominated day. This does not take into account committee meetings, council meetings or external meetings that also require Council Member attendance. The sheer volume of briefings and meetings held (to ensure members are well-informed) is likely a deterrent to people who work full-time or are primary caregivers.

It is the general agreement of Council's members that an ability to be able to attend 1-2 ordinary/special meetings per year would be beneficial in providing members with an alternative means of attendance that might otherwise have prompted them not to attend – sometimes putting meetings at risk of achieving quorum.

Another option may be to restrict electronic attendance to special council meetings only. Allowing members to attend too many meetings electronically could present a risk of not being able to build a 'team' rapport between members and increases difficulties around navigating technology.

If council meetings are to be conducted electronically, then some stipulations/training around how to manage confidential discussions also needs to be carefully considered. COVID-19 demonstrated that it is difficult for the presiding member to ensure that members who are taking part online, are actually in a space where they can discuss confidential items.

There is also the issue of ensuring the audio-video technology and internet connection is working correctly – it can be difficult to troubleshoot issues while a council meeting is underway.

No, I do not support council members being able to attend council meetings electronically.

In terms of elected member attendance via electronic means, this should be broadened and be more flexible but also protected from overuse/abuse. For example if an elected member is unwell and doesn't want to attend in person but could participate from home, or if they are on leave or travelling, in limited circumstances, and when reasonable, there should be more flexibility for them to do so.

Council members should have the option to attend certain council meetings electronically. With permission from the Presiding Member, they could attend up to four meetings per year remotely. Embracing electronic participation aligns with the contemporary landscape of technological progress and evolving work dynamics. This approach not only fosters accessibility and inclusivity but also reflects a commitment to adaptability in local governance. By facilitating remote attendance, councils can accommodate members facing geographical constraints, mobility challenges, or scheduling conflicts, thereby ensuring a broader spectrum of voices in decision-making processes. Additionally, leveraging electronic means can streamline operations, reducing travel-related time and expenses

Topic 2: More local promotion (2.3)

Let prospective councillors know they will receive significant training and support. And counselling. Some people can be real pricks these days, scaring off people that in their heart want to do what is right for their community. We must protect these and let them know we have their back. Those are the people we want, not the snake who is in it for the cash.

"you don't need long white socks, walk shorts and a cricket umpires's hat to be a councilor anymore!"
Animation: "they" should fix it (examples of local government jurisdiction problems)...wait a minute - why they, why not ME! There's lots we can do for global warming - and it's all local, stand up and be counted

with the decision makers! A campaign that gets to school gates, school newsletters, workplaces etc and finds hard to reach audiences, people with disability, women, migrants.

* a better pre- training & educational programme. * If community organisations reps are on Council Committees they often learn a lot more about Councils & LG.

1. Conduct information sessions to educate potential nominees about the roles, responsibilities, and benefits of serving as a councillor. These sessions can provide valuable insights and address common questions and concerns.
2. Implement a targeted social media campaign using engaging content, such as videos, infographics, and testimonials, to reach a wider audience and spark interest in standing for the council.
3. Engage with community organisations, local businesses and other stakeholders to promote councillor nominations and encourage individuals from diverse backgrounds to consider running for office.
4. Develop initiatives to engage young people and students in the political process, such as youth councils, mentorship programs, or educational campaigns that highlight the importance of civic participation and encourage young individuals to consider standing for council in the future. This could even include topics on democracy in the school curriculum.
5. Create interactive platforms, such as online forums, Q&A sessions, or town hall/institute meetings, where potential nominees can connect with current councillors, ask questions, and learn more about the councillor role and responsibilities.

a campaign that showed the outcomes of being an elected member

a community forum to discuss

Actively engage ALL local media, not just the mass media. There are community radio stations, blogs, community social media pages. micro-news businesses. I get this is really time heavy but the LGA could compile a proper log of all local media available and make it available to every council so they don't have to do the extra work. Most local Councils know who to reach out to but sometimes they miss some.

Actually I am a bit ignorant as to how they get people to run. I don't think they go to groups asking people to apply though. They should probably send out a request for nominees to all the community groups out there

Advertise how the new changes to Local Government in SA support young people to run for Local Government.

Advertising inserts with rates notices and email

Advertising on social media

Again, why are we obsessing about encouraging more people to stand? Have we really got a problem here?

There are many in my LG area who see how much work is required to satisfy the community and this may be a reason for not putting their hand up. Of course, making it a career move with associated pay would address that but is that what we want?

Allow candidates to be endorsed by political parties because they can organise campaigns better. Provide each candidate a \$500 social media advertising budget to help connect with the local community when running as a candidate.

Allow scope for publication of candidate responses to a set of Question and Answer submission relating to locally specific issues or opportunities approved by the Council CEO.

Ask newer Councillors to share their stories., not long standing incumbants.

At least go in to the schools and conduct proper education sessions in the community

at the last election there promotion material put together enrolling, nominating and voting. The message was lost in the general nature of the material and not eye catching. Voluntary voting requires motivation on issues of greater concerns which normally motives to prevent some form of change so primarily candidates that have reactive agendas are interested, those who feel disempowered or not overly concerned see no need to be involved.

Attend town committee meetings.

Campaigns to encourage community involvement should be politically free.

Candidates should be required to make a Statutory Declaration that the contents of their endorsed promotional material are true.

Centrally regulated through the Electoral Commission provides neutrality and less discrimination

Clean the corruption and honest people who want to engage with community might actually stand forth. No promotional campaign will attract intelligent honest people to the corrupt Councils.

clear information about the role of a councillor, length of time needed, expectations

Clearer explanation on the role, commitment and responsibilities of council members and local government.

Could we use Digital Humans/mascots to create innovative ways to interact with communities that look and sound like the communities (they are often multilingual)

Council based sessions about the role and conduct of elected members ought to be conducted by a knowledgeable third party, e.g., an educative arm of the LGA and ECSA to avoid any apprehension that a council corporation seeks a change in the elected members of its council.

Council elections are already well advertised. Any additional investment into the promotion of council elections must be balanced against the perceived benefits and must be carefully planned to include a mix a of all groups that reflect the community at large.

Council elections should be run in conjunction with state parlement elections. One lot of voting for both. Reduces election costs but should also enourage more votes and attention to local gov elections. So many elected members get in because of minimal numbers of votes. It os insane that people who get 10 odd votes can then make decisions that effect 1000s

Councillors should only be allowed to be on council for 2 terms it seems hard for new people with a fresh outlook to get on councils

Councilors should be non-political.

Councils and Boards are a necessary evil to be negotiated in the running of many government and private organisations. Perhaps its time to come up with new ways for allowing stake holders to get their views and concerns aired direct with the people charged with the actual day to day running. There is considerable potential for great savings and efficiencies to be gained by making the governing practices more streamlined and less time consuming and getting rid of panels and boards might be a good first step.

Councils contribute funds to the Electoral Commission of SA (via non-discretionary election cost contributions) and the Local Government Association (through member contributions) to support election promotion and initiatives. Individual councils play a limited role in shaping the content and delivery of these initiatives. The relative value of broad, centralised/state promotion versus targeted local initiatives is challenging for individual councils to measure. However, voter turnout statistics suggest that increased promotion/initiatives, apart from compulsory voting, may have diminishing benefits.

To potentially have a more significant impact, a focus on creating engaging election voting materials that inspire voters to promptly complete and return voting papers could be explored. Online voting, particularly when utilising media platforms for voting reminders/links, might encourage higher participation, especially from younger cohorts that are currently believed to have lower participation in local government elections.

A crucial aspect involves candidates' self-promotion. If candidates can motivate voters to support them, and the voting/return process is streamlined, this could have a more substantial impact at a lesser cost to the Council and the community.

One aspect not considered is the potential merit of more directive structural options. It is common for statutory bodies, such as boards and committees, to have minimum criteria ensuring a diverse mix of skills or experiences. Implementing key skills mixes or minimum representations (quotas) could promote increased diversity and level the playing field for under-represented groups. While predetermined skills mixes may not be feasible in the current representative democracy model, they could be compatible with alternative models like liquid democracy.

The discussion paper overlooks the impact of trust, reputation, and the views of the state government on the attractiveness of standing for local government. Approaches such as cost-cutting, resource-shifting, and devaluing the sector through public criticism, instead of a collaborative problem-solving approach, contribute to increased pressure and the devaluation of the sector as a whole.

Councils could do more. We have to put up motions on notice to enable information sessions

Councils currently rely on LGA/ECSA promotion, and accept low turnout as something they have no control over. But participation in elections as candidates and as voters is an important part of civic life, and can have benefits for individual and community wellbeing. Local government therefore most certainly has a role in promoting, supporting, and building such participation. What can councils do? As the 'training ground for politics', many candidates in local elections are independents, with no prior exposure to political campaigning. They also often don't have significant resources to fund their own campaigns. As such, councils could hold 'meet your candidates' events; they could film and post campaign videos on the council site (perhaps using code to jumble the order of the videos randomly each visit); they could place candidate posters around the council area (this is important given the prohibition of posters on public land). The goal is to build awareness and momentum around the election among voters, and to enable them to get very good knowledge of the candidates' policy positions.

Councils should actively seek general members of community or community groups to nominate. Particularly people who are already engaged.

Councils should not have to use ratepayers' money to pay the Electoral Commission to run their council elections

Councils should stay at arm's length from the promotion so to remain neutral in the process and not to be seen to promote or target particular nominations.

Councils, as they currently set up, are not working in the interest of residents and ratepayers. There is a lot of discontent, particularly in the current economic climate, of how councils are spending our rates and responding to our issues. Maybe we should do away with councils altogether....

Currently the LGA undertakes promotion before council elections to encourage people to stand for election. Councils also provide funding to the Electoral Commissioner to run a promotional campaign to let people know the election is underway, and to encourage people to vote.

Demystify the process.

Digital / social media, posters in local gyms and Shopping centres

Direct mail, one month before nominations open, which states the remuneration and requirements. Currently, the advertising is based on a "doing your part" sort of rhetoric (mostly from the LGA) which caters to busybodies and politically inclined rather than more representative candidates.

Disband Council

Doing a great job.

Don't tell them how little the re-imburement is.

ECSA and LGA could run more advertising. This should however not be the role of the Council as they are somehow conflicted. Also targeted campaigns to focus on community leaders (sporting clubs, cultural associations, arts and music industry etc).

ECSA should focus on running a smart promotional campaign, targeting community leaders, sporting and cultural groups etc, with input from the LGA.

efforts to increase the prestige of being on council and taking steps to reduce the image of the job being for retirees and the independtly wealthy would assist. being a councillor should be viewed as a great way for young professionals and community leaders to get board level experience and serve the neighbourhood while advancing their career.

Elected member public talks about their role and what it is like to be on Council

Emphasis should be put on Community Involvement, rather than 'Standing in the Community'. Councils need 'ordinary' people to represent their residents.

Encourage transparency.

Encourage community members whom want better for their community not degree educated people whom are out for their own successful gain.

Encourage young people, people with disabilities, people from Culturally diverse backgrounds.

Encouraging more inclusive techniques and support for community members who want to nominate, pounding the pavement is not plausible for all members of the community to get the minimum number of names to elect.

Engagement with local government, and all government, starts in our schools. High school students need to be taught about the way our governments, court system etc work, and by teachers who have a deep understanding of the topic. Once people understand what the job is and isn't about, they'll be more likely to nominate.

engaging with schools, parents and friends committees often have a community focus and skilled people looking to make the world a better place for the next generation

engaging with representatives from community groups from different cultural backgrounds and ages to share information

using the internet, social media and offering translation into multiple languages

Ensuring that potential candidates are aware that they are representing the community - not themselves. An emphasis about community is required in any campaign to gain the right people.

Explain clearly the job requirements, the pay and privileges that come with the role. Encourage younger generations to participate. Provide training and professional development for councillors each year.

Explain the terms and conditions.

Do a snazzy campaign, telling them what they do, (meet, greet, represent community,) and how much people get paid.

People will be absolutely motivated by how much they will get for it. (even if I have advocated that it is not commensurate) 😊

Focus on real success stories of people that have run previously.

Focus on the good that Council does well rather than the negatives.

Formation of sub-committees headed by elected council members, but also including non-elected residents and ratepayers, provided that such groups are visible to the local community and openly broadcast.

Former members of councils to be available to provide advice/support for people wanting to nominate. They would have to be remunerated for their time. Or some other form of support.

General campaigns don't work - Councils vary too widely.

Generally, the last periodic local government elections were widely and consistently marketed in South Australia. Unfortunately, the selected marketing material lacked relevance and connection with genuine South Australian communities, felt by regional and rural communities disproportionately. Customised marketing which is relative to the circumstances of individual or grouped communities may improve engagement with a diverse demographic.

With all South Australian Mayors to be elected at large at the next election, a nomination for Mayor should not preclude the nominee from a nomination of Councillor. This is particularly important in regional and rural communities where experienced Councillors may be few and can be inadvertently lost by Council should their nomination for Mayor prove to be unsuccessful.

Given the elected body becomes the employer of a Council CEO – it would be inappropriate for CEOs to have a role in council elections

Going out of your way on promotional posters to show pictures almost exclusively of minorities is an over-correction and doesn't correlate with the everyday person's view of what an Elected Member looks like. I understand we want change and agree that a group of similar demographic does not make for quality decisions that represent all but the last election posters didn't connect.

Greater awareness at a State Level, including regions, as to the fact Council Elections are being held. This needs to be directed towards general awareness, encouraging people to nominate. Councils can better integrate into such campaigns at a local level and promote via established networks, eg social media, clubs and organizations.

Having existing councillors speak to groups in the community so that people know the support that is available if they are elected.

highlight service to the community

working collaboratively to advocate and promote improve benefits and services

Highlighting the impact that council decisions can have on residents would be helpful in showing potential candidates why taking part could be quite impactful

Hold more information sessions/displays where the people are. (Libraries, shopping centres, sporting centres). Don't ask them to come to a Council facility. Online is good.

I actually would like to see more education and understanding in education settings, particularly primary schools - this would have flow-on effects to better understanding when those children and young people become adults. More structured civics programs etc.

Many people seem to have a limited understanding of what council does.

I am a retiree from predominantly IT, TAFE and University senior administration sectors. I had retired to Adelaide from many years working interstate. I had an extensive sporting career and qualifications in this area. I therefore thought that I could contribute to my local Council.

I attended a councillor briefing session in August 2022. However I left the 2 hour session after 1 hour, thoroughly disappointed and disillusioned. My reasons were that much of what was presented could have been read online. I was greatly put off by the fact that prior to the election candidates were effectively recommended to engage with their ward constituents via functions, impractical for a new resident in the area, arrange personal promotional corflutes, provide a photo and a resume.

I considered that this was a great overreach for a Council election, more aligned to a state election. My suggestion is that a resume based on a provided template that all candidates complete, a professional photo session of all candidates at the Council be undertaken for consistency and quality of the photographs, that there be no public advertising as there is an inequity in a candidate's financial situation to letter-drop and provide visual promotion. The photograph and resume of each candidate could be posted online, placed in the Council building (despite recent removal of such information) and provided in hard-copy to those without computer access. This format would have encouraged me to strongly consider nomination.

I do not believe it is a lack of promoting the campaign, but more so the perception of Councils and Councillors that put people off.

I do not think promotional campaigns are the way to go for nominations. I think it should be more about interactions, what people are already doing within their local community and how we can support them and get behind them running for council.

I don't think any more is required. There is a huge amount of promotion on this.

I felt that what you do is very far reaching and encouraging. If anything maybe you could be more targeted towards local areas to make the campaigns more relatable to the people living in that council. For example in a farming area, have a photo of a farmer, or in a fishing district a photo of a fisherman etc.

People need to be able to relate and identify with the campaign for them to feel encouraged to nominate. This is done well when you know the demographic better.

I have never been made aware of the process how to nominate for council. It seems flyers start arriving in the letter box with nominees already decided.

Again greater transparency.

I think that the current campaign is more than adequate. The issues in terms of getting more people to nominate have nothing to do with the campaign in my opinion.

I think that the number 1 thing that made me want to nominate was the LGA's "Part of your everyday" campaign that explains what Councils actually do. I think this kind of thing is particularly important. A lot of young people care deeply about the Environment and don't know the impact things like waste management have on the Environment but this was a core part of what made me want to run for Council. I think testimonials could also be important even if it's from retiring Council members.

I think the issue is more that if we want to be councillors we have to promote ourselves and campaign like a political thing...

I think the LGA SA do a good job of this. But we need to be clear and transparent about the time commitment of being a councillor and in particular a Mayor. The allowances need to be increased to compensate people for their time and effort. Just reading a 300 page Council agenda can take hours.

I think we need to get more creative about the way we talk about the role of elected members and the opportunity to run for council. The current promotional materials from the LGA are very generic and don't elicited a great amount of excitement. I think Individual councils are limited in their ability to run promotional campaigns as they already paid a significant amount to the LGA to run a state wide campaign and have restrictions around ensuring they are not showing any preference to a particular nominee or ward. I'd really like to see more promotion targeted at young people, at community volunteers and community club representatives and at mums and dads. A large portion of our current candidates are people interested in a future political role who are aligned to a political party and people with a grievance with council. I don't think your general community members believes they have the knowledge and influence to hold the role.

Identify key stakeholder groups: sports clubs, Lions etc., schools, TAFE's: market directly to them for nominees

If promotional campaign targeted Resident associations, clubs and other groups, this would be encouraging for community members to nominate.

If you want quality candidates, you have to open the door to having discussions with and acknowledging communities of interest which are already active such as political parties, women's professional networks, LGBTIQ groups, Chambers of Commerce, cultural communities etc.

I'm immune to most forms of advertising and awareness raising as I don't watch the news or commercial television. Perhaps FB ads or street banners - they're the last 2 forms of advertising that manage to catch my attention. But at the end of the day, if I'm not inclined to see it as a civic duty worth doing, I won't nominate no matter how much or where anyone promotes it.

I'm sure there are media & marketing people with better ideas than me!

In regional councils – having Council briefings and even meetings in other towns would encourage the community to know what a Council meeting is like. Many are unaware and have never even seen a Council meeting when they are elected

Include in the suggested newsletter. Also all candidates should have the same opportunity to promote themselves. Too expensive for private individuals to do corflute's (which should be banned) and prepare flyers. Should prepare an official candidate list with picture, bio and any party affiliations which should be sent to all rate payers when candidates declared and 2 weeks before voting.

Information about commitment requirements and processes to nominate should be available well before council elections

Inserts with the rates notices, TV advertising, Email notifications

Instead of encouraging diversity of ethnic origin , promote diversity of thought

Interaction through peak bodies be other community groups is important. There are many people in these groups who would make great councillors if encouraged.

Issues:

Lack of investment in the time in between elections to increase civic engagement and education. State Parliament runs an education program yet there is no equivalent in local government. I understand the History Trust of South Australia and LGA SA recently released a range of resources for schools etc. to improve local government civics education. But such an initiative likely needs further funding and investment to 'breathe life into it' rather than leaving it to individual councils and sectors such as education to solely implement, which would take possibly decades take effect even if they do. This requires further state support to embed the approach systemic way in education sites and within councils, community groups etc.

Domination of major party politics within certain council areas enabling access to election resources the average everyday non-political party affiliated person might otherwise struggle to have access to. This can put the everyday person at a disadvantage when running in a council election.

There are little consequences for individuals that are not election candidates that may be low level harassing and attempting to intimidate those who have put their hand up to run. This takes a mental and wellbeing toll on candidates that is rarely discussed in public and may dissuade them from running again in future.

Costs to run a successful election campaign can be prohibitive. I was told recently that people should seek 'sponsors' however advice as such should be taken with caution as the candidate should be very clear on their values and potential future conflicts of interest in accepting campaign funds from donors.

Fear of inability to fund any litigation issues that may arise within an elected term or as part of nominating for election as there are no protections in place for Elected Members equivalent to 'Parliamentary Privilege' or for example 'Liability Insurance' available to Directors of Boards. This concern amongst some Elected Members is also impacting the acceptability of live streaming council meetings.

Lack of general leadership programs within community settings. These exist for certain sectors or demographics or locations but could be more widely available. Through such programs people can learn about the different ways to be a leader in their communities, of which local government could be one pathway to consider now or in their future. This is an example of a tailored leadership program: Free leadership training for culturally diverse women - TAFE SA. This is another example of an a political leadership program that could have improved access within South Australia: Pathways to Politics for Women | Faculty of Arts, Business, Law and Economics | University of Adelaide

It is a costly business to run a successful campaign in,ess you have a high profile in your community. Too many people do not vote, so you get the people you sometimes 'deserve'. Too many get in on less than 300 votes and believe that they represent their community on that limited recruitment of votes.

Its a much deeper root cause than a campaign. LG has no connection to the real people

Its a thankless job, who would want to do it unless they was a career in politics. Councillor are toothless tigers that just go with the flow of making sure the council funding is growing.

Its NOT JUST ABOUT PROMOTING what is required to is to have people nominate who have a genuine intersdt in the community [National, State and Local Issues] There needs to be a reduction in the amount of work thayt is put onto elected members because very few of them ever read or have a full knowledge of the issues they are making decisions on . In many situations the Appointed staff and the Mayor are on top of the issues and basiscally direct the elected members to go along with the recommendations for consideration. Some people in the community run of a single issue within their ward BUT Councils are not being democratic and failing in their duties to allow this to happen . There must be greater accountability of the ability of the candidte to be suitable to take such high responsibility.

It's not promotion that is required: people don't want to serve on the council because there is lack of flexibility and freedom there. As a result, most councilors are those who are there for the money.

Last election the advertising was focussed on racial diversity. Need to have more diversity in your chosen diversity - ie need single mums, students, LBQ, older women (retirees) etc

Less. Not more

Letter box drops, council members meeting and greeting in shopping centres and at local events.

Letter dropping to all residents.

Advertising on TV/Radio and in the Newspapers.

Lift the profile

like with boards call for 'professions' to be represented on councils as well 'mums and dad's'. e.g.Councils need writers, engineers, artists, scientists, mums and dads, teachers, labourers, shop owners etc.

Local government should be abolished and if not, councils should be amalgamated eg Eyre Peninsula should be one council. Some rural councils have less than 3000 or so people but about 50 or more "staff", most of whom are on over \$80K.

Locally based forums and pop-ups, and local advertising so the community can identify more strongly with the values of their local council and how they may contribute to this. This also supports connection between those thinking about nominating and personalises the experience.

Real life stories from people who have previously nominated and been successfully elected. Make these available on line and encourage those wishing to nominate to contact these people and hear their experience of the process. The power of story telling and sharing experience cannot be underestimated.

Lower the age of voting in Council elections to 16.

Actively encourage young people, including Years 10-12 at High School to consider nominating for election.

Provide a mentoring service where by interested candidates are allocated a mentor to discuss the experience with.

Make it easy for people to nominate in different ways. Information through schools and other government bodies.

making it accessible to do

Making it clear that the responsibilities of an elected member are part-time and can be managed on top of a full-time job. Many potential candidates think being an EM is a full-time commitment, which discourages them.

Many Councils already play a strong role in promoting elections in their local communities and there should be no mandatory requirements placed on Councils to do more than they can afford

Marketing to political parties and encouraging questions around formal preselection / endorsement.

Media releases announcing calling for nominations for Council have been fine in the past.

More active promotion of the actions and decisions of the council and its benefits for the community. E.g. e-newsletter with quarterly bills and community meetings by elected members.

More advertising

More awareness at a State Level, including regions, as to the fact Council Elections are being held. This needs to be directed towards general awareness, encouraging people to nominate.

Councils can better dovetail into such campaigns at a local level and promote via established networks, eg clubs and organizations. Putting up banners doesn't seem to work. More Social Media Awareness.

More community meetings

More people would be encouraged to stand if they thought they had a reasonable chance of being elected. Forcing councils to abolish wards or have wards with no less than 3 positions and requiring encumber councillors to stand down after 3 terms are a couple of ideas which fit with my initial comment.

More professional behaviour by councillors will be the best way to attract nominees; the form of promotion.

More promotion across all mediums: online, print, posters.

More social media campaigning, particularly to raise awareness in younger cohort.

Most councils are despised by their ratepayers due to their appalling conduct. Most people have no desire to be part of such behaviour. Councils need to clean up their act in order to attract decent community members.

Need to know who has nominated progressively as some would nominate if they knew there weren't too many competitors or that they'd have a good chance

Need to reduce the number of councils to improve the quality of candidates

No - I have seen these ads over the years and they are not very inspiring. People are going to be interested in standing mainly due to who they know, not seeing an ad. I think it is all a waste of money.

No, their role is outdated and needs to be replaced with AI

No. The steps already taken are adequate. The problem is one of general societal malaise, not specifically a problem of promoting awareness.

Nominate and make a difference

If you think you could do it better stand up and be counted... your views will then count and make a difference

Offer training and support for campaigning if they nominate

Once again I think putting yourself forward to stand for election can be very intimidating for a lot of people - people may feel they are not qualified either on an educational or a socio-economic level, or they may due to family or other commitments feel unable to commit to regular meetings or other obligations. They may also not have the tools or the connections to get the necessary publicity, to make the speeches etc that standing for public office requires

One of our regional councils had a wonderful promotion about a sheep running for council and all the things he got up to in the lead up. Was a great use of social media and humour to get the message across. I'm not saying that everyone should do that, as then it loses impact, but Councils need to get more inventive. Social media is an amazing resource to reach many people all at once.

I also know of a group of councils that get together to cross promote, running the same adverts and combining resources to get more promotion out there ie: running very similar briefings to offer different times and the ability for people to attend a briefing but not be seen to be running. It all helps.

Organise presentations to the community that explain the role of councilor and how they fit in with local governance

Outline that you don't have to be a ratepayer (if that is the case)

People turn off when it comes to Local Council because they know at the end of the day, Councils no longer serve the people. Fix the roads, footpaths, playgrounds, provide services and don't bitch and moan about no funding when all they do is employ more over educated idiots to manage budgets. Fix that and you will start to get engagement.

Perhaps training and education opportunities to support community members to become leaders. LGA's are well placed to run these.

personal invitation by community leaders, making space for emerging leaders to come together to consider running

Post letters, door knock and to see more councillors in the community. Many elections of candidates I have never heard of before or seen at various community events including the Mayor.

Potential candidates could organise a meet and coffee session to get ideas and give their ideas to the public to get possible support.

Previous Councillors with time and skills should be recruited and paid to help Councils run pre campaign workshops prior to caretaker mode

promote in different languages, promote the importance of Councils and share stories from existing elected members

promote the fact that regional councils can hold their meetings outside of business hours if the elected members make that decision.

Promote what decisions elected members make. Explain what the role is and the impact. Simplify messaging.

Promoting elections can be an expensive exercise, particularly during an election period, as Councils are already required to pay for the elections. The conduct of elections is now appropriately carried out by ECSA and this includes promoting the elections.

Promotion flyers/emails/mail. Promotion to all community groups in the electorate.

Promotion via local media publications, social media, SMS messaging etc. Costs for Council were largely the ECSA costs which cover advertising and marketing. Council advertising was largely through social media, website and a public meeting advertised for candidate briefing which attracted smaller costs

Promotional campaign for 2022 elections was good.

Promotional campaign information should be included with the Council Rates notice, not just newsy information which is in itself good, though.

Promotional campaigns are secondary. Need to shift the perception on being an elected member, some negative connotations currently that promotions are purely superficial

Promotional campaigns can encourage participation by highlighting the impact of individual contributions, emphasizing community benefits, and showcasing success stories. Incorporate engaging visuals, use

diverse media channels, and leverage influencers to reach a wider audience. Offering incentives such as recognition, exclusive opportunities, or tangible rewards can further motivate individuals to participate.

Promotional campaigns featuring former Councillors expressing their views about being involved and what they believe are their achievements would be useful. Also information about what Councils actually do, it's not just rubbish rates and roads, They are leaders in their Communities and should reflect the values of their communities.

Promotional campaigns seem to be very metro-focused. It would possibly help having separate promotional campaigns for metropolitan and regional Council areas.

Promotional campaigns should be run by SA Electoral Commission and Local Government Association and they should provide material and resources for the Councils. Councils should not have to use ratepayers' money to pay for election campaigns. Instead the SA Electoral Commission should fund council elections. If a council wishes to do more then that council can pay the extra amount.

Promotional campaigns should include bringing people from the community into the Council to see what is happening and how Councils go about their business and also how people can get more involved. This could include all age groups from school children to senior citizens, business people, and young families and promote the council as an opportunity to get involved in our democracy at the grass roots level. I think democracy is under threat with many levels of government becoming more autocratic and authoritarian and we need to get back to a democracy that involves all the community.

Promotional campaigns would be quite costly in terms of resourcing - elections already cost local councils quite a lot of money. Also need to keep in mind impartiality of councils - they can't be perceived as trying to encourage certain candidates (e.g. those in a community organisation) over others. The high resourcing requirements would need to be balanced against the perceived benefits.

Provide details of the 'typical day' for a councillor to illustrate context. For example, this could show a university student studying for the day, then joining the meeting at night. Or a councillor engaging with ratepayers at an organised meet-up. Or simply illustrating the types of responsibilities and meetings they might have with council staff, community groups, or other stakeholders.

Public notices in Newspapers FACEBOOK ,X, TIK TOK LETTERBOXING

Public poster graphics of the current diversity of representation. Our council has only 5% women. There is no disclosure or efforts to engage outside white wealthy farmers due to they directly benefit financially from council subsidies.

Publicity campaign to educate people of the role of local government.

Quotes from current or former Members with statements about meaningful projects/decisions they have been involved in eg " We achieved X outcome through Y strategic decision".

Rather than a generic centralised campaign to encourage candidates, a more nuanced local campaign with case studies of existing or former elected members in that area talking about their experiences and the reasons they ran would be good.

Realistic and long term campaigns - not just close to election time.

Reduce the burden and formailty, but also better position the recruitment towards skills and capabilities rather than popularity.

Reduce the number of councillors.

Remove all political party affiliation

Stop all political advertising (eliminate cost to prospective candidates), have should only have the official website, and pulished papers with their credentials, plus opportunity to door knock hold local forums

Restrict candidates from running more than two terms and ban households/families from multiple candidates in elections.

Scrap wards - focus on policy/strategies for City. Improve quality and diversity of candidates - psychometric testing of candidates

Self funding election campaigns can be a challenge for most candidates. It would be good to have an election campaign allowance from state government to candidates to stand for local government.

Show and tell. Asking questions either at the council offices or even have a permanent display, show and tell at the Library.

Show people what councillors do for their community

Show some respect to the outlier wards within an LGA and not pretend to do "community liaison" when, in the end the Council makes their own mind to an outcome.

Simplified online documentation detailing the role description, expectations, prerequisites, etc should be promoted more widely.

SO MANY already active in the community have the skills & experience ('transferable skills') to bring to LGA"s Many non for profit' organisations like schools & and community based child care already deal with multi million dollar budgets. AND they have the understanding of how to conduct themselves with integrity & NOT bring the organisation into disrepute . IMHO "training' after being elected is NOT going to 'weed out those ' who whilst they do have the support of a group of people who will vote for them hold radical or single issue views. You NEED to have established your 'bona fides'; before you are eligible to nominate.

So many people don't know what local government does. The campaign last election was quite good. People aren't interested because they are generally happy.

Social media targeting can be tailored to the demographic

Busses are extremely effective and deliver great CPM

Radio can also be effective.

Some community members may not feel that they have the knowledge or capability to run for Council. Improved messaging around the training provided to members and the need for diversity of members may encourage more people to consider nominating.

Some more localised promotion would be beneficial – with the state-wide (one size fits all) approach possibly losing some level of impact locally.

Local promotion of state-wide promotional tools – and this was generally at low cost using existing media, social media, and links to local organisations

Stop making it look like only young people should apply or run for council; the oldies do a good job and they have time and experience

Stop the politically correct female skewed adverts , men have every right to stand

Stop with the gender and race issues yes we r multi cultural but stop rramming it down our throats, if they have actually been in the country & the area for a serious amount of time and have given freely 2 that community then they should be able to apply.

Studies show that mentoring future candidates two years in advance of the elections.

Talk about issues of interest and how prospective candidates can support their local community, i.e. environmental policy

Target organisations representing minority groups to engage in local government. Discourage people with business interests from engaging

Targeting promotion to youth community members (17–25 years old) could give them insight into future opportunities available.

Teach civics at school. Get young people understanding the importance of democracy and how politics work.

The 2022 campaign was very large and was advertised well from my Council. I would have no feedback other than to promote through more local groups.

The administration should maintain a non-political stance, refraining from involvement in the formal promotion or mechanics of campaigning and elections. It's noteworthy that councils currently allocate funds to ECSA for election promotion.

While ordinary Council administrative activities involve collaboration with ratepayers or community organisations during and across Council terms, engaging in promotion or encouragement related to nominations or supporting a candidate could be perceived as utilising Council resources for private political candidacy or electioneering. Such use of Council resources might rightly invite challenges from rival candidates seeking equitable resources for their interests and campaigns. Explicit permission for such activities could be susceptible to challenges regarding transparency, accountability, and resource equity.

The prospect of more candidates participating in elections may increase if the entire community is compelled to vote rather than the current one-third. In essence, compulsory voting could enhance candidate engagement.

Council administrations collaborate closely with elected members, necessitating a clear distinction between public service delivery and political representation. Robust controls are established during election periods to differentiate between council business and election activities, ensuring fair competition and preventing incumbents from gaining an unfair advantage.

Requiring councils to fund, organise, or manage election campaigns, whether related to nominations or participation, would potentially undermine these principles, introducing ambiguity or contradiction.

The campaigns run by ECSA and the LGA in the past 3-4 elections have been pretty pitiful and last minute. Not sure of how to improve the quality of nominations without increasing the one issue candidates and the sovereign citizens

The council needs to appeal to young people (under 30) to get involved with council because in 10/15 years all the old Councillors (which most of them are) will be dead and no young people will want to be involved in council.

The LGA and ECSA should continue to combine resources to encourage people to stand for elections and promote the role of local governance in the context of elections, rather than individual councils that may have a more direct interest in an outcome and bring an actual or unconscious bias to their promotional activities

The LGA campaigns are great but there should be the ability to customize them and add local issues of importance.

The LGA's campaign informed the community. Ensuring that the community is well informed about the availability of running for council is the best approach. Then it is up to individuals to decide if they are interested.

The local government employees to promote elections

The mandatory promotional expenses included in each Council's election costs from the Electoral Commission of SA could be reconsidered and reduced to allow councils more flexibility and revenue to promote locally and refine the promotion to local audiences.

The potential cost and challenges associated with efforts to increase interest in nominating for council whilst remaining impartial could outweigh the real benefits.

The promotional materials for the 2022 election showed generic "models", I think real elected members from around the state with case studies and experience reports would engage with potential candidates better.

The reality is that most councils promote information sessions but that intending candidates don't bother attending. Perhaps make attendance at an information session a pre-requisite to nominating (that would stop people nominating at the last minute when they have no idea of the implications

The role and associated responsibilities should be explained clearly on the website so that interested community members can gauge their ability to take on the role.

The State Government should run media campaigns and not charge local government for this.

The timing of campaigns which promote the role of Local Government and the benefits of being an Elected Member could be undertaken more in the lead up to each election.

There are already meetings for interested people, but attendance is poor.

There needs to be a 'try before you buy' campaign say in the last six months of the council term so people can participate in council activities and make up their mind about whether they would like to nominate.

There should be forums all year round not just election year that encourage community members and community groups to become actively involved in Council issues.

There should be more effective marketing strategies and better education.

There was a strong ECSA campaign. Hammering people more will just turn them off.

They must have not been a member of a political party in the last 12 months before election.

They should hold information sessions for potential candidates.

This could be done better.

To provide a stronger role in promoting elections locally to increase voter turnout, as councils are under the State Government Local Government Act, the State Government should provide funding to councils to promote council elections with a certain level of promotion. If a council wants to do more than that, it can fund that itself

Training, Training, Training

We have some fantastic town committee members, community group Chairmans, business operators, practical people,

But Their Meeting management/proposals making is not formal enough & don't know how to debate. Currently more then one of our councils councillors got elected with no formal meeting background, so is participating very little in meetings. And losing their available time going to training courses. which still doesn't help with lack of experience.

TV advertising & Advertising inserts with rates notices

TV advertising

Advertising inserts with rates notices

Tv or radio campaigns run by LGA might help.

Tighter controls re: ability to manage / remove elected members for continued poor behaviours (ie the inappropriate antics of some members may deter people from wanting to get involved)

We do quite well in small Council communities; hence there is effort that council could make to increase interest in standing over a council term

Why must a councillor cover all topics?

Perhaps special interest areas would be better served with committees from the community with rotating membership that can be the advisory to the formal council in the same manner as a SA Governmnet Department approaches Cabinet. Areas of special interest in large councils that raises concerns on favourtism and spending would include Sporting facilities, Parks, Street scapes, Health, traffic etc

Yes, actually allow us to vote and have proper representation.

You should be showing real faces. People who have or are currently in council. Find the people who are genuinely passionate and committed to their community to tell some stories. Why are they there.

Council believes the marketing of elections to encourage nominations and voter participation should be a statewide coordinated campaign. However, Councils should be actively engaged and consulted during the development of the campaign materials to ensure they are effective and representative of communities.

Greater consultation on what will be provided as part of the promotional materials would ensure that council can effectively use what is made available. Council did not find the postcard (which were only made available during the vote campaign) or extremely large corflutes the best use of resources. It is the role of candidates to raise local issues and to campaign on issues they believe are important to the local community, not Council.

The most limiting factor to the 2022 Election promotions was the late provision of promotional materials, the branding and the quality of materials which did not meet Council's needs.

The perception of what a Council is and what it can achieve is often quite narrow, and it is seen that the 'really important work' in a local area is carried out by volunteer groups. So a Council would need to work on how it wants to be perceived and what it wants to achieve - and this goes to the heart of how those standing for Council present themselves. Disclosure, honesty and value statements (in addition to reducing council rates etc) should be widely circulated and those standing should be questioned publicly about their values and backgrounds and not be allowed to hide behind slogans.

You can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink. Last council elections promoted locally on media, social media, council website and many other forms of advertising almost to an excessive extent, costing councils (Rate payers) a lot of money. The residents are completely made aware of the council elections and the call for nominations unless they live under a rock or another planet.

People don't nominate for many reasons, could be financial, lack of commitment and passion, hearing other people rubbish councils on talk back radio or simply not interested, how do we fix it? The infrastructure and support are already in place the missing ingredients are passionate community minded people to step forward and nominate. Thousands of young and older Australians commit to volunteering in various charitable organisations possibly due to time availability and not much a full on commitment to nominate for council.

Councils already heavily promote the Election process with social media, public notices, banners, newsletters etc. The disinterested public ignore each method while the interested ones take steps to ask for more information.

Any additional promotion would need to be seen to free of any influence of the 'outgoing council'.

Working with community organisations to support a candidate could be beneficial. Reducing the amount of red-tape would also help.

Facebook, Informer (local paper), website – minimal cost

Council believes the LGA promotional campaigns continue to be very 'metro'. Targeted campaigning of town groups (committees, sporting bodies etc) may be more effective in regional areas.

At the end of the day, Council considers the way a Council performs during the term – and associated communication around outcomes – is likely to be more of a driving factor for people nominating (i.e. they like / dislike what they see and decide they want to support or seek change).

An idea could be to work more closely with town committees to develop strong governance and decision making capacities within the community that could then encourage a step towards local government.

Northern Areas Council already meets with town committees and runs:

- Information sessions for candidates

- Community forums
- Advertising to appeal for local candidates

Councils would get a better local result if they make greater investments in local promotion and initiatives, particularly ahead of election periods

Position: Yes

It is the view of Council that Council's already do this, however this should be more consistent across the sector. ECSA introducing education/information distribution in schools about what elected representatives do could be a good way to introduce civic responsibility at a young age (similarly with what is currently being done with waste education in schools).

Position: No

Not necessarily. Council continually promotes activities and initiatives, and focusing on doing so just prior to election has the potential for this to be primarily used for political purposes or the benefit of sitting members. It is the view of Council that other factors such as voluntary voting, voter burnout (holding 3 elections in 1 year), limitation of election poster advertising for local government etc has a greater impact on voter turnout

- Social media
- Information in community centres / recreation centres / library
- Council's website
- Banners

Staff costs/time for undertaking these activities were not recorded.

Better promotion of what councils do

Better advertising the range and number of functions of council do and how it impacts daily lives.

ECSA responsibilities

In relation to administrative activities, when promotion / follow up on candidates for returns/forms used to be an activity that was undertaken by individual councils, most went above and beyond to support candidates to meet their required obligations. It appears that ECSA only does the minimum required by legislation now that responsibilities have been transferred, which was reflective in the number of elected positions that became vacant after not submitting campaign donation returns. This is despite a significant increase in election costs, which is funded by councils (eg. increased cost for lower service delivery). Centralising this function was intended to make it more efficient and effective.

Display of nominations

While the reasoning behind removing which candidates have nominated in each ward is understood, in reality this had actual implications for a number of councils (resulting in supplementary elections and increased costs to councils).

Councils. Ultimately, the role of promoting elections should sit with a single body and not multiple to prevent duplication of spend or mixed messaging.

Ongoing sector promotion by the LGA of election arrangements and opportunities throughout the 4 year terms to the wider community would raise awareness of election nomination periods and understanding of roles rather than a flurry of promotion only at election time.

The Local Government Elections, roles of Councils and the benefits of being an Elected Member have been promoted extensively by the Local Government Association of South Australia and the Electoral Commission of South Australia for at least the last 2 Local Government Elections. These campaigns

have been extensive with consistent messaging for the community. It is appropriate that these campaigns are conducted at a state wide level as opposed to by individual Councils to ensure consistency in the messaging and brand recognition.

It is less about the short-term local or state-wide promotion and more about building relationships with the community in the long-term.

Councils will get a better local result if they make greater investments in local promotion.

Councils should be directly involved in the receipt/processing of candidate nominations.

One of our Committee member reports that: “ I was not supported by my council and therefore was charged for venues to run information sessions and paid my own petrol, refreshments etc. I travelled to two neighbouring Councils and they provided spaces but my Council saw it as a conflict under the caretaker policy.

The Council also refused to host candidate forums, so the candidates paid for venue hire and made themselves available for the forums

Strategies used to promote nominatig for council were:

Signage

Social media

Local advertising

Word of mouth

There would likely be a higher impact if promotion and engagement were left to individual councils, rather than following a state-wide approach. That being said, the resource burden of such an approach would be considerable.

The LGA and ECSA need to work at a greater pace, keep to committed deadlines and provide early election collateral. The reduction in service / support was likely as a result of three tiers of government holding elections in the same year, which may need to be reconsidered to spread workload / resourcing.

Our council utilised the promotion material provided by ECSA and the LGA. A variety of methods such as media, social media, print news, inclusion in rates notices etc. The highest engagement was from prospective candidates though information sessions.

Online ESCA information sessions are also supported.

This is a complex area, as councils must remain neutral and promote elections generally, rather than specific candidates – however research indicates that the community engage better with specific candidates than with generic information. Staff shouldn't be placed in a position where they are exposed, unsupported or unsure. ECSA have a key focal role.

Caretaker training should be mandatory.

Councils could be perceived to be conflicted in promoting local government nominations as their efforts could be criticised to favour specific politically aligned candidates.

It is the role of ECSA to promote the elections process and councils should be at arm's length from this process so not to be seen to exercise undue influence. ECSA should be properly resourced to undertake this task accordingly.

Council had a strong social media promotion of all stages of the 2022 Elections. In addition to this Council ordered promotional material from LGA which was displayed in the Community Hub and information was also published on Council's website. Councils should not run individual promotional campaigns outside the LGA and ECSA process for reasons outlined above.

Councils need to find ways to host 'Q and A' or 'Meet and Greet' sessions with candidates for voters in neutral ways. City of Charles Sturt did a good job of this in 2022 with the candidates forum, which was live streamed too, however noting it was mostly new candidates that engaged, not existing elected members with the exception of the Mayor

Education and promotion of the role is one option to increase interest in standing for council however Council administration should maintain a non-political stance and refrain from involvement in the formal promotion or mechanics of elections (as outlined within the act).

Our region noticed the secrecy of the nomination process which affected the number of candidates standing.

Updates on nominees should be published as they occur and not once nominations close to encourage people to stand if they feel nominees are not in line with their values or objectives.

Election fatigue is a significant factor and Council encourages moving the local council elections so they do not occur so close to State elections.

Lack of new nominees standing in an election can also be an acceptance that the current elected members are doing a good job.

Ratepayers should not have to fund further promotional material for local government elections. They already contribute to the Electoral commissions and LGA to support election promotion initiatives. Small councils do not have teams of media and communications personnel and it is unreasonable to expect that limited resourcing is diverted from delivering the services required by the community, when the LGA and ECSA can create more professional and consistent campaigns. Council suggests that the criticism frequently put forward by the State government towards the local government sector may also impact the willingness of candidates to nominate.

Council work closely with the young people from the area through the Youth Advisory Committee. A few past members of Council's Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) nominated and were successful in being elected to Council. This has been positive for Council, resulting in diversity of age of council members, increased awareness of local government amongst the youth and encouraged other YAC members to nominate.

However, it is acknowledged that this good work does not address the other areas of under-representation – indigenous, multi-cultural, women etc.

Greater monetary payment may encourage more individuals to nominate, as would the payment of superannuation. Information sessions could be held earlier than they are, perhaps 12 -24 months out from an election so that prospective candidates have time to consider their options and make an informed decision as to whether they want to nominate or not. Need to provide information on how it works to candidates, what allowances are payable, time commitments to ensure that anyone seeking to nominate is prepared.

Funding should be provided by the State Government, specifically quarantined for community engagement sessions to be held on nominating for local councils

Yes - Council has an important role to play being mindful of budget constraints.

More public promotion / advertising of what a councillor is and what they can do for the community. Increasing awareness of councils and becoming a councillor, e.g. through school programs, could be useful.

Is there a role for councils to play in enabling all candidates to reach potential voters?

No. You are more likely to frighten potential candidates off if you have councils running 'meet and greet' candidates public meetings. It may also affect the impartiality of the council and council staff. Councils could however provide ECSA approved information on candidates on their websites

Local councils should be encouraging and promoting people to stand for elections. The LGA does this well. Councils run sessions about 'What does it mean to be a Councillor'. These are very good. It is not known what is meant by "a better result" consequent on greater local promotion and initiatives; the converse might equally apply. We suggest that what is critically important is that people know what nominating for Council entails, and the representative responsibilities that arise if they are elected. Ensuring that the timetable is known i.e. when nominations close, when material is needed by the Electoral Commission etc. is essential information for prospective councillors

Working with ratepayers and other community organisations may be an opportunity for metropolitan Councils to increase interest in nominations but given these organisations in regional areas are very small, if in existence it would have minimal impact on this process. Closer engagement with the community and one-on-one conversation traditionally works best in these areas with a more targeted approach.

Increased local promotion is required however, should not be an added cost or responsibility to the Council itself. Campaigns that are run by ECSA or the LGA need to be cognizant of the media and engagement opportunities that exist in specific areas i.e., some communities do not have access to local TV and instead have TV which is broadcast from interstate which has little benefit in a state election engagement process. This should include advertising using such avenues as VAST, so a full state reach is achieved.

In respect to existing practices, Council uses a variety of social media platforms and holds information sessions in an attempt to encourage potential candidates to nominate including the LGA provided signage encouraging nominations and promoting diversity. Given the increased access to local residents in regional Councils and the more strongly developed relationships, a lot of informal conversation are normally undertaken during the course of standard interactions in the community. This is undertaken one-on-one and in small groups and allows for a two-way conversation to be held. The main costs to council for these strategies are time and resourcing.

Increased local promotion that is more specific and targeted is a necessity but needs to be balanced with the capacity to do this as it relates to resourcing and financial investment given the already stretched resources which are further exacerbated by elections costs.

Council was very active in its promotion of the enrolment, nomination and voting stages prior to the last local government elections, which was demonstrated by the resulting high voter return rate (over 60%). A range of strategies to promote nominating for Council were used, including direct mail outs, media releases, signage, information available on the website, social media and online newsletters, articles within three local publications, advertising and undertaking of candidate information sessions.

In terms of other efforts that councils could make to increase interest in standing over a council term, it falls back into Council's general community advocacy, and volunteer governance and leadership training within the community. This gap has become more evident within our own community in recent times, which we are taking steps to address through support and training opportunities.

No, I do not support increased council expenditure on promotion initiatives.

Yes, we think that while the overarching statewide campaign is excellent, there would be merit in some allocation of funds to councils for local promotions and initiatives

Clarity for the community on Elected Member roles, and what they actually have the ability to influence.

Councils could significantly improve the outcomes of local elections by increasing investments in local promotion and initiatives, especially in the lead-up to election periods. By actively promoting key local issues, ongoing initiatives, and achievements, councils can better inform voters about the work being done to address community needs and concerns.

Greater investment in local promotion can also help raise awareness about candidates running in the election, their platforms, and their qualifications. This increased visibility allows voters to make more informed decisions when casting their ballots, ultimately leading to a more engaged and participatory electorate

Topic 2: Remove council wards (2.7)

1. I believe it is more democratic to have no wards as people then have to vote to have their candidates elected. It also means the candidates have to campaign more..
2. The absence of wards might encourage councillors to adopt a more holistic approach to decision-making, focusing on the overall well-being and interests of the entire council area rather than specific wards.
3. Without wards, there might be fewer incentives for councillors to adopt parochial or narrow perspectives focused solely on the interests of their specific ward, potentially promoting broader collaboration and cooperation among council members.
4. The absence of wards might provide flexibility in representation, allowing councillors to address issues and concerns across the entire council area without being confined to specific ward boundaries.

100% agree, Councillors should represent the entire council, removing wards and potentially limiting the number of elected officials with provide for greater representation across the board.

68 too many, split into East, West, South and North, 4 councils is enough for our state, less employees could mean less council rates costs for households and maybe more money for up keep of council land and property.

Only have Plan SA to approve or disapprove for projects and developments, take away the middle men in councils.

More Indians, less Chief's.

Align wards to state based electoral boundaries

All councils should have wards and they should be smaller rather than larger. As a resident, it is useful to have a specific person in a ward, who understands the area and local issues to call, Cant imagine trying to call all councillors to discuss an issue. "No wards" is a tool used to reduce resident engagement. Also no wards means that certain councillors do all the work and others nothing. Alos means many councillors are all handing (double handling) something instead of one or two. Staff must get tired of each councillor sending emails all about the same issue.

All of the above 3 questions ignore other possible ways to look at this. If a Council needs to introduce certain efficiencies of representation by creating wards then this may be an argument for splitting up mega Councils into a number of smaller Councils.

Allowing councils to determine if there are to be wards and the size of the wards has, in the past, led to gerrymandering. Decision as to whether to have wards and their size should be made by an independent body not Councils.

An elected councillor represents the whole of the council community - not just a smaller portion. Decisions made at council are for the benefit of the whole council, not only for organisational sustainment - but for the good of the WHOLE community.

As a larger council, wards are very helpful for us. We put significant effort into connecting with the people within our ward - we would not be able to connect in the same way with the entire council. It helps us break it up into more achievable areas. We listen to our fellow councillors who connect similarly with the residents in their wards and still make decisions for the whole of council.

It is also helpful for our community members to know which EM(s) represents them and contact them directly rather than all of the EMs. They get to know their ward councillor. On occasion, we have community members contact all elected members and it becomes tricky to know who has responded, or we end up duplicating responses.

As is currently prescribed under the legislation, Wards should be considered as part of boundary reform.

as the population/electors within a specific area will still determine the number of members for a suggested ward area. In large LG areas with sparse population – the ward would have to also be large to enable that ward to have a member (based on ratios).

Benefit is you have hyper local representatives. Negative is you are such with that hyper local rep when other members may better align and advocate with your interest.

Benefits of wards are that they allow Council Members to be more in tune with their small area and population. It also allows members of the community to know easily who they should contact with a local issue.

Better kept as its more efficient ,you should be able to know who represents you , not chase around to find out.

By removing wards all Elected Members are encouraged by default to represent the whole of the Council and its interests therefore, acting more like a board in lieu of members representing small sectional areas within the Council

By removing wards all Elected Members will represent the whole of the Council and its interests therefore, acting more like a board in lieu of members representing sectional interests within the Council.

Community residents want wards. Council administration and council factions don't. It's that simple. residents want local elected member accountability and access to elected members when needed. Most residents that have area councillors and are required to only deal with council administration feel that they just get fobbed off by council administration.

Continue to have whole areas rather than wards in LG noting it may not work in all areas.

Council covers a smaller area than for example state MP's i think they should be able to represent the whole area unless it's a large outback area then wards are appropriate.

Council does not have wards, but based on its own experiences, supports the principle of allowing all Councils to decide for themselves whether to have wards

Councillors elected to represent a ward are the closest people we have to the community and they generally listen to what their community say

Councillors make decisions on behalf of the whole council so should be accountable and responsible to all the electors

Councillors recognise that they represent the electors in their whole Council. While wards serve as a focus point for residents in a particular area and allow closer interaction for immediate issues affecting a particular area, it does not detract from the broader decision making and governance of the city.

Coved in previous comments

Decisions about wards, meetings etc should not be made by councillors. They are business decisions and should be made by the council leadership team.

Depends on the size of the Council area, but I feel the number of wards could be reduced. This would need to be linked to remuneration, if a Councillor is then communicating with double+ their usual constituents.

Disband Council

Elected Members should always be thinking of the entire Council area in their decision-making. Wards can lead to unproductive competition between Members for "their" community.

However in rural areas, no Wards could result in all Members coming from one town, and so focusing on that town, and neglecting the other townships/communities in the Council area.

There needs to be flexibility in whether Wards are applied, depending on the nature, and population spread, of the Council (Ward quota).

Elected members will always look for what is needed in their own area. Removing wards may see other areas not receiving the support needed.

Essential for larger councils or councils with a bigger area to cover (and therefore different needs).

Factions can gain too much sway over council activities, Do not think we need as many wards

Finding nominations for every ward can be difficult.

The council electorate should have a vote unless say 75% of the Councillors vote in favour.

for smaller councils I think ward boundaries are unhelpful. Larger councils (geographically and population) benefit from wards.

Gerimanders are counter to the aims and objectives

Get rid of them, same as get rid of councillors.

Good to have local representation

Having no wards would only increase the likelihood of State and Federal politics gaining more of a foothold on local government. Individuals with no political affiliation would find it impossible to compete with the political influence

Having Wards ensures equity and that Elected Members represent the views of the constituents they have been elected by. It ensures the community voice is heard across the whole Council area, and all areas are represented.

Having wards keeps councillors focused on true local needs and not distracting from outside needs and interests. Keep the boundaries tight to assist those in the local area.

having wards means every one can be heard and the time to be heard with alot more people has a say

Holdfast Bay should reduce number of councillors per 4 wards to 2 giving toal of 8 plus a ayor

How a council is electorally structured (area wide, ward based, or mixed; and the number of roles) will depend on the diversity of circumstances applicable to council areas; what is suitable for one may not suit another.

I agree that wards enable some people to feel they are better represented - they have specific members that they can contact for that local connection, however there are also many people that do not know (or want to know) that wards exist and if they do who they should contact. Having worked in a large metro council with wards there was the feeling that members were thinking more locally on issues, however removing wards won't necessarily change this. If I live in an area of the council, I might still have stronger connections to that area.

I am conflicted on this notion. For larger councils with diverse demographics there is a risk that more marginalised communities may be under-represented - for example a smaller rural community on the periphery of a more populous urban community within a single council. Elected members should however have a duty to be represent all constituents and I believe that this is possible and could result in a better pool of candidates.

I am of the view that local representation outweighs popularity

I believe wards are really important and that councillors live in the ward.

When a councillor lives in a ward, they are visible to the constituents when they step out of the door and shop or ride their bike or walk their dog. Constituents can connect with them. Accessibility to Councillors is very important and when a councillor lives in the ward, they can also feel the local issues, see what the rate pays experience.

Also, if a councillor has to drive to a Ward then they are not walking or riding a bike and in this era of encouraging less cars on the road and increasing walking and cycling routes this does not send the right message.

I often meet constituents at the local precinct, and constituents also know where I live in the ward, so they feel they are connected with their Councillor.

I believe we should keep our Wards. Councillors are more likely to be elected to a Ward if they live in that Ward. This reflected in my Ward results. Both Councillors were elected because they lived in the Ward!

I can see pros and cons about this and I can see it might vary depending on the specific geography of different LGAs.

I commend your idea of removing wards to open up diversity and improve the lack of involvement most of the community have with Local Councils.

I consider that wards provide an elected councillor an area that they are solely responsible for. They can attend local gatherings and take on the responsibility of ensuring that the constituents' issues are heard and acted upon should it be considered appropriate by Council.

Removing the ward structure would greatly diminish the local councillor / constituent relationship.

I dislike the concept of wards

I do not support the removal of wards in metropolitan councils. At my council having a local Ward Councillor ensures someone is appointed that is well versed in the local community needs, accessible to the community when needed and is passionately committed to the cause.

I do not think wards in city or large town councils are really necessary as the councils are not so large for people not to be able to be aware of what is going on in the various areas of the council. This may not be the case in country council areas.

I don't think the wards are beneficial as our training makes it clear we are not there to serve the ward alone.

I don't believe in wards personally, if your elected you should stand for the whole council area and not just one ward.

If it is working or not for some councils, then they should be left to determine how it goes and what they should do.

I feel wards are an excellent part of the council system, as it allows for council areas to truly and more accurately represent areas that are naturally ignored in council areas. removing them would allow for more affluent areas to dominate the conversation

I have never been represented or even approached by my ward councillors in 30yrs. They could care less!

I live near an elected councillor but they serve in a different ward.

I support keeping wards. Ensures local representation and stops dominance of Council by one group with no ties to your area.

I think councillors need to be aware they are representing the whole council area, even though they may have an interest in a certain town or suburb. Councillors need to have a broad skillset and appreciation of the issues, not just to advocate for a single topic or interest.

I think it easier for the community to have a representative for their area/ward rather than a whole. Especially with larger/growth Councils. Elected Members still always represent the whole Council but easier for the community to have a representative for a smaller area.

I think it is better to keep smaller wards, but ensure Councillors are receiving training in the requirements of all minority groups in their ward.

I think keep them. Human nature is that if one ward is more represented they will get all the action

I think many councils feel wards are good, but I feel they are just too small and too restrictive. I think there would be a great benefit from removing them and letting more people run and where more people can vote for them so there is more competition between candidates. It would reduce the number of uncontested elections, it would mean that the potential number of votes that goes to elected candidates is much greater than single or 2 member wards. Voters can vote for all the candidates they want without being stuck in a ward where they don't want to vote for any of the candidates

I think reducing the number of Council Members through legislation for the size of a Council is key and removing wards will assist with this, otherwise the wards will need to be amalgamated i.e 6 becomes 2 if people want to keep a ward structure.

I think that Councils should have members that represent a particular ward and members that draw their support from across the whole council area. Having Ward Councillors and Non-Ward Councillors could encourage greater diversity of candidates while maintaining representation for each region within the Council.

I think that will depend on if the right people are in place and with the right ideas.

I think the Act needs to be flexible in this area - comparing a city council to a regional council is not appropriate.

I think the overarching responsibility is to the council as a whole, whilst still representing the interests of the local ward. There are going to be times when there is a greater good and a benefit to other wards, and having a cooperative approach should work. I do think wards should be geographically simply named eg north south east west rather than obscure names.

I think wards are very valuable in larger geographical council areas. I'm not sure they they are necessarily in smaller geographical council areas.

I think wards need to be retained to allow sharing of workloads and representing own areas where it is a large council.

In smaller council areas then wards are not so essential

I very strongly support maintaining a ward structure. Using my Council as an example, without wards I believe nominees in the more populated areas would attract more voters. However, the communities outside of the central area have very different needs and as a 'Central Ward' councillor, I rely on my North and South Ward colleagues to ensure those communities are well represented. Often, residents from the outer communities do not have as large a network as someone central and therefore unlikely to receive enough votes to be elected. We need to ensure all areas of the district are well represented.

I was only able to be elected to council as a result of the abolition of wards, the two ward councillors do a great job and I wouldn't have been able to beat them. The wards do safeguard the representation of a small community but in our case roving them enabled greater representation for the margins of the council.

I'd be concerned that if wards are removed some communities would not be represented. It is my experience that councilors more often than not have a bias to the community/area in which they live and lower socioeconomic/higher need communities are often underrepresented.

If a Council has Wards, then nominations should have to be in the appropriate ward to which they are aligned.

If the Council is to be represented and diverse, it must have wards in place for all areas. This allows each area to produce its own candidates that represent them. The question suggests that candidates could find support outside of their ward, paradoxically, would this then suggest they are not representative of their own community? Wards play an important role, and their removal will risk electoral corruption and manipulation within elections. Council's also consult with their Elected Members on issues that arise from their ward, this process would be impossible if wards are removed.

If there was a predominance of elected members from one particular suburb, that suburb might benefit from a disproportionate number of improvements in the area.

If you remove wards you better assist candidates to campaign in a larger area because it costs a lot to run a decent campaign.

If you take away anything from my submission today, DO NOT remove Council wards.

It should be up to the Council to decide this. It would have catastrophic impacts on Council areas with lower socio-economic levels or voter engagement. It would lead to the cherry picking of particular topics / areas by Councillors to run on. The comparison of this to me would be removing all State based electorates and just having a set number of seats.

Areas would be totally ignored if they had lower turnouts. Other areas would have an outsized influence on what Council funds and where one particular Council has always had a significant split between priorities of the hills vs the plains. The hills however, has a significantly higher turnout, despite the plains area having a much larger number of residents. Removing Council wards would have potentially massive impacts and I do not see why the State Government should legislate to remove them. The current system of allowing Councils to decide works very well.

The fundamental premise of being a Councillor is to represent your entire community. While this can get caught up in representing your ward vs entire Council area, the removal of wards will allow for candidates that pander to niche interests that do not represent the broader area.

In larger (geographically) councils, wards allow geographical communities of interest to be represented. To me a hybrid model where wards always need to be multi-member with at least 3 members would be a way of ensuring that there are opportunities for varied communities of interested outside of the strictly geographical.

In our Council there are no "Wards" and this leads to the smaller communities being virtually excluded from having elected representative members. The "mantra" that all councillors represent all areas is a

complete nonsense and consequently people who would like to run for election become discouraged as they are unlikely to defeat candidates who are supported from larger communities. People vote for someone they either know or who comes from their area. Our community has not had anyone on council for over 12 years.

In short, I support at-large elections in small municipalities, and ward elections in large municipalities.

The question of whether wards or at-large constituencies are preferable from a participation and diversity viewpoint requires further research – but I have significant reservations. At-large elections have a higher district magnitude, which typically ensures more proportional representation – due to the reasons outlined in the discussion paper (ability to build a wider base of support), and due to the STV voting system. However, it is important not to forget the issue of campaign cost – and while research on the relationship between jurisdiction size and campaign cost is currently limited, some assumptions can be levied.

Importantly, at-large elections will favour well-resourced candidates – including those with more wealth and those from political parties. In a ward-based election, getting elected remains a feasible prospect for less well-resourced candidates, who typically could – even without assistance – knock on a large proportion of doors, mail every household, host meet-ups on every street corner, and distribute posters to local businesses. Wealth will certainly provide some advantages, but the resource differential between candidates will be less impactful. On the other hand, in at-large elections, well-resourced candidates will be able to outspend other candidates by a much greater margin (i.e., the cost ceiling is higher). In other words, resource differentials will matter much more, particularly in large municipalities. The reason for this is that it is only those with money or the support of a political party, who will have the capacity to (hire people to) knock on every door, to mail all households, and to place their posters throughout the council area. Not only this, but new expenditure opportunities arise in larger jurisdictions because the cost-benefit calculus of placing an advert in a newspaper or purchasing social media or billboard space becomes feasible (whereas in a ward election, these campaigns will be less effective because one could not be sure whether many readers or viewers would be from that ward).

Of course, it doesn't require stating that achieving diversity among councillors cannot occur if only the wealthy can be elected. And it also doesn't require stating that we should aim to be crafting an electoral system where policy – not money – wins.

It helps to share the 'load'

helps community to get to know their councillors

Continuity aids in building partnership or team work

It is easier and more efficient for councillors to represent a smaller part of the ratepayers. However I think all council staff and councillors should be subject to key performance indicators. Employees in the private sector certainly are!

it ought be a matter for individual councils. Homogenous or smaller councils probably don't need them, but large (by way of population) councils & councils with distinct communities of interest clearly do

It should be left up to the Council and what is best for their community (after consultation) to decide. It is a good thing for micro Councils such as Walkerville and rural Councils, but terrible for large metro Councils or diverse rural Councils. In the city, the cost of a City wide campaign would be prohibitive.

It's my understanding that our Council has removed wards. I fully support this as our 'settlement' never had a representative. I also believe that the removal of wards should ensure that council members are encouraged to understand the community as a whole and not a specific area within the council area.

It's really none of my business, and none of the state's business. It should be up to the council alone, subject to a few fairness principles.

Its a case by case matter for consideration, depending on how active and engaged the community of each LGA is

It's the same argument as single-member electorates vs proportional representation. The latter actually reflects the opinion of the entire community, whereas SMEs reflect an arbitrary area and are unrepresentative of the community — although the multi-member wards help dilute this a bit. Perhaps cut the number of wards and have them have more spots to be elected to.

Keep them and those living in a ward would know who to go to for a voice on local issues

keep them, or only rich centralised interest groups will form

Keep wards as it gives a local focus

Keep wards, it helps balance councillor over area. even though our council ignores it.

Also helps with Australia Day awards, spreading them over area.

A good council would hold meetings in each ward.

Keep wards. At least there is someone responsible for a smaller community within the greater community.

Keeping them prevents high vote turnout areas from dominating lower turnout areas. An example of this is the Adelaide City Council which has an area council over the whole area in addition to wards and results in an area council dominated by the high turnout in North Adelaide and the south side of the city despite the centre city ward being 40% of the council by population.

Keeping wards mean Councillors can represent a certain area and means there is representation from across the Council area. Due to the nature of elected member work often people who run are retired or business people. This means areas of lower socio economic areas are often not represented.

Kobe what's happening in their particular area.

Larger country councils still need wards to represent their different communities

Less Councils. Wards would then be bigger and more meaningful.

local issues are relevant to locals, in my experience councillors and LGA Representatives do not care if it does not impact them

Make bigger wards, but have more Councillors per a ward.

Many Councils have specific areas where people are passionate and engaged (read, retired and rich) and other areas where there is less engagement (read, younger and have better things to do with their time). This is clear to see in the City of Adelaide for instance. If wards were abolished, it's likely that

North Adelaide's influence would probably actually increase despite their existing overrepresentation, just because North Adelaideans so disproportionately engage with Council.

Members should be representing all their community not just those in a particular ward.

My council has the idea that there is only one ward. the one with the council office in it.....:-(They only visit the others

Keep wards, Council should hold an office in each ward. Building off side council yard or in library or in hall. And yearly rotate a staff managers. e.g. one year "asset manager", next "community manager", next "Works", next, next "roads". So they get to know what's in the councils scope

My Council with two wards (somehow) has "swapped" two councillors' wards so that each, rather than represent where they live, represent where they get the most votes. Should be illegal under the ward setup.

My local council has a small rate base however very large geographical area and as such having wards is extremely beneficial to adequately represent the varied communities within the council boundary. There are local issues specific to ward areas and a local person has a greater understanding.

My only concern is that groups/factions could form to represent one specific area/business interest/political group if the ward structure was removed entirely. This is already a problem in some Councils and has led to some poor decision making for the community.

Neutral

No wards would mean all councillors would have to think of the best for the whole council area not just their ward. Having no wards worked very well in the country area where i lived for 20 years . Wards lead to parochialism which is not helpful

No wards. Councillors should represent all areas.

No. I don't know enough about how wards have affected councils.

Not only Wards should be removed, Individual Councils should be abolished and instead become a bottom tier of State Government i.e get rid of all the mayors to have only one, have only one Council government body for all the metropolitan area, have an appropriate number of councillors to work within that frame, make the election for that compulsory so that it is like the state govt election. Currently councillors just get an allowance and many also have other perhaps full time employment which does not allow them to be dedicated enough. They get elected to local council- it's all please elect me blah blah - then they are not heard from again. The local MP makes better contact with the community!

On balance, I think that it is time for wards to go. On the one hand, having ward councillors does force those councillors to focus on their ward and fight for services, but on the other hand it allows all other councillors to ignore the ward. Without wards, all councillors would be required to consider the needs to all parts of the council and this would result in a more even distribution of all aspects of council services rather than what I perceive to be a focus on the "loudest voices" (who are probably the longest serving councillors who are more confident in their demands) who are getting resources for their wards.

Furthermore, doing away with wards would provide better a opportunity for individuals to nominate for a position on council without limiting to a ward boundary. In my council, there have been wards where long-serving councillors are elected unopposed whereas in other wards there has been fierce

competition among large numbers of nominees. Without the restriction of wards, there would have been a better chance for new nominees to be elected to council bringing greater diversity to council governance. Furthermore, in a changing world, what is "local" has broadened significantly. A small ward, as they currently exist, is a parochial and outdated approach to governance.

Once upon a time having members that serve wards was useful but its now easy to serve an entire council area due to the ease of mobility and the access of information.

Our Council requires wards due to the sheer size of the council. Having wards ensures a more tailored level of knowledge by elected representatives that live and participate in those communities.

Our council used to have wards and it worked very well. We now do not have wards and all representation comes from one town with people who have no interest in the whole area.

Our councillors by and large think globally. It is made part of our training and we are often reminded of it by fellow councillors or the mayor. Our Council is better off with wards but we consider the alternatives and have so far decided to stay with wards. To some degree it helps with the division of labour. Wards enable us to electioneer in a practical manner. No wards would have people travelling hundreds of kilometres across our thirteen towns.

perhaps splitting up big Councils into more smaller ones.

Please abolish them I think the next generation would be more interested without what would appear to be restrictions

Politically motivated individuals in a large council may seek to join a council en masse, this would not be true representative body and would assist fringe groups to takeover a council

Possible stacking from one area of a council only.

Preferencing means deals must be done to get second preferences. If you don't know anyone this is difficult. It thus paves the way for political party interference. Unley's current council shows this as did the last Adelaide Council.

Re WARDS - keep Wards - although councillors can still work more broadly and collaboratively- if and where called for.

Reduce the wards in smaller Councils this should be adjudged and completed by the Electoral Commission.

Reduce wards..elected members can represent voters..reduce costs

Reducing the number of wards would save Money for the RATEPAYERS

Regional councillors have difficulty representing wider areas and often behave as if they are representing a ward. Having seen this happen after amalgamation 20 or so years ago, and the representation continues to reflect a ward mentality, I am in favour of wards.

Remove and reduce the number of members. Have more checks and balances that members are delivering for the community.

Remove the wards its like a state within a state its stupid

Remove the wards. Councillors should be like Senators, they represent the entire Council area.

Remove them.

Remove them. It holds back great candidates from being elected as they are bound by one person per ward.

Remove Wards to encourage elected members to think strategically about the whole council area and what its priorities are. Wards may encourage or support a 'representative' mindset where by elected members push only 'their constituents' perspectives without regards for the wider implications.

Remove wards.

Removing council wards is not supported. Local communities should have a say in the structure of their own Council. I don't believe there is a one size fits all solution

Removing wards allows nominations from people who are actively interested in representing their whole community. Councillors should be proactive in obtaining a wider picture of the communities needs, and not just be concentrating on their local area.

Removing wards is totally against the idea of representing your immediate community.

Removing wards may cause specific areas to receive preferential treatment.

removing wards will have dedicated Crs doing far more work than the ones who are only there for ego

Removing wards with proportional representation would be great.

Removing wards would improve the degree that council members get into the minutia of issues in their ward. It could help improve strategic focus. Ward briefings can be a drain on council administration.

removing wards would simplify elections for smaller areas and small numbers of electors. Where councils cover large areas or have large numbers of electors there should be wards to ensure representation across the whole area

Smaller Wards would be more manageable for Councillors. I don't know anything about the Councillors as it is. I vote each year trying to nominate who I think would be best but would be better to meet the nominees to have an idea of who they are as a person and not just a brief resume.

Some wards have representatives who have been elected on a small number of votes and do not represent the views of large numbers of rate payers in the Council. Yet, they vote on decisions that affect the whole Council area; at times with little regard for the wishes of the majority.

In some instances, Councilors that may be good reps but are more timid lose out for their areas. In may instances Councillors have to be in dispute with each other over scarce funds.

Sometimes wards are necessary to represent different communities or to keep things at a manageable size (i.e. there would be a huge financial and time burden in asking someone to try to letterbox 60,000 houses across the entire Salisbury Council, and whoever was richer would have a big advantage.

That said, wards can also lead to uneven contests depending on the number of nominations.

South Australia as a community is over governed and I would support Council amalgamation.

Structural approaches such as removing wards, setting term limits or linking candidacy to boundary changes are likely to make significant differences system-wide, however, not necessarily for the better. Council strongly objects to these proposals. Structural levers should be approached with high levels of care, and a wide range of scenarios should be considered if they are carried forward for further investigation. It is suggested that before any structural changes are progressed, the State work in partnership with councils to define the problems to be solved and assess the detailed impacts of any structurally based solutions prior to legislative proposals being formed.

That people can stand for wards that are close by but not actually where they live is good.

The bad = Groups of people in one area doing all the spending in one area. Could also cause a voter block.

The benefit of keeping wards is that Councillors must reside in that ward which means they are more likely to be aware of issues that are relevant to that ward.

The current method of election is enhanced if there are no wards, or larger wards in terms of number of members to be elected from each ward perhaps a minimum of 5 members per ward

The decision on whether or not a Council should have a ward structure should be a matter for its community. ie: if the community wants to retain a ward structure - then a ward structure is retained.

The decision to remove or keep wards should be made by an independent body - not Council staff or elected members to ensure transparency

The legislation requires representation reviews and provides councils with guidance on reviewing area members and ward members. There are arguments for both views. The legislation should remain unchanged so that a proper process is undertaken.

The LG Act deals with the matter of representation being that decisions must be made to benefit the many not only the few.

I think councils can choose the approach that their community wants. There are negatives and benefits to both models but large Councils operate best when representation is voted in by a Ward. Cost of elections is also a consideration when limited to a Ward rather than a whole Council. cost of elections is particularly important given your earlier interest in increased candidate participation.

The Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 introduced the requirement for proportional representation into local council elections. The ward quota encapsulates this concept but wards mitigates the full implementation of proportional representation. Especially single member wards. Even 2 member wards means that up to 1/3 of the community may never elect a person who truly represents their views. Abolition of wards is the only way to get true proportional represent into all councils. More than half of the SA councils currently have no wards and many of these are country councils which are physically bigger than any metropolitan council so distance cannot be a justifying factor for metropolitan councils to divide into wards.

The number of wards could stay the same but the number of councils reduced. That way shareholders (ratepayers) still get local representation but the council has a better economy of scale. COUNCILS ARE BUSINESSES AND SHOULD BE RUN AS SUCH BE ACCOUNTABLE TO RATEPAYERS. There is no questions that councils would fold were it not for a legislated income that residents can't argue against.

The only thing that would make them actually do the work is KPI's & a set time limit

The removal of Wards could result in a greater workload for Elected Members in terms of building relationships with local residents and their knowledge of the wider Council area.

The removal of Wards may be a further deterrent for a citizen to nominate for Council as the area in which they have to campaign would increase significantly.

The removal of wards would see the best councilers elected across council. Too many times good candidate may get knocked out as they are running in the same wards. This would likey see better overall candidates enter the race.

The representatives on council (elected members) vote of all resolutions not just the ones that impact their ward. Having wards gives residents the opportunity to connect with an elected member familiar with their area and needs. It also allows that elected member to advocate on behalf of their ward. I have seen other councils with no wards be heavily represented in one area and nothing in another possibly allowing a lopsided focus.

The use of Wards provides a local connection. Most rate payers (in my experience) recognise their local members. This does not stop them taking up issues that other members may be better qualified to address.

The ward structure is a mechanism to distribute representation equally across the Council area and removal of this may result in greater workloads for Elected Members who are generally more accessible to the broader public.

The ward system is a way to replicate the state base electorate system, but without all the resources and electoral systems that support that. Compulsory voting would make members accountable to the electors in their ward and strengthen local representation. Alternatively, such a change may make areas more partisan in a Council that should collectively represent the local community. My view is that wardless Councils would be beneficial in Metro councils, but retained in regional where there is more population disparity.

The wards should be designed where there are different community groups, for example in the mid Murray council you have people living in the large towns and then you have shack owners near the river, totally different communities.

There are benefits and negatives to wards, overall I think Councils should be able to make their own decisions about this.

There are benefits to both. Local representation is positive but having larger amalgamated councils or ward reduces cost and improves efficiency.

There is a benefit of wards because as a councillor, you are able to get to know the intricacies of a particular area. Other areas on the other side of the city I am nowhere near as familiar with so will ask the local ward councillors their views on issues that affect their communities and not mine.

There is no benefit to remove council wards as all wards are required to have equivalent elector and member ratios to ensure the 'one vote, one value' principle. Having a council wide no ward system does not guarantee opportunities for a much wider, more diverse group of candidates, by giving them much more flexible options to find their own community of potential voters. One group of disaffected voters could potentially come from a local group or a local street so the whole council would be not represented across the whole Council area and that would be undemocratic. wards are very important in Council areas where there are diverse populations who need to feel represented. Councils should be able to self-determine the make-up of wards to ensure local situations can be taken into account.

There is opportunity to improve understanding of local government representation with a focus on the whole of Council, creating a united council body. There are potential cost savings to hold temporary vacancies (as it stands now, the current system unfairly burdens councils with ward structures in place). The risk is that entrenched members / communities may struggle with the transition to a model without wards. This could be managed by public consultation and engagement design. Members sit on external associations (progress/ratepayers' groups etc.).

There should be at least 1 member for each ward to enable local input. Lor Mayor and Deputy shouldnt be representing any one ward but should be area wide representatives.

There's a lot of discussion which gets caught up on 'communities of interest' and the many ways this can be delineated.

If there are clear communities of interest which span across a whole council, then area councillors, or the removal of wards may work best, however if there are really distinct geographies involved, then wards may well work.

They need to be removed. Elected Members make decisions for the whole council area, they need to be accountable to the whole Council area too!

This is a matter for local communities.

This is an interesting debate. As I said above, people need to understand that they are elected to represent their whole community, but Ward structures put them in boxes and some members are only focused on their Ward and do not act in the best interests of the whole community. I believe it would open up more opportunities if there were no wards or the ward numbers were reduced.

This is dangerous and contradictory to previous goals for larger councils like mine.

This should be up to individual councils to decide. Wards are necessary for large councils and will not produce better outcomes for constituents

under the illusion they are connected to their local community

Ward boundaries are detrimental to council business, because elected members are torn between representing the whole community and their own ward. For example, I have seen grant funding given to applications with lower merit simply to try and achieve greater distribution between wards. This is unfair and councils should fund the best grant applications, regardless of the location of an applicant.

Councillors should always be acting in the best interests of the broader community, and having to represent a ward sometimes makes that very difficult for councillors.

Ward Councillors bring greater understanding of issues in their area helping other Councillors who are less aware of these issues make better decisions. Our Council is over 100kms wide attending meetings and community events across this diverse and geographically large area is an unrealistic expectation. All Councillors have other commitments which enhance their understanding of issues that also impact on the time available to fulfil the role. If this was the the expectation of Councillors, a fulltime wage would be required to cover lost income so they could fulfil the expectations.

Ward councillors enable every resident to have a person specifically representing them and their ward. Without wards, we don't know who to contact, and councillors are not interested in local issues

Ward mergers should be considered if not enough candidates nominate

Ward removal has been tried for a few elections in our council and it was unsuccessful. This is the basis of my decision.

Ward structures need to be removed. The more powerful Councillors are able to use this system to achieve more benefits for their Wards rather than balancing the needs of the whole community.

Wards allow communities of interest to have a voice. Wards are vital in rural areas. It does mean candidates in other wards who received more votes than candidates in another ward may not be elected, but it is the local community in rural areas choosing their representative. Council members are quired to make decisions in the best interest of the whole area anyway. The rural and primary production voice will be lost and disadvantaged if this occurs. Local government is local.

Wards allow for localised representation, ensuring that diverse areas within a jurisdiction have a voice in decision-making. This promotes a more accurate reflection of community needs and priorities. Wards can also enhance accessibility to councilors, as residents have a designated representative for their specific area. Furthermore, wards can foster a sense of community identity and encourage local civic engagement, as residents may feel more connected to decisions that directly affect their immediate surroundings.

Wards are advantageous for hyper-local representation and local knowledge of individual and local issues and history. For example, in the City of Adelaide or the City of Unley, it may be possible to abolish wards. However, this is less feasible for the likes of Port Adelaide-Enfield, where the westernmost and easternmost wards have little in common, let alone interaction.

Wards are artificial boundaries that are unrelated to community of interest. Councillors should represent the entire area only.

Wards are critical for representation regardless of the size of the population of that council. The more amalgamations have happened the more critical it has become to have wards for balanced representation as it protects the representation of minorities. I strongly oppose the removal of wards.

Wards are fundamental to representing varying needs according to location. They also identify who can be approached on a specific issue

Wards are in effect mini seats, similar to the seats of State or Federal Government. Geographical size should be the determining factor. A Councillor of a Ward is still a representative of the whole Council and should conduct themselves as such.

Wards are needed in large council areas so that there is a better engagement of residents with their councillor's.

Splitting large council areas into smaller council areas could negate the need for wards.

Wards are not necessary. Councilors should be across items covering the whole council. Also the preferential voting should definitely be abolished.

Wards are not required. Representatives should understand that they are there for the whole of the Council area

Wards are perhaps necessary in very large geographical Councils and would be critical for any future merged rural Council. Perhaps they could be phased out over a period of time

Wards are the best way to represent on day to day matters , but Crs collectively represent the whole of council , wards must stay

Wards are very important in keeping areas with less population included by having a voice at the table.

Wards based on physical features are useful for planning, policy, and service delivery, but not for political representation as it leads to unhealthy competition for resources that could be to the disadvantage of the council as a whole, especially where some areas are less effectively represented than others.

Wards can be useful in addressing local issues.

wards can curate a divisive atmosphere on councils, I believe that the best practice is where councilors are considerate to the needs of their entire community.

Wards can easily result in a Councillor carving out a small section of the community which helps them get over the line each and every time. It can also contribute to candidates running on single issues which I think is unhelpful in quality governance practices.

Wards create division and vested interest. They aren't fair

Wards create the problem where Elected Members have less focus on the Council as a whole and predominantly focus on ward issues only.

Wards creates friction within Council - "fighting" for funding from the budget etc without following the strategic directions. Council has one strategic plan and one set of priorities - adding wards makes it more complex and in my opinion wastes resources through the "in fighting" for resources. Some Council's basically use Ward Accounting as a way of seeking fairness - ill informed. In small Councils this dilutes funding such that some larger projects do not get funded but often would be better value and serve more ratepayers and tourists.

wards enable monopolisation of a few over the spots; everybody should be as good as everybody else (ie not wards full of poor candidates just because nobody else lives in that area).

Wards encourage parochialism and a battle over what money is spent where rather than looking at the big picture for the whole council area

Wards guarantee where possible local representation, preventing more populated areas, to some extent from dominating council.

Wards have different cultures across council areas. Round pegs for round holes and square pegs for square holes are needed. Just working off number of votes does not mean that the relevant person is a good fit for a particular ward. How then would it be determined which candidates go to which ward if there are several candidates in a number of wards? Not a good idea. It's like having a federal policy applying to each state when each jurisdiction operates differently. Really disagree with the notion of removing wards for those councils where it works effectively.

Wards IMHO seem to entrench 'long term' seat warmers who can count on votesIt discourages new, vibrant candidates!

Wards just create even smaller scale parochialism. All elected members are supposed to act in the interests of the whole of the council area and yet ward by ward decisions are regularly made, to the detriment of strategic decision-making. Wards make it too easy for hyper-local wastage to occur, but they don't enable improved connectivity across the whole community - just an easier avenue for squeaky wheels to get their pet wants met. Wards make life easier for elected members but they don't make things better for the whole community nor result in improved decision-making.

Wards limit the number of quality people who can be elected as they may all be located in the same ward. Like senators, they should represent the whole electorate.

Wards mean there are representatives from all parts of the area not a concentrated group with a narrow area of focus.

Wards seem like a good idea, and in my experience they ensure the whole council area is represented.

Wards should be maintained. A lot of community members feel disenfranchised due to the lack of connection with council. Removal would risk further disenfranchisement.

Wards should be removed - elected members should be acting in the interest of the whole community they serve

wards should be removed if the total number of candidate is less than twenty for each council election at council area

Wards should be removed, they promote parochialism and confuse councillors who are elected on the basis of the ward but are then told to ignore it when making decisions

Wards should provide more local representation in large councils but when councillors live outside the ward this isn't the case

Wards tend to encourage a local bias in some elected members and to conflict with the principle that, once elected, Councillors should be representatives for the whole council area. There are pros and cons to ward based elections. In a large regional council, some members of the community are reassured by

knowing that some positions must be filled from their local area, however it does not help overall community cohesion in the region.

We don't have wards, my partners council does in the City and I do honestly think that the wards don't benefit the community and in fact can create in house issues between council members.

We strongly support wards being retained. A councillor living in a local area can often understand issues of their neighbourhood as often they are experiencing the same or similar issues and thus can both support their ward and whole of council issues

Where there are wards, Councillors will be biased to make decisions that benefit their ward, and those that vote for them, over the strategic benefit to the Council

Yes councils should continue to have wards. There is no benefit to removing council wards as all wards are required to have equivalent elector and member ratios to ensure the 'one vote, one value' principle. Having a council wide no ward system does not guarantee opportunities for a much wider, more diverse group of candidates, by giving them much more flexible options to find their own community of potential voters. One group of disaffected voters could potentially come from a local group or a local street so the whole council would be not represented across the whole Council area and that would be undemocratic. Yes – wards are very important in Council areas where there are diverse populations who need to feel represented. Councils should be able to self-determine the make-up of wards to ensure local situations can be taken into account.

Yes keep wards, makes the positions more personable to the community

Yes! The ward system is undemocratic and better be removed.

Wards currently have little positive influence. There is generally no good that can come from pitting one ward against another.

If a council has wards then the rural wards would be able to elect the representative which best meets their needs and requirements, the urban wards would be able to elect the councillor who best meets their needs and at the council meetings each representative would have 1 vote, whereas without wards every councillor elected may represent the urban population or at least the vast majority of those elected would represent the urban community based purely on population - if you have a large town of 10000 people and a few small rural areas with a total population of several 100 in the same council area, it stands to reason that most of those people in the large town would vote for those candidates that they know and respect, giving them a majority if not a monopoly on the council

Confusion (or a lack of understanding) would appear to exist, that a ward structure guarantees representation from a more specific geographical area – and this in reality is just not the case. Ward representation is based on population/elector number ratios, so the greater the population, the greater the representation would be within a ward structure.

Additionally, a candidate does not have to reside in a ward area to nominate for that ward.

Communities (electors) will largely determine the representation that best suits the community – so a ward system does not appear beneficial or required.

The ward system may also be a somewhat archaic legislative approach – and this used to include financial accounting by wards. The connectivity and mobility of candidates/members across a community suggests ward structures may be less relevant now.

I support the retention of Wards, I am a firm believer that as a ward councillor you build a repo of respect and trust overtime with your constituents and also really get to know and understand the needs of your Patch so to speak, in regards to no wards, the constituents will find it hard to build that connection of trust knowing that there is no specific councillor that they can rely on when the need arises because councillors will not have a specific area but across all council.

in my opinion this will diminish that repo of trust between constituents and elected members as it will be like a box of chocolates, they never know which they going to get. With a lot of development under way which means an increase of constituents / population moving into our city of Charles Sturt our rate payers will be better served by a ward situation.

In my experience, where Wards existed, Councillors will concentrate on 'their Ward' to the exclusion of the whole Council area and will make decisions based solely on that perception. These Councillors overlook their undertaking to serve for the greater good of their whole community. Often votes are lost or won on a NIMBY attitude rather than a 'greater good' principle.

Retaining Wards based solely on ever changing population size will require constant and costly re-assessing of the facts used to determine locations, boundaries and voter numbers of each Ward. Removing Wards will require Councillors to be seen to be considering 'Whole of Council' issues.

Councils should have wards, but decided by each council as they currentluy are

No, should be a community choice.

Lack of effective representation for small towns / regional areas

If amalgamations are going to enforced then wards make that more palatable

Councils should continue to have wards. Particularly in vast regional areas having wards is important for the community. Councils / community already have a mechanism through the electoral representation review process to abolish wards if this is deemed appropriate.

There are risks in removing wards: diversity of Council Members would not be achieved as it is likely most would come from the more heavily populated towns and there would be difficulty in serving larger areas (potentially thousands of square kilometres) to ensure constituent needs are met.

Varying comments/views were expressed:

- I do not believe wards are necessary and removal of wards would ensure that there is no favouritism for any particular ward.
- The Ward system may preclude some people from nominating.
- Yes, because areas of low socio economic are underrepresented when there are no wards due to the nature of elected members work. Often it attracts retirees and business owners. We need to attract more diversity such as people who work shift work, people from low socio economic backgrounds.
- No – members should consider the needs and interests of the entire community rather than focusing solely on a specific geographic area.

Noting: - City of Mount Gambier has not had wards for several Council terms, but will be conducting an Elector Representation Review between April 2024 – April 2025 which requires consideration and consultation on Ward Options. - The only Local Government Act 1999 provisions that reference Wards are those that relate to their creation/review and election of Councillors as representatives: o S9 Powers of Governor - to (re)divide/alter, name and allocate number of Councillors to represent wards. o S12 Composition - review of ward structure o S27 Reform Proposals – proposals to change wards o S34

Ward Quotas - considerations relating to ward boundaries o S52 Councillors – elected as representatives o S301 Boundaries – that line along middle of a river, stream or watercourse described as a boundary will be the boundary. Other provisions in the Act refer to the Council ‘area’ as a whole or to the ‘community’, the ‘public’, ‘residents’, ‘ratepayers’, ‘visitors’, ‘electors’, ‘individuals and groups’, business, commerce, industry and tourism’, but not specifically to wards, such that all Councillors are responsible to the broad cross-section of the community not just those tht elected them as a Ward or Area Councillor

Varying views have been expressed: - Probably - No, should be left to Councils.

Varying views have been expressed:

- Opportunity for more candidates perhaps.
- Less diversity, people being left voiceless. Wards also offer a transitional period after Councils merge I.e. the City of Mount Gambier was formed after a merger. This Council then removed them. The District Council of Grant was formed after a merger and the former Port MacDonnell Council retained a ward. They can offer people some assurances they won’t be forgotten post mergers.

Noting

- The City of Mount Gambier has evolved from once being the Town Council of Mount Gambier created in 1876. During its 150 year history the Town Council has had various ward structures until removed at the 2020 local government elections following an elector representation review in the preceding years. Wards were not re-introduced following review in 2016/2017, and will be re-considered in the next review between April 2024 2025. With the exception of boundary re-alignments as Mount Gambier has grown, the Town/City of Mount Gambier is not known to have had any historical amalgamations or mergers. This contrasts with the District Council of Grant which has evolved from both amalgamation (and separation?) of several district councils since the late 1800’s. This includes the former District Councils of Mount Gambier East and Mount Gambier West (understood to have separated and later amalgamated to become the District Council of Mount Gambier) but all being separate to the Town/City Council of Mount Gambier).
- Some members have not had experience with wards.
- Elector Representation Reviews should retain consideration of wards ONLY IF they currently/continue to retain wards. Consideration to wards should not be a mandatory consideration for Council’s that have removed wards in the past.
- Consideration to re-introducing wards should only arise from a specific reform proposal under Chapter 3 Part 2 (i.e. Sections 26-32C)

Position: Yes. This should be considered as part of any elector representation review, and not established as a requirement within legislation

Councils address this matter as part of Representation Reviews (conducted at least once every 8 years in line with a gazetted schedule).

Removal of wards may discourage nominations as candidates would need to raise their profile within the whole Council area.

The removal of wards would likely result in a cost implication for candidates as they may need to campaign across the whole area. Factional voting could also become a factor for some Councils and communities.

Removal of wards could also lead to a decrease in nominations.

Councils should continue to have wards as members are able to learn the intricacies of a particular area which in turn, benefits the community as members are able to act as experts on their ward.

Additionally, having a smaller resident base to service allows for more time to focus on strategic council

wide decisions.

No wards run the risk that one area is not represented whilst another area is overrepresented which can sway decision making

Opinions were divided on this matter. Some argued councils should have the capacity to decide their wards and representative structure, whilst others argued that wards should only remain in councils with the size to warrant their retention. A suggestion was put forward for a mixed council of both general positions and ward-based positions

Council believes that ward structures should be maintained and be determined by each individual council. The current process of representation reviews should continue which allows Councils to consult with their communities and determine their own locally tailored structure.

It should be at the discretion of individual Councils and their communities as to how their Local Government area is structured. This is currently undertaken as part of a Council's Representation Review.

Council became unsubdivided in 2014 and confirmed to remain without wards in its last electoral representation review in 2022. However, at the risk of repeating ourselves, one size does not fit all, and the periodic electoral reviews undertaken by all councils already consider the best fit for their community. An argument often cited against a removal of wards is the risk of some areas and smaller towns no longer having direct representation. However, whether elected as a Ward or Area Councillor, we all work for the betterment of the entirety of our respective local government areas.

We understand that candidates from smaller towns or rural areas may find it more difficult to achieve the required number of votes, but this is a question of engagement with communities outside their immediate locality, rather than one to be dealt with by stipulating the establishment or removal of Wards.

As per our previous comments, we should allow the democratic process to do its job to ensure representation.

Maintain wards for metropolitan Councils because this gives residents a consistent point of contact about diverse needs, priorities and issues within their ward. It is important that residents can voice their concerns and follow up with their local councillor

Wards do not exist in the Council, which is a cohesive and discrete Council area with one city and no significant outlying communities. However, Councils which have more than one significant population centre should be able to determine for themselves whether to have wards.

Not applicable to small councils; however in larger Councils, having wards benefits localised issue resolution

Yes, wards should be kept in councils where size warrants their retention; however community profile dependent (townships may be spread and larger rural Councils) particularly previously merged Councils.

If candidates were required to reside in the ward for which they nominate, there may be better understanding of wards structures and more benefit generally.

Currently, given any member can nominate for any ward (regardless of where in the council area they reside) it appears to cause only division and confusion for the community.

Whilst wards have historically been extremely relevant, the accessibility and transient nature of communities presently has decreased their importance, and councils have moved away from 'ward

accounting'. Members also generally take a wholistic approach, debating recommendations on behalf of the whole of the council area.

The elimination of wards is not without merit, Councils would need to undertake strong community consultation.

No, as this still does not change that a member does not need to reside in the ward to be the representative, so any delineation becomes irrelevant.

This should be a matter for each Council to determine with its community. If the State supports the retention of the concept of Wards, noting that wards are only referenced in the Local Government Act in the representation review provisions, ward naming provision, ward quota provision, and that Councillors are appointed as representatives of the area as a whole (whether or not the area is divided into wards). Accordingly, the purpose of wards is only for election of representatives, no other practical purpose, with ward councillors responsible for the area as a whole the same as any other ward or areas councillor. Councils that do not have wards should NOT have to consider wards at each elector representation review unless the sitting council support reviewing a ward structure.

No, should be left to Councils to determine as part of the Representation Review process. Consideration to re-introducing wards should only arise from a specific reform proposal under Chapter 3 Part 2 (i.e. Sections 26-32C) and should not have to be considered as a mandatory requirement of an elector representation review.

Alternatively, elector representation, quotas, wards and the administration of these could be a matter for the Local Government Boundaries Commission (and/or with the Electoral Commission) so that Council's/Members (and their administrations) are not conducting and endorsing the reviews that relate to their own positions.

Yes wards should be retained, so wards can have a voice and be heard. Removing wards may cause specific areas to receive preferential treatment. At City of Salisbury for example, the St Kilda area would have less representation than a more densely populated city centre area.

Whilst the current processes can be inefficient, supports the underlying premise of the current regulatory arrangements, namely that councils have the flexibility to remove or maintain wards, based upon public consultation.

This council has not had wards for a number of years, at each representation review electing to have area councillors for the following reasons:

- Area councillors are more likely to consider the needs of the entire area, not a smaller segment of the council
- Lessens arguing for 'their patch' in decision making
- The purpose of wards is only for the election / distribution of representatives so there is no practical purpose to wards outside of the nomination and election process, as all members elected to council are representatives of the whole council area.

Yes, wards could only be kept in councils if the population warrants wards.

1. Councils that cover a large area would be difficult to be served diligently by EM's given the amount of travel, and intimate geographical knowledge that is required. Remembering that many EM's are also fulltime employed and don't have the time to travel large distances.
2. Ward councillors know to their constituents and have good local connections, knowledge and contact
3. Wards give the ratepayer more access to their elected member. Benefit of keeping wards.

Yes. Wards are beneficial in having candidates that have better knowledge of the local ward area and who understand the needs of that community. Wards can prevent all candidates being from the same area and certain areas feeling unrepresented

Council wards provide an opportunity for a close relationship between elected members and the area they represent. This opportunity is lost when a councillor is required to represent and be familiar with the much larger area of an entire council area.

Wards also facilitate the election of independent members of the public who run election campaigns without the backing of political parties who have much greater finances and workforce at their disposal. Thus, wards are a great contributor to local democracy and should be retained.

This idea of doing away with wards again appears to be politically motivated. Elected members in local government are not bound by the constraints of a homogenous political party. Wards allow for difference and for nonpolitical representation. While elected members are free to join a political party should they wish to, they should always take a local viewpoint and not be bound by party policies

The idea that size is a determinant of a ward is a fallacious argument. The so-called 'economies of scale' mitigate against democratic representation and discriminate based on size as a factor.

It should be left up to individual councils to decide whether they wish to retain wards or not.

Our group considers that this depends on the Council and community. In some areas, wards work well and there would be a need for them eg Mt Barker. However, in other areas, i.e. the country areas, area councils (no wards) could work better. If there are no wards, there is a greater amount of work to cover the whole council area, and this may discourage people from nominating as it increases the time and costs considerably. Logical ward structures create an effective and efficient method of managing communication and engagement with constituents in those areas, much like state and federal electoral districts do. If the nominee lives in the ward, they will likely have a deeper and more experienced knowledge and understanding of the specific issues in that ward, within the context of the wider council area. These criteria were important in the community response to the representative review associated with the City of Adelaide where a ward structure was retained.

We believe both are required and will depend on factors applicable to the Council area, including: communities of interests, demographics, size, geography, diversity or commonality of operational issues, and local characteristics. We believe each Council should make this decision themselves, with the voice of their community included in their decision-making process. However, where a process miscarries or apparently does not meet the requirements of the legislation, for example, as was the view of ECSA in the last review of the City of Adelaide, it is appropriate that ECSA makes a determination

From the perspective of a Council without wards it is difficult to comment. Acknowledged is the need for Elected Members to make decisions in their chamber on a holistic approach however, evidence suggests this is not always the case. From experience as an area Council, a natural outcome of elections sees members from different geographical areas represented.

Council has moved to a 'no ward' system and seven council members plus a mayor elected at large, which came into effect at the 2022 elections. Reasons for this included bringing the council members into a more holistic view of the whole council (rather than ward focused), and the difficulty experienced with drawing ward boundaries in rural areas.

There are merits for the Ward structure in some councils, and other councils work effectively without them. We are unsure that having or not having a ward structure effects the quality and diversity of

candidates, however the ward system can ensure representation from diverse council demographics, particularly in large rural councils

Retention of Ward system. I believe local representation at this level of Government is critical for the constituents. The increased size of West Ward in Alexandrina Council proof that too big an area means under representation for the constituents and frustration for the Elected Members

Topic 2: Required training for candidates (2.5)

'Training' does not have to be an arduous course however set guidelines of expectations and outcomes should be set out and agreed upon.

1. Host regular workshops where current or former council members, local government officials, and experts discuss the responsibilities, challenges, and expectations of council members. These workshops can provide practical insights and answer specific questions from potential candidates.
2. Create comprehensive online resources, including guides, videos, and interactive platforms, that detail the responsibilities, processes, and best practices for council members. Make these resources easily accessible to potential candidates.
3. Offer shadowing opportunities where interested individuals can spend time with current council members, attend meetings, and observe day-to-day activities. This firsthand experience can provide valuable insights into the role's realities.
4. Host networking events that bring together current council members, potential candidates, community leaders, and local stakeholders. These events can facilitate meaningful conversations, knowledge sharing, and collaboration opportunities.

Some people had a bad experience at the last elections when it came to filling out the gifts and benefits form. This form was very difficult to understand for first time nominees.

A brief overview of the expectations of new councillors should be sufficient.

A full information package of expectations. And commitments of being a Councillor. Same as any prospective job position has a list of roles and responsibilities

A general information page and expectations set out to give to people considering running for council should be enough. true leadership is a skill that requires authenticity and compassion, lead and not follow, therefore instruction is based loosely on following a protocol, however people would prefer to vote based on a person's integrity.

a meeting with those who are considering with a list of what is required and what and what not you can achieve

A mentoring program.

A mini induction could be done prior to nominating.

Once elected, a more formal induction done to tour council offices & sites while being introduced to council staff.

A must.

A rigorous selection process needs to be implemented but how to control this independently may need external bodies perhaps from the people select from the professions such as accountants, lawyers, medical, and engineering.

A simple video explaining it when nominating. People should not have to spend time going through training etc. when they aren't even elected.

A TAFE run free course would be ideal. It should be made available online.

A terms and agreement form that is read and signed. Also a job description form that must be signed before taking office.

Absolutely. Fortunately, I had financial, legal, project, technology, infrastructure and planning, governance, audit, compliance, conflict resolution, change management, community engagement, risk management & legislative experience before I went on council. But so few elected members have the required knowledge or experience to handle the workload of being an elected member on council. Even fewer have the skills to be able to review information presented by council administration to ascertain what is truthful or selective or misleading. It would be helpful for past elected members to talk to candidates, for candidates to be aware of the challenges and workload and knowledge requirements to be effective on council. The LGA association is about protecting Council administration interests, not elected members nor new candidates.

Advertise what councilors do better in the campaigning, perhaps some case study information would be useful

AEC/LGA delivered Digital Communications piece on the regular life of Councillors to give example of the roles of elected members representing country/metro, male and female perspective and people from CALD groups.

All applicants should be required to have police clearance for working with children, and not be an undischarged bankrupt or have been convicted of certain types of offences.

All nominations should receive full details on the amount of time and material plus training that they have to undergo

All nominees to read and acknowledge understanding the current Local Government Act.

Allow prospective elected members to sit in on 2 or 3 council meetings as observers.

Allowing potential candidates to complete an optional online training course prior to nominating would build knowledge and understanding of the requirements of being an Elected Member. This course should be optional so as to not limit potential candidates.

An information session on the procedures and what to expect on Election day. Our Election day done by ECSA was completely uninformed and left us all not knowing when our Ward was being counted !! Not when our scrutineers were required. Total shambles.

Apart from Meeting procedures, they should undertake training about appropriate conduct and representing minority groups eg ATSI, CALD and the Disability community.

As long as they are well informed and understand the role at the time they take office, I don't think it matters.

As well as training should include accreditation to ensure they understand their responsibility's

Attacks on social media discourage people from nominating, need the ability to protect members once elected.

Social Media Training

Attend council meetings as an observer before they nominate, interview a councillor before they nominate

attend Information session and encouraged to watch and listen to debate in chamber

Attend meetings and see what the council members do. This should be mandatory. I know of many people who did not attend council meetings and thought it was easy. You have to be able to make decisions. If you find that hard: then Council is not for you

Before you can nominate you should have already been involved in SOME community organisation. Your Church, sporting club, children's school, childcare centre, Organisation like St Johns, CFS/SES.....Scouts, But you'd need to provide some sort of verifiable reference what within the last 10 years you'd been an active & rule abiding member. . Of course those in paid employment like finance (accountants) , teachers, lawyers ect ect who have professional standards to uphold & adhere to would fulfil the role. AND that once you were elected, if you did NOT abide to the 'rules' your elected position could be withdrawn.

Buddy them with a current or ex councillor
require governing service background, town committee

Candidates could be offered training that would assist them to operate from day one such as legal obligations and a practical overview of local government and the role of a Councillor.

Candidates could benefit from training such as cultural responsiveness training with regard to multicultural issues, particularly understanding and respecting Aboriginal culture. As well as training on how council meetings operate and the roles and responsibilities of a council member

Candidates should be required to complete mandatory training prior to nominating – similar to the mandatory training for Council Members once elected.

Candidates who are elected by surprise are the ones that tend to not make it through a council term as they are not aware of the scope of their role and the time it takes, ensuring that all candidates are aware of this prior to nomination will ensure that candidates have some awareness of what they are nominating for

Candidates who wave a single banner such as Sporting Facilities or Community Health may have little regard for all the other topics that are under the purvey of the council. ie a family member is a councillor and the volume of reading and agenda items they receive is frightening.

A lot of the bureaucracy is a turn off for potential community members who have no idea of the admin activities.

Cert in Local Government before hand. So often the candidates are misinformed or ignorant of the responsibilities of council vs state government, and conflate the two
AICD course - company directors learn to disagree respectfully, that they make decisions as a group
The Governor's Leadership Foundation Program help to see multiple perspectives, deal with one's own issues, and tackle challenging adaptive leadership issues of our society

Compulsory information session prior to accepting their nomination.
They need to know what is required in the Primary Return
They need to know the requirements on their time for meetings at council and for training sessions
They need to know how being a councillor impacts their them as ratepayers in regards to personal building applications or grant applications etc etc, that they are held to a higher standard.
They need to know the types of decisions they will be required to make and their role and the staffs role.
They are there to be effective, not to rubber stamp decision of staff.

Considering you don't really provide an option above I think the training should be required following the election and if implemented before nomination should have grounds to opt out based on experience or expertise.

The current training is not sufficient but putting another barrier in front of the election is not a great solution when a lack of candidates is the problem.

Continue and expand on online topics of interest and offerings.
Should point out that it's not just Council meetings you are committing to, the gamut of roles and responsibilities

Council agendas contain many complicated issues including planning control. Put in the hands of people without prior knowledge can be devastating to the community

Council supports the concept of ensuring candidates have a proper level of awareness about what is required of an Elected Member.

Councillors can stay well-informed and understand their roles by participating in regular training programs, workshops, and seminars on governance, policy-making, and community engagement. Encouraging mentorship programs where experienced councillors guide newcomers can also be beneficial. Providing comprehensive orientation materials, access to relevant resources, and facilitating networking opportunities with experts in various fields can further enhance councillors' knowledge and understanding of their roles. Most Importantly- Regular updates on local issues and ongoing communication with constituents contribute to a well-rounded understanding of community needs.

Councillors make financial, environmental, structural decisions costing ratepayers millions of dollars WITHOUT formal qualifications or experience in these fields! Can a teacher teach without a degree?? I attend almost every council meeting in my area. I am horrified at some of the decisions these cowboys inflict on our community! This needs to stop!!!

Councillors should be required to participate in some form of professional development before they are allowed to re-nominate.
In particular financial decision making and understanding legislation.

Councillors should have a basic understanding of how Council works, the variation between strategic direction (The Councillors) and operations (The Council Employees) The ability to understand cash flows, how to read a cash balance report, and competent computer literacy. The ability to engage with stakeholders is most important. Most of the requirements could be included in a Councillors handbook, distributed on nomination..

Councillors should have mental health and health checks when they run and every couple years to make sure they are mentally and physically fit to run for council.

Councillors will do many things in their role and need to be trained for it. There should be a learning module for candidates to use to learn about the role. And a separate compulsory training module once elected.

Currently, there is no mechanism for the public to assess, in any meaningful way, the character and integrity of candidates who nominate for election. Requiring candidates to publicly provide a SAPOL criminal history check, which is published on the internet, along with their nomination, would enable the public to be in an informed position when choosing the candidate that is best equipped to represent them.

Depends on who, where what & why is doing the traing, not just for the sake of someone getting a job for jam for mates or that its just a scam for using taxpayer funds to do it.

DHS Check is a standard expectation of the community

Disband Council

Diversity (however it is defined) must be balanced against suitability and ability to fulfill the functions of a role. For example, it would be reasonable to expect a minimum level of integrity and good character from elected officials, so a standard such as having to have a current 'working with children' or a national police check could be appropriate. It is also reasonable to expect candidates to put in a minimum amount of effort in their candidacy, for example, by being required to attend 'meet the candidate' events, or similar.

Educated and skilled people only should be considered for roles

Education campaign on the role of local government and services provided. Its more than garbage collection.

Education, training and reminding should be based on principles of adult education; relevant to local and individual circumstances; and delivered at 'arm's length' from the council's corporate entity

Electoral Commission SA should be responsible for developing and delivering the training
The training should be developed and delivered by a governing institution that can control the intellectual material and has appropriate training qualifications

Encourage more nominees and insitute compulsory voting, it is then up to the voters to determine if candidates have a siffucent grasp of the role or would do a good job. We shouldn't be trying to 'guide democracy'

Encourage them to attend Council meetings before nominating

Enforcing conflict of interests with stronger effort and consequences

Engage with existing Elected Members to be on Q&A panels at information sessions to discuss the role with prospective candidates

Ensure political allegiance is declared

Ensure those without means or who are disabled are not negatively impacted by needing to attend training

Ensuring the candidates have ease of access to the information to inform their decision to nominate

Fill in a survey which asks enough questions that makes the candidate aware of their responsibilities

Formal Local Government training should not be required

Given my earlier observations, I agree that training is necessary. I also disagree that it might put off good people. It should not put off good people and I expect it should put off people who should not put their hand up.

GO to Council Meetings , be allocated a working Councilor to see what's involved in meetings and other Council work done in their own time , seeing ward ratepayers, corner meetings paperwork , Council and ratepayer issues.

Governance training, experience in being a board member of a club or association, financial knowledge would benefit candidates and generate more community confidence

Have a nominee induction pack regarding expectations and key policies and procedures. Nominees sign to show they have read and understood the expectations

Have a way to inform new members, but training is over the top

Have optional information sessions and strongly encourage people to attend.

have roles and obligations listed clearly on council website

having some form of training after nomination could be an advantage so the candidate understands the process and obligations of running. An overview could also be an advantage but at the beginning of the term may also be enough time to induct elected councillors and invest directly into those that have been elected.

How will future candidates be able to "understand the role" when the current activities of the council all take place behind closed doors and even council employees seem to be unclear on the finances, e.g a \$150k debt caused by council negligence suddenly ballooned to \$900k overnight?

I agree that more needs to be done to get people considering running to attend briefing sessions held by councils prior to elections. This will give them the grounding and explain how council works. I do know of a person who ran on a platform of changing everything and promising everything - he was elected in a majority landslide, but once in he realised very quickly that he was unable to do anything he promised and had to find ways to make that ok with his constituents. Working in the Governance team it could

have been a nightmare, but he was very humble and learnt quickly the way to do things - in much part to the fabulous training he was provided by my then Manager and team.

I agree that people should attend some kind of training, as long as that, in itself, doesn't become a barrier for people to apply.

- language as a second language,
- cost
- learning disabilities,

I am amazed at how many candidates I meet have no idea what they standing for, or the requirements of the role. Pre-election training is required, even if no more than 2 hours, it's something that will help.

I am not sure that it is mandatory training in the true sense, but some kind of orientation and induction to the role is essential. Those nominating need to have some idea of the commitment required and the responsibilities associated with becoming an Elected Member.

I believe informal training prior to nominating would be beneficial for those who are not entirely confident in the official aspects of the role. The LGA resources are great, however, more in person sessions could be useful. I think mandatory training should remain as a post election task due to the cost and difficulty some may have accessing it.

I believe some mandatory training is required but there should be recognition of prior experience and learning that may not require everyone to complete all aspects of training.

I do not see the point of mandatory training. It appears that the intention of this discussion is to encourage people to nominate, not put them off!

A lot of people who nominate do not understand the role or time requirements. I think that these can be better outlined in the candidate handbook / optional drop-in sessions. I don't see what mandatory training would do.

I don't believe that training should be required of candidates. Not only would this lower participation rates, but it risks violating a fundamental principle of representative democracy that government is by and of the people. The government should have no authority to circumscribe who may be elected (beyond some basic legal and procedural matters).

I find this a hard question to answer. I think there must be minimum standards of integrity that apply to all nominating candidates - but this is less about training, and more about eligibility perhaps. It would be great to offer support to those thinking about nominating - and this would be best in the form of one-on-one support - so that potential nominees could be matched with someone who might be able to relate to their lived experience or perspective. Blanket training requirements are likely to continue to privilege certain voices, especially if they are costly, time consuming or assume certain skills eg digital literacy.

I like the idea but it won't create a better turn out of electors. Post election training is adequate

I think any education should be in house, mentor ship style training by someone equal to the role

I think it is reasonable to have a potential onboarding process to allow candidates to understand the position they are taking on, however it should not be overly laborious a course

I think it only needs to be a relatively short online type introductory training.

I think it would be prudent to split the training required into two sections. The first is a brief introduction to the role and responsibilities which is completed before or during the nomination process. The second is a much more in depth training course about what to do, how to do it, the current state of the council and its agendas etc, which would be completed after being elected. The initial training in the nomination shouldn't be much longer than an hour or two but the second should be between a day and a weeks worth.

I think some level of minimum requirements for council members should be enforced, such as digital literacy training and basic comprehension. I required reading and understanding for councilors is of a high level as is the time requirements for them to undertake their duties. I think an introductory training of this is what you can expect and is expected of you would be appropriate.

I think that those interested in local government should get an opportunity to find out what Council is about.

The people who aren't sure about running but probably should may be dissuaded by mandatory trainings thinking they don't have exactly what it takes while the arrogant buffoons who don't have the foggiest idea what Council's actually do and rate themselves too highly, won't be dissuaded anyway.

I think the information is sufficient.

I think the training should occur after someone has successful been elected into the position. I would however like to see police checks and/or working with vulnerable people checks, occur as part of the nomination process.

I think there should be test

I think they need the training - as long it is presented well and encourages the idea of public service. It would need to be quality and engaging training

If increasing pay is being considered then increasing professionalism is required. Mandatory training and background clearances must be implemented.

If the community considered that person suitable for the role, it is sufficient to only present the role/job description as in any regular position.

If the role is clear on the commitment to time, for example, is it a .5 FTE time commitment or a 0.2 FTE time commitment then people can manage to find a balance with other commitments to nominate.

If this change is made, there needs to be an education campaign, run every election, so that people thinking of running know the requirement and have time to complete the training.

If you introduced training before hand then people would know what the standards of behaviour are. They would know the required reading and engagement with community. I know of council members who did not realise what was involved and are just turning up because they have to. If sessions beforehand put people off, that is better than having people elected who realise it's not for them but is too late!

In addition to mandatory training, individual councils should undertake information sessions that review the strategic plan, committee work, etc.

In any organisation individuals are provided with a job description. This is a must and they are not to step outside of the decision making parameters set by state govts.

In preparing for nomination, candidates would benefit from compulsory completion of online course(s) which provide an understanding of the requirements for campaigning, protocols and functions of an elected member and their role as a local government representative.

New elected members would also benefit from improved understanding of Council meeting procedures at the commencement of their term. As such, guest attendance at Council meetings should be encouraged or even introduced as a prerequisite of the nomination process.

Informal training e.g. webinars before nomination could assist if there is no cost; no barriers for people with a learning difficulty, language barriers etc. and offer online choice. Informal training, such as a short online course, before candidates nominate provide insight into a council member's role before they put the time and energy into running. However it may also discourage candidates the same as it might maximise the chances of a person being really committed before they stand and are potentially elected. The training should be developed and delivered by a governing institution that can control the intellectual material and has appropriate training qualifications e.g. SA Electoral Commission in conjunction with LGA.

Informal training is good. There could be an information session, then informal training for candidates, then perhaps more structured training for successful candidates.

Information for candidates about the requirements and workloads involved in sitting on Council should however be made part of the nomination process and include a 'tick box' to acknowledge the candidate has read it.

Information for candidates could be made available online. This information could be available for all community members so they might be informed as to what they could expect from their representatives. Ongoing training could be a part of the role.

Information is already available to candidates to inform them of their duties and responsibilities. My greater concern is that once elected they do not have the financial skills to responsibly undertake their role responsibly and effectively.

Information sessions for those considering nominating for Council are a good idea, but not training.

Information sessions must be attended at least once to nominate

Information sessions need to be provided

Information sessions- online training before nominating

Information sessions run by councils with standardised info from central body to ensure consistent message. Some way to make the attending of this course public knowledge so people know who did and d

Information should be provided at least 12 months out from election time.

Investigate a QR Code application of providing the information instead of reams of paper and big glossy pictures with online training

It is clear that many Councillors do not understand what will be required of them before they nominate, and do not seem to do their own homework on this.

It may be beneficial, and this should be based around raising awareness of elected member responsibilities to assist in understanding of roles and responsibilities if elected. This should not be promoted as 'training' but rather information and awareness improvement.

It may be that informal training, such as a short online course, before candidates nominate provide insight into a council member's role before they put the time and energy into running. However it may also discourage candidates the same as it might maximise the chances of a person being really committed before they stand and are potentially elected.

It should be mandatory to attend an information session that informs of the roles and responsibilities of an elected member prior to standing. Some people put their hand up with no clue of what they are actually putting in for.

It should be highly encouraged but not mandatory to attend council meetings prior to standing.

It will help identify candidates in regards to what is needed in a community sense.

It would be useful if candidates watched meetings before nominating, so that they had some understanding of the formalities

It would be very reasonable for candidates to be 'tested' to see if they can understand the minutes of previous council meetings, how they would contribute to the council meeting agendas, what areas of council eg finance, sport and recreation, planning for future housing development, communications and the important aspect of modern life being social inclusion particularly for the elderly and those living alone which is an ever-growing demographic that they can best contribute to. If they cannot understand what their responsibilities are to the council and the broader community, they are effectively taking the position ahead of a more suitable candidate.

It's a big commitment, and I think people who nominate need to understand that. If requiring them to commit to training is a barrier, they're probably not the right person for the job! If they can't commit to a single training session, can they really commit for four years?

Just need to ensure people selected to run for council are competent (people) who can absorb and benefit from the training.

Learn on the job!

Less candidates may be interested if having to attend training

Let community decide

LGA should be responsible for developing and delivering training

Make the education neuroinclusive so that people of diverse experiences and levels of education and passion can be involved.

Mandatory information session as a minimum, unsure!

Mandatory information sessions or training

mandatory information sessions with a short quiz.
police checks

Mandatory notification /reporting suspected child abuse - for CHILD PROTECTION and national police security checks - should be mandatory. Anything else should not be mandated. Democracy does not require degrees, certificates or stipulation in conformity. Democracy by definition means every voice counts. Every voice.
Just as it truly is.

Competent Trainings and skills development can be made available , voluntarily and in good faith by professionally ACCOUNTABLE cert. providers, educators or trainers.

Mandatory training after election should be a non-negotiable. Training beforehand on what to expect in terms of commitment and responsibilities would be useful in assisting people decision if they want to nominate for council, but I'm not convinced that it is the right time for training.

Mandatory training BEFORE nominating could be a deterrent, but a mandatory information session of an hour or so would be very beneficial. However, lots of training is needed for successful candidates, and that should all be mandatory.

Mandatory training for Council staff undertaking Candidate information sessions

Mandatory training in the for of decision making, anti sexual harassment training, reporting of abuse and neglect, listening and communication etc.

Mandatory Training may be "too hard" mentally

mandatory training or equivalent training required

Questionnaire attach to nomination

Council use to supervise volunteer sub committees (town oval, hall, events,) running them near council standards. Working with council gave volunteer knowledge on council Management workings. And practise having a role and its requirements. setting them up as future councillors.

Mandatory training should be conducted by the LGA. Candidates should be required to undertake a very brief introductory training session before nominating with a more detailed programme undertaken upon election.

Mandatory training, which could be as simple as having to attend an online information session or watch an informative video with a brief competency test at the end to test understanding of the content.

Many candidates are one issue candidates and do not have a solid understanding of the system of local government. Training on the functions that elected members will have to undertake would be useful for those considering running in an election.

Many elected c members come into Council with a very limited understanding of what and how Council works.

Many new members come onto Council not fully understanding what their responsibilities are and whilst a candidate information session is held this is a general overview. Having a more interact and in-depth information session where current or past members provide insights would be helpful.

Maybe talking to a sitting councillor

Mayors and councilors should proactively visit community groups and sporting clubs to discuss the work of council and how they actively be involved.

Students approaching voting age should be actively encouraged to participate in council activities and meetings. There should be no barrier to students being active members of Council subcommittees.

Meetings between current elected members and prospective nominees to talk about the role and the experience of being on Council

Mind your own business it's not your role to interfere.

Minimum qualifications, pre-nomination test

More non-mandatory information sessions, both face-to-face, online and recorded on the role and limits of an elected member, as well as the role of councils in general. If this could be tailored to the specifics of the council that the person is considering running for it would be more beneficial.

Need a full position description breaking down responsibilities and estimated time that should be spent each week/month on the tasks

Need to understand minimum legislative requirements.

New Candidates should also be required to attend a Council Meeting/s prior to nominating.

Obviously police checks are undertaken prior to confirming a nomination. Again, confirmation from the candidate to confirm awareness of the wider role of councils in community sustainment and maintenance. (Somehow be able to remove single platform people from the candidate process, unless they are willing to expand their capacities to these wider community support areas - probably difficult to undertake though.)

Offer training regarding the role, but do not make it mandatory. Mandatory training would deter some people from considering to apply. The time for mandatory training is when councillors are elected and ready to undertake the role.

Offering mentoring to candidates to help them understand the role requirements. There needs to be a 'try before you buy' campaign say in the last six months of the council term. There needs to be some criteria or threshold in relation to security and integrity before you can be accepted by the Electoral Commission as a candidate. For example, if you have been convicted of a criminal offence.

Often candidates nominate and campaign on an agenda of which they as individuals have little or no control over, many time legislation stands in their way or it is totally unachievable. They only find these things out once elected, they sit there bagging, disrupting, blocking good progress of the other councilors. Proper training is essential.

Once a candidate is elected I think they need training in the the rules of meetings and the legal obligations of Council and councillors. They should not be able to participate in meetings until they have done this.

Once a person has been nominated and if successful then full training should begin. No point training if a person is not elected.

Once elected they should receive training.

Once elected they should undertake mandatory training

One idea candidates should be discouraged from standing. If there is candidate with affiliation to a particular political party this should be revealed.

One member of my council gained his position with less than 100 votes and those were largely from members of his ethnic community. He has shown throughout his tenure that he is favouring his community to the detriment of the ratepayers and residents of his ward. This should not be happening.

online multiple choice test?

Online training so they are aware of the role requirements and commitment.

Only if there is no cost. Only if there are no barriers for people with a learning difficulty, language barriers etc

Opinions were divided on the topic of completing mandatory training prior to nominating. Those for the training argued it would provide candidates with the necessary skills to prepare them for council. Whilst those against the proposal argue it could be a barrier to entry and would be difficult to ensure all those nominating had actually understood the course.

Our Council offers briefing sessions for anyone considering nominating for Council. These have been well accepted by those who have attended.

Our Council procedure is to have information sessions run by our CEO. The session covers a range of issues and is an appropriate way to go. If someone isn't willing to attend at least that session then they probably won't be good participants at the numerous meetings/trainings of Council

Our local LGA when I became a new Councillor had compulsory workshops for all new and previous Councillors so i assume thnis was a prerequisite to being a successful nominee.

Participation in training as a condition of nomination needs to happen. Currently candidates can make quite absurd claims about what they will do once they are elected. It misinforms the community and paints a poor picture of what elected members and Councils can and cannot do.

People could express their interest to council and then be invited to attend a forum...and also meet individually with an elected member to discuss their interest and what is involved.

People need to understand the basics of what Council can & can't do. I attended a Town Hall meeting featuring prospective Mayoral candidates at the last election cycle. One very vocal nominee thought Council had the power to change the curriculum at the local high school as well as to hire & fire staff in

various state/fed government departments. An audience member pointed out that wasn't how it worked. The nominee wasn't elected.

People should be made aware of the expectations i.e code of conduct for Councillors and that all debates should be respectful of all community members. It should be made clear that members are representing their local communities it is not an election platform for State or Federal candidates to get their name recognised.

People should have to undertake training, so that they don't make fake promises

People should not be required to complete online training - it will put them off and is another barrier of red tape

Police Clearances, DHS checks to be provided free by the state government should DHS Working with Children clearances be required

Possibly a very short lecture/tutorial and signing of a document to say they understood the process and obligations of being a councillor.

Post-election: additional training on governance, code of conduct, and protocol for operating within the chamber, with council staff and within the community as an elected member.

Post-nomination – compulsory online module on campaign process, rules and communications.

pre enrolling training so the person to understand the dos and don'ts of campaigning, and training before enrolling of the roll if elected

Pre nomination training is a good idea, but it should not be mandatory.

Pre-nomination: compulsory completion of online course for new nominees on the roles and functions of an elected member and the function of local government in a three tier government system in Australia.

Pre-qualification/screening

Presentations and consultation with community members prior to the election

Print in layman's

Produce some videos in short chapters that answer FAQs, are subtitled and Auslan interpreted and have translations in most frequent non English languages. Look at the onboarding that is done once people are elected and bring that forward into a simplified introduction to local government training package. (eg Kineo is one company that can provide this). Rescreen Rats in the Rafters.

Prospective councillors need to be able to convince voters they understand their role, or we won't vote for them.

Set a precedence so that elected members know that they need to meet their obligations, or they'll be booted out. 45 councillors failed to lodge their campaign returns after the last election.

Provide an online course and a declaration that they have an understanding of role. They can choose to do course or not but must sign declaration?

Provide good information in the candidates pack.
Make the process competitive with compulsory voting.
Provide more than 200 words about each candidate.
Encourage political parties to preselect.

Provide non-compulsory opportunities for pre- and post- nomination training.
Pre-nomination - provide a very broad overview of what are the roles and responsibilities of a councillor, what is the workload/time commitment etc
Post-nomination - more detailed coverage of roles and responsibilities, conflict of interest principles, how to make an effective contribution, council structure (i.e. committees), meeting time determination process etc

Providing information could be helpful, but unsure if it should be mandatory.

Questioning candidates by the voting public is the very least that should improve the suitability of the candidate and avoid the 'takeover' by a small, well-funded minority group that is unrepresentative and hides their true purpose.

rather than mandatory training, perhaps an online (or in person) questionnaire to assess suitability and mandatory training once elected.

Require prospective candidates to have to undertake mandatory training before nominating and for that training to have a basic level of assessment that must be passed.

Required to undertake mandatory online training at a time of their convenience.

Requiring a candidate to undertake mandatory training prior to nominating simply adds another impediment to those wishing to stand for election and also adds another layer of complexity and bureaucracy. It would require a compliance assessment mechanism and would add another cost to the process.

However, Council Members believe that they would have been better served as a candidate if they had been given more detailed information earlier about what is involved in being on a Council. Although individual Councils distribute as much information as possible in this regard, it does not always reach the right people. If the information formed part of the nomination process and candidates were required to acknowledge that they had read and understood what is involved it would assist them to nominate with more knowledge in advance.

Requiring candidates to undertake pre-election training, which would introduce a potential barrier to participation and increase the costs of administering the elections

Requiring training or qualifications could limit who could run for council.

Run video sessions on platforms like YouTube or on line in some other way so people see and understand more about what their roles and the role of the mayor is. They may need to pass a test like for a driver's licence. Many do not understand even after mandatory training. There is nothing in the end that beats experience. Sometimes really unsuitable people get elected because they just are in the right place at the right time or that have more money to use to promote themselves, or more knowledge as to how to run a campaign.

School education

Screening for credit clearances before nominating

Send out information booklet

Set a "criteria for nomination " Based on they knowledge of the role of local Government , what is expected of them in the role, General knowlwge questions of WHY they have nominated, there understanding of democaric representatio, will they be prepared to hold regualr information and feed back sesions of the community within ther elected ares[wards] Do they have a understanding of the politacal systems [federal, State, Local] etc.

should have minimum 'qualifications' and not just anybody standing

Should have to have lived in the area for minimum period, e.g. if teh term is a future 4 years, they should have been a resident for at least 4 years at the time of nomination

Some candidate checks could be considered.

Some candidates who ran at the last election did not disclose their political affiliations when they were supposed to. Make the rules stronger so people have to disclose.

Some candidates will have the skills, knowledge and experience required to be on council. Others may not. Maybe there is a quiz/survey/assessment to make sure candidates are appropriately equipped otherwise they need to undertake further training.

Some form of role descriptor should be available for all councils - so that nominees can be informed of the role and expectations

Some level of training is needed. We see too many single platform candidates get on Council only to then be shocked about what the role actually is. This causes frustration and often aggression directed towards professional staff.

Sometimes barriers are in place for good reasons (and after some of the results of the 2022 election, it seems they should have been much higher). Also, if the training was available in a range of formats to accommodate different learning styles, then it's only beneficial, not a barrier.

It's not unreasonable to expect that people making decisions on behalf of thousands of others and about millions of OUR dollars should have some grounding in reality as to what they can and can't do, and what will be expected of them. Spending time on learning these things should be the price of entry. Decision-making of this nature should not be set up as an entry-level 'no experience required' job.

Strong pre-training and education is badly needed. Whilst the LGA organises such training - often the local issues and knowledge is not discussed. Those nominating should also be made to attend Council Meetings prior to nominating eg it could be a condition of nomination that the nominee attends at least 2 Council meetings and Committee meetings.

That they can speak and read english

That they cannot be associated or employed by a political party

The Councilors need to understand their role representing the local community, not that they are paid by the council and just repeat the council narrative.

The criteria could be strengthened for candidates to be considered fit and proper to hold office. This should also apply to State and Federal members of Parliament. Could consider Working With Children Checks (WWCC), Working With Vulnerable People Checks (WWVPC) and Police Checks,

- There should be no cost to the candidates associated with any clearance process,
- Should be paid for by State Government not Councils.
- This could be viewed as a block to encouraging a diverse range of candidates.
- All candidates should have a Working With Children Checks (WWCC), Working With Vulnerable People Checks (WWVPC) and Police Check. All of these costs need to be borne by the candidate, like any other pre-employment consideration, similarly to teachers registration

The Elected Body is essentially a Board of Directors, sometimes in control of annual budgets in excess of \$100m dollars, stands to reason that private company of similar size would have educated directors to represent the interests of the company so why should the Councillors have some form of training requirements.

The existing information sessions and seminars are good.

The idea that one needs training prior to nomination is antithetical to the ethos of democracy. Instead, if you really need mandatory training or whatever alternative, have it after an election. If the newly elected person doesn't complete it in a certain period (1-3 months, doesn't really matter) the council can hold a vote to expel them like how they expel people after not attending enough meetings and there can be a recount to replace them.

The LGA in conjunction with the Office of Local Government should be responsible for developing and delivering the training

The Local Government Association and Office of Local Government could develop the training. ECSA should be responsible for administering or ensuring that the training is completed and candidates should be given a clear understanding of time commitments.

The Mayor should promote & run an information session on the matter prior to requesting nominations

The opportunity is that you have better prepared candidates in the event they are successfully elected. The time & expectations should be explained.

The risk is that you potentially decrease candidate interest in participating.

The Town of Walkerville hosted an information session before I nominated which was very helpful.

The training should be the basics on process and procedures. A quick overview is better than going in cold.

There are already information sessions. It's pointless having to train them if they're not going to be elected. If they are genuinely interested in nominating then they should already have a good idea of what's required.

There can be significant discrepancies between what candidates think the role is, and what it actually entails. People willing to undertake training to inform themselves and gain a clear understanding of the role would make much more effective Members than people who have no understanding of the remit of an Elected Member.

There could be an online training course for prospective councillors that clearly illustrates the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of an elected member. It should also include an understanding of conflicts of interest and probity.

There could be voluntary training, but forced training has a risk of indoctrination, which only people of certain views will be willing to undergo.

Voluntary examinations can be held before elections, where candidates are tested for their knowledge, then their marks can be published for the voters' benefit.

There is a significant amount of training required, and information to be absorbed, by someone newly elected to local government. This same amount of training is required to be provided to incumbent members who are often 'trained' in these mandatory aspects every term, adding potentially unnecessary costs to councils. Consideration should be given to an alternate training package for those that are re-elected

There is already training on offer through the LGA which I found was very helpful. I don't think this should be mandatory - how can you monitor whether people actually take in the information and understand it? Attendance alone doesn't really mean anything.

I think a big problem currently is the lack of mandatory cultural responsiveness training with regard to multicultural issues, particularly understanding and respecting Aboriginal culture. It would be great to have more Aboriginal representation in local councils.

There needs to be set requirements/filter to run for election. There have been people with a very unsavory past running for election, its quite scary and doesn't put the community's safety first. LG need to have a duty of care

There needs to be some consistency in the role of a Councillor, and this is where the LGA could take the lead. Yes, legislation stipulates the roles and responsibilities of an Elected Member, but this varies greatly between Councils. What I do as a Councillor is very, very different to what I would perceive it to be based on the nomination information. As nice as it would be to encourage nominees with different levels of education, culture and ability, the fact is that there is a lot of detailed information and concepts to understand, lots of legislation to abide by, and often politics at play - it is not for the faint hearted or for someone without a reasonable level of education with great communication skills.

There should be a formal statement about the duties of a Councillor/Mayor that is acknowledged by prospective candidates before nomination is accepted. There should be a requirement for newly elected Councillors to attend training about expected behaviours and meeting procedures.

There should be mandatory training after being elected and within a prescribed timeframe. Information on the requirements of the role should be made available to candidates as part of the registration process.

There should be some security checks on candidates who are nominating to run - some you are elected you provide your police check etc and if a member fails to provide an appropriate check then there are safety concerns for staff and community

They should at the very least complete an online training course that takes them through the role of an Elected Member (including not getting into operational detail), a computer literacy component, and the behavioural standards.

They should have to attend training to gain a minimum understanding, but also attend 2 or more council meetings in the previous year to gain an understanding of what they are getting into and see how the meetings run and function

They should have to complete compulsory training each year to ensure they can fulfil the requirements of the role.

They should have to complete education once elected. This is difficult but requiring education prior to nomination, presumably at their expense could be a barrier to entry for many.

They should undergo a test with several questions relating to the Council.

This is not an issue as prospective councillors reveal their suitability in their CV, and voters will do the rest by their choice

This is not worth worrying about. Generally anyone who takes the trouble to nominate is going to be reasonably well informed.

This is very tricky. Many people don't understand just how much is involved in being an EM. Training may be a barrier because it takes time and effort, but it also might have benefits as it is important for people to understand what they are getting into.

This would again be an impediment to getting people to run for council and favour sitting members. Some sitting members still need educating. Compulsory training within 6 months would suit better

Training after elected.

Training and education about the role of councillors prior to nominating

Training and workshops on a regular basis

Training does not and should not be onerous perhaps a function of retiring members. More of process information.

Training for candidates as part of the nomination process needs to be informative, designed to create awareness of the role, and furthermore establishes a clear understanding of the interest provisions. Care must be taken to ensure the training requirement does not discourage people nominating for Council

Training for candidates needs to be informative, designed to create awareness of the role, and furthermore establishes a clear understanding of the interest provisions. Care must be taken to ensure the training requirement does not discourage people nominating for Council.

Training in the role of council and what a councillor does is essential to make sure the right people are nominated for election.

training is a key, competency based as well as a form of psychometric testing to screen out those who simply have a platform rather than a genuine desire to improve the decision making

Training is definite. I was lucky that I knew what to do because I have worked in local government. I still have an EM asking me questions and it has been a year since they got into council. Clearly more training is needed. There are others who have got help from fellow em's because they don't know what they are doing. :/

Training must be completed within six months before the nomination to have important knowledge about the functions and roles of the Council Plus update on legislation and regulations

Training sessions so candidates can actually understand what the role requires and what influence they would have, would be very useful. Doing this before the campaign means that the campaign can be "fought" on more reasonable terms, which would be a good thing. It's perhaps a bit patronising for some people, but that's the lesser evil there.

Training should be for all not just new members. Many forget that they are representing the community and not just their own interests. Audit elected members to ensure they are voting in the communities interest and not their own. Ensure they deliver outcomes that align with the strategies and policies in place to deliver outcomes beneficial to the wider community.

Training should be free via subsidy

Training should be offered in different forms to ensure that the training is accessible to all.

Training should be supplied to all newly elected members..

Training should include the requirements of the role, agenda reading, meetings briefing sessions

Training should not be compulsory and should only be advisory in nature. It would likely lead to candidates being more suited to the role, but would come at the cost of potential nominees.

Training would be a great idea, but it should be voluntary.

True leadership is based on a number of things e.g., authenticity, compassion, skill, good communication, transparency and an awareness of the information required to be a candidate. A candidate's values and beliefs would factor into this as to their understanding of the role. Integrity can be a way in which people may base their vote.

Understanding the role is easy (I'm considering running next opportunity) BUT there should be a minimum standard of qualification and not just " he/she seems a nice person". As an example a career nurse does not have the experience or qualifications to analyse and vote on a \$9M purchase!

Use deliberative democracy things like forums

use the internet to allow anyone interested to complete a short course

Varying views have been expressed:

- Yes, Maybe a nomination fee (of substance) should also be considered.
- No, if you haven't been elected you shouldn't have to commit time to it.

Perhaps a video when nominating explaining the roles and responsibilities.

Noting – resources are available for prospective nominees, but no way to know if or extent to which these are engaged with by actual nominees.

Varying views have been expressed:

- An introduction to local government and some of the mandatory requirements like the ABP, LTFP etc, meeting procedures
- It is democracy, anyone can stand. If someone doesn't have confidence in the people who are standing then they should run!

Opportunities:

- Training would ensure candidates know what they are committing to.
- Would ensure that all candidates have a basic level of knowledge, creating a level playing field and reducing the potential for uninformed or unprepared individuals nominate

Risks: • Wasting a great deal of people's time who will never use the training as they don't get elected.

- May be seen as overly restrictive and could deter people from nominating
- needs to balance the benefits of education with the voluntary nature of public service

Varying views have been expressed:

- The LGA in conjunction with local Council.
- Electoral commission
- Onus should be on the candidate as it is already an administrative burden ensuring sitting members complete their mandatory training. If they haven't completed it, then they would not be eligible to be sworn in.

Varying views have been expressed:

- Mentorship programs where experienced members mentor new candidates, providing guidance and sharing knowledge.
- Voluntary training programs that candidates can opt to participate in and would be included on their candidate profile
- Improved communication between the SA Electoral Commission and prospective/actual candidates, make it clear that the electoral commission is the responsible agency, not Council.

Criteria for individuals seeking candidacy should absolutely be strengthened by requiring a DHS check

Varying views were expressed:

- Maybe a Police Check, literacy and numeracy test, general knowledge test about their local government area.
- No. Particularly for people who've had criminal history they have served their time. The position creates a great deal of public attention and anyone with a bad history would be highlighted and won't be elected. Leave it up to democracy. For example, many first nations people have a criminal history due to over policing, trauma etc. Do we really want to discourage first nations people and others such as those from low socio economic backgrounds from running because of past misdeeds (either on their part or of the justice system).
- Consider setting minimum education or qualification standards to ensure that candidates have a certain level of knowledge or expertise
- Skills / fee for nominating

- Literacy
- Prior offences

Varying views were expressed:

- Should be stricter / more thorough.
- No need for it.
- Any requirements for mandatory training, and any other checks should also apply to members of Parliament

Voluntary opt-in training is good. Mandatory not so much. Perhaps a statewide voluntary training certificate that candidates can display on campaign material. Along with , in the final voting pamphlet listing qualifications, training and number of council meetings attended.

We don't do it for actual government so why would we for these pathetic local councils?

We need less barriers to nominating, not more, and newly elected EMs experience truckloads of mandatory training once elected.

We support mandatory training and minimal requirements such as

- being able to read
- Being able to write
- Being able to count
- Having basic understandings of financial spreadsheet and balance sheets

We support The idea of an online training program before nominations can be accepted

We also support mandatory checks on

- bankruptcy
- Criminal history
- Safe to work with children

When people consider standing for the role on council it is usually because they care about their community, money and training should not be the reason.

No amount of training can instil this kind of commitment and care for community.

I have always found that the best people in any role whether on council or in private business are those that learn on the job ie by hands-on-experience.

Whilst I do not agree that it should be mandatory to take training prior to nominating, maybe after nominating but before the election people should be expected to attend at the least some information sessions about what would be expected of them if they were elected. I assume there is training supplied for people who are newly elected.

Whilst mandatory training may have a negative impact on the attempts to encourage more candidates to nominate, I believe it would go a long way towards improving the quality of candidates. From my observations I have seen some candidates campaign on a platform to make changes/improvements on issues that local government have little to no power or influence (e.g. hospitals, education). This indicates that candidates such as these have little idea of what local government does, and ends up wasting a lot of people's time.

yes be involved over a number of years , not stand on a single platform matter ,. then deliver nothing for the rest of the term

Yes they should attend information sessions, but many are put forward As dummy candidates by the political parties

Yes! and the thing is make it simple - very low cost on line course. Where you get some kind of official notification to say you have done it.

From my experience there is an abundance of training, candidates are invited to attend sessions to learn about the responsibilities of becoming an elected member. (You want to be a Councillor) booklets with information are provided and candidates can ask any question. I was once asked to talk about my experience as a sitting councillor and what it is expected from a councillor in the execution of his duty of office. In regard to required training for council members most of which is mandatory I am personally satisfied that the level of training opportunities given are very generous, supportive and of good quality training in practically all aspects needed to execute your duty of office.

Attendance by first time candidates at some sort of compulsory pre-nomination information session (either on line, "Zoom" style or face to face) would be an advantage. It could demonstrate the wide range of Council responsibilities they may encounter, detail the time commitment required and behaviour standards expected

Candidates should complete an online course and pass with a high percentage

Legislation - effect and purpose (Not just LG Act), Good Governance - meeting procedures, policy frameworks and communications training should be conducted before people nominate

OLG/LGA should be responsible for the training

More detailed website - individual briefing sessions with either Council/LGA/OLG would ensure candidates have the necessary information to support their decision to nominate

Training for council members should be CPD type environment with a points system and minimum points per year

In relation to requiring people to complete an online course before nominating, Council believes there is value in potential candidates understanding what is required (through simple and effective communication) but compulsory training may be a step too far and could potentially discourage potential candidates.

There is a risk mandatory training would make the process seem more onerous and discourage nominations.

If mandatory candidate training requirements are introduced, this should not become an additional financial / resourcing burden for councils – many do not have resources or expertise to manage such processes.

Council believes the current screening is adequate.

New elected members would also benefit from improved understanding of Council meeting procedures at the commencement of their term. As such, guest attendance at Council meetings should be encouraged or even introduced as a prerequisite of the nomination process

Candidates should not be required to complete an online course before nominating

ECSA or LGA should be responsible for training. If it is a requirement for nomination, then ECSA.

A self-paced online training course managed by the LGA or ECSA would be useful for candidates, though attendance at training may also be a barrier for some people considering nominating if it is mandated.

Equally, online participation may be a barrier for participation for some candidates.

An alternative off-line opportunity should be available to candidates who require this level of support.

If online training is offered, a participation fee should not be required.

At a minimum, candidates should have attended and observed a minimum number of Council meetings before standing to appreciate the work obligations, meeting procedures, and team atmosphere.

Flexibility for regional Councils where distance may be an inhibiting factor, should be considered.

Elected Members recalled that prior to elections there were information sessions run by Council Staff for candidates and noted that there may be benefits in making these available an online attendance.

Council supports the idea of mandatory training for candidates. Council resolved to support strengthening the criteria for individuals seeking candidacy by requiring a Working with Children clearance and that they be fit and proper. Any consideration of mandatory training for candidates should be flexible and include options for completion such as online, written submission, telephone or in person to ensure inclusivity.

How council operates is not clear to most intending candidates and the role of councillors prior to being in council is not clear. A Council's role is very similar to a board of directors and there are very few people who think they have the skills to be on a board of directors. Any mandatory training should include an attempt to indicate the skills that are required, finance, policy, communication, engagement, commitment, community minded, etc.

Education and encouragement to nominate could be provided as a generic request through all existing boards in the community (sports clubs, community facilities, school governing councils, industry boards, etc)

It should also be mandatory for Candidates to complete Council Candidate Briefing training sessions for the Council that they intend to nominate for to ensure they are aware of that Council's particular operational requirements (ie times of Council Meetings, how information is provided to them, meeting places, strategic documents, Organisational structure, etc)

Consideration should also be given to establishing a time frame in which the training is mandatory for those Elected Members who have previously served on Council (ie if the person served as an Elected Member two (2) terms ago then the training should be mandatory as a number of legislative changes could have occurred during that time).

The last periodic election included a candidate handbook that provided good insight into local government and the requirements on elected members, both when nominating and once elected. Like other levels of government, it is, at essence, a political appointment based on the democratic voice of the electors, and should be treated as such, rather than turning it into a job application with key selection criteria and minimum qualifications.

Unless the same requirements are introduced for candidates in state and federal government elections, who will ultimately deal with significantly higher budgets and matters affecting a whole state or country, we do not believe that training should be mandated for candidates.

LGA provides this and local councils also provide their own training and induction

It is not supported for people to be required to complete an online course before nominating but does support other screening such as Police Checks or breaches

Candidates should not be required to undertake mandatory training prior to nominating, particularly in light of the difficulties in attracting candidates in many Councils, as identified in the Discussion Paper

It makes the process more difficult and time-consuming that it is currently

In preparing for nomination, candidates would benefit from compulsory completion of online course(s) which provide an understanding of the requirements for campaigning, protocols and functions of an elected member and their role as a local government representative.

Yes - candidates should complete an online course before nominating to ensure they have awareness of the tasks and time load required should they be successful.

This may be beneficial, to increase awareness of the role, responsibility, complexity and workload of council members prior to nominating.

Any training in this space should be undertaken jointly by ECSA and the LGA, as informed by the sector.

Earlier promotion. Recommend prospective candidates attend Council meetings prior to elections.

No, Council Member roles are strategic in nature (not operational), there generally should not be a situation where they are required to work in isolation with children.

No, if diversity is a goal, overly prescriptive requirements / criteria may stifle that.

Mandatory and mid-term refresher training is a significant expense for councils. It would be beneficial if the LGA could provide templates and resources for adaption and utilisation by councils to run this training internally, noting there is generally significant skills and experience in the relevant subject areas in-house.

LGA should develop training collateral which is easily applied and in webinar form.

There should be an accredited/assessed training course to ensure active participation and understanding, including testing with random question samples with a threshold requirement. Failure to meet this standard would prevent the nomination from proceeding. While numerous resources are available for prospective nominees, the actual engagement and extent of utilisation of these remain uncertain

Training should

(1) sufficiently inform potential candidates of expectations, enabling them to make informed choices, (2) inspire potential by fostering growth rather than merely demanding existing experience, and (3) be delivered in various methods and formats to cater to different learning styles, ensuring it does not act as a barrier to entry.

Barriers to entry should be limited to a person's ability to fulfill the role's requirements, not the process of attaining it.

Being an elected representative entails a challenging and crucial role. It goes beyond representing diverse viewpoints and requires making sound decisions on complex matters that affect a wide range of interests. While diversity is essential, it should not come at the expense of competence.

An introduction to local government and some of the mandatory requirements like the ABP, LTFP etc, meeting procedures, Council's obligations and limitations.

Members need (and Council Administration and communities need them) to be aware, knowledgeable, conversant and supportive of a much wider range of matters than the average un-informed potential candidate can imagine.

Informed (i.e. well trained) candidates will likely present a better campaign and be better prepared to consider and make decisions on complex and difficult matters within months of being elected (such as budget deliberations and strategic planning activities that commence almost immediately in the new calendar year after November elections)

Workshop opportunities provided for community members considering becoming a councillor outlining the role, including some governance training so they are aware of the requirements and the level of commitment needed for the role. This training could be undertaken online. Police check to only be undertaken once elected (not a requirement as a candidate).

Supports the introduction of mandatory screening arrangements but remains wary that too many obstacles will result in reduced nominations for council.

Supports the exploration of flexible arrangements, such as a requirement for screening to occur before a councillor takes their oath of office

Council's view is that 1 hour online course prior to nominating is sufficient. Any longer and it can put people off nominating

Council supports a high level introduction to local government for candidates, with mandated sections that can be localised.

Candidates live in the area, can prove they have attended three or more meetings in their Council Area, and to do the orientation course offered by the LGA

Hopefully the orientation besides explaining what Councils are responsible for in our three tier levels of government includes a sample of Council briefing notes, agendas and minutes which they will be expected to read before each meeting.

Information is currently readily available for any potential nominee to inform their duties and responsibilities.

My opinion is that completion of online courses prior to nomination will not assist in attracting more nominees. However my greater concern is that once elected they do not have the financial skills to adequately undertake their role effectively.

Livestreaming of my local council meetings has highlighted to me the lack of knowledge and preparation by some council members at the meetings. Greater ongoing financial training for members and upskilling should be prioritized to assist in this process.

In the past Council has run quite an involved training program for new councillors but with this council there did not appear to be much training for the new councillors which appeared to put them at a disadvantage in understanding council business? Workshops and training as soon as elected is crucial and the Local Government Association should be involved with this in both running programs for new councillors as well as helping councils provide training

We are of the view that there definitely should be an online course/package before nominating so understanding of requirements and commitment is very clear

Should people be required to complete an online course before nominating?

- Yes, similar to Victoria. It is important for those wanting to be a Council Member to understand their roles and responsibilities and have had a thorough induction into Local Government.
- This training should also include the legislative responsibilities of a candidate when campaigning

A police check and a credit check.

Should avoid replication of training subject matter between compulsory training sessions. A better methodology (e.g. a skills matrix) should be established to assess the gaps in core knowledge/skills, and training should be based on the deficiencies identified

Candidates should be aware of the commitment that they will face and should complete a course before nominating. While this may put off some people who only see the prestige of the position, others will be prepared for the responsibilities that will be involved. It is better to have a candidate who will “stay the course” rather than a person who will lack commitment and perhaps resign before the end of the term. Any course should be run centrally by a body such as the Local Government Association to ensure uniformity of information

The online course that people can take before they nominate is not too onerous and quite useful. All intending nominees should complete it. Training once on council is critical and essential. Prospect Council did not appear to run a comprehensive program last elections and new councillors appeared to struggle. The LGA runs training, and this should be mandated. A training needs analysis (TNA) before training and then a follow up TNA after training would also be useful to determine if the training was successful. We know that newly elected Councillors are often surprised by the complexity of the position once they are elected. Anything to help smooth their transition would be helpful. However, we caution against training for the sake of training. Imposed training does not necessarily have a productive effect. Training should reflect principles of adult education, local and individual circumstances, and that there are differing roles and responsibilities as between elected members and administrators within a council. We suggest that “community confidence” is not a function of training as much as are the behaviours, values, intent, and purpose demonstrated by a person.

No – I don't think an online course should be a prerequisite before nominating, however perhaps a non-mandatory course might be helpful for some people. See above suggestions for training for candidates that might help them, or look at aspects of the leadership programs that were suggested.

Training for potential candidates should be provided and be a requirement for candidacy. The mode of delivery should be determined based on the individual Council needs. This should also include the identification of the training and participation that forms part of the Council Member role and the need to commit to what is required if elected. The opportunity to undertake candidate screening should be explored also, although it is uncertain how this would work. A general overview for candidates to enable them to be fully versed on what the role they are considering entails could be considered. Some basic Council and legislative awareness to ensure they have the appropriate skill set to meet the needs of anyone undertaking a position as an Elected Member may also be deemed appropriate. This biggest risk to training for potential candidates is that it may discourage them from nominating particularly in regional areas where some Councils struggle to fill the number of Elected Member positions. The opportunities from this are that it will ensure that potential candidates are committed to the

role. It will also prepare them for the future mandatory training they will be required to undertake. The training would probably be best developed by the LGA on behalf of the sector with input from Councils but the responsibility for delivery will be dependent on what format it is presented in. If it is an online training, then it should remain within ECSA who can determine whether the training has been undertaken prior to accepting a nomination. If it is face-to-face, then it would be best delivered by Councils with the opportunity to provide names to ECSA of those that have completed the training before ECSA accepts that nomination. Consideration would need to be given to the ability for organisations involved to resource this training.

At a minimum candidates need to be mandated to attend some form of session to ensure they are aware of what is involved in nominating for Council whether this be an information session or an online training. In respect to other required credentials the police check seems to be a more stringent form of check and may be worth considering.

The capacity to restrict candidates from nominating if they are not fit for the role is very limited given the information that is provided as part of the nomination process. It is also hard to tell who will make a “good” Elected Member until they commence their role. It has been evidenced that past candidates who have been considered “worthy” of the role of Elected Members have not always realised their potential.

Council’s members feel that required online training before nominating would act as a deterrent for people considering standing for Council. It was agreed however, that a basic introduction into local government which covers meeting procedures and financial management would be beneficial for candidates so that new members (in particular) have some prior knowledge before they attend their first council meeting.

Yes – we think all nominees should be required to take the online course, which should include a positive, inspiring overview of the role and importance of elected members. Additionally, we believe that ongoing training, and particularly for first term elected members, is vitally important

Required training for candidates is not supported. That is a personal responsibility for each candidate to access the already available resources.

The LGA/ECSA should be supported to continue improving the available resources.

It would be better to spend resources on training for those who are elected.

The recently introduced strict rules/timeframes for elected member compulsory training should be reviewed. The possibility that an experienced elected member could face being booted from Council because they weren’t able to attend a powerpoint presentation on strategic planning, for example, should be challenged and sensible changes must be made. The LGA’s failure to provide alternatives such as after-hours or online training modules is deeply disappointing.

Yes, people should be required to complete an online assessment before nominating for council.

Implementing such a requirement can ensure that potential candidates have a comprehensive understanding of the responsibilities, skills required, time commitment, and fiduciary duties associated with serving as a councillor.

The course would serve as a tool for self-assessment, enabling individuals to evaluate whether they possess the necessary skills and commitment to effectively fulfill the role of a councillor. It can also provide valuable insights into the challenges and complexities of local government, helping candidates make informed decisions about their candidacy

Topic 2: Term limits for council members (2.4)

The people who probably should be on the council are too busy to give the attention required to be effective members.

1 four year term is enough, but some long time Councillors have experience to help others. I want Councillors to serve the people as they are suppose to, and not to 'dictate' or 'shut people down' from asking questions of clarity regarding loved council area .

1. Term limits can promote turnover and prevent the entrenchment of long-serving councillors, allowing for new perspectives and ideas to be introduced regularly.
2. Knowing that their time in office is limited, councillors may be more motivated to prioritise and act on key issues, deliver results, and maintain a strong connection with their community.

100% agree!

Due to a lack of understanding and resources with the community at voting tijme, we ended up with a council of many who should have resigned their seat years ago. Unfortunately, due to the money factor, they refuse to leave and thanks to the voting system, any who are in the top 9, pretty much got voted in.

12 years as a maximum. Could run for Mayor after this for a term.

2 consecutive terms and then a compulsory 1 term exclusion

2 or 3 terms max

2 terms for Mayors (2 x 4 years), 3 terms for Councillors (3 x 4 years). Otherwise it all starts to become a 'career'. Both those numbers are sufficient for people to make a difference. People should not be allowed to run again either. Once you've done your terms, that's it.

2 Terms is perfect. Allows for some continuity but also fresh ideas and personalities. It would need to include gaps. For example a Councillor shouldn't be able to be a Councillor for 2 terms, take a 4 year break, and then run for another 2 terms. It needs to be 2 terms total for any one Council despite any breaks to continuity of service.

2 to 4 years

2 years primary + 2 renomination max

3 terms max straight with the 3rd term as a leader nor new councillors on 1st term, then can run again at a later stage minimum of 2 terms later

3 terms maximum

3 to 4 terms max as councilor

2 to 3 terms max as mayor

A councillor should only be able to serve for as long as the people in the local area feel they are serving the community in their best interests!! The people should always have power to vote out or re-vote in a

councillor and/or mayor. No person should be able to keep their position when it is clear the majority of local people are not happy with their current elective/mayor.

A maximum of three terms would seem fair and reasonable.

A person should be able to serve as long as they continue to be elected by their constituents to represent them.

A presiding member has a lot of power, influence and a role that is very different from other councillors. Too long in the role creates a risk of personal dominance and hegemony; there should be a two-term limit for that role (mayoral).

Absolutely - fresh ideas and opinions are great. In rural areas we see very long term councillors mainly due to lack of others opposing them or a unwritten community agreement that the individual should remain unchallenged until they die or decide to not nominate. Check the ages and term lengths of elected members - especially in rural areas. Then there are Councils who only have the exact number of nominations to match the vacancies or in some instances there are not enough nominations. In this instance of not enough nominations the Council should be made to commence amalgamation - as there is obviously apathy or something affecting the nomination process.

Absolutely agree. It is standard practice for most high performing boards to have term limits for members for this exact reason.

Absolutely, elected members lose touch with the community or only represent small pockets of the community. A single term would even be preferred. Most importantly ban families or households running multiple candidates in elections.

Absolutely. Councils are a 'board' and so should adopt many best practices seen for directors. Without 'fresh blood' Councils stagnate. 2x4 is good, and 3x4 would also be okay.

Agree

Agree - 8 years is long enough to make a contribution.

Agree two terms to get the rubbish out and give a chance to get decent community members in.

Agree with a finite number of terms but recognize that there are times when this means a loss of knowledge so believe perhaps more than 2 terms and a rotation that all knowledge does not leave at the same time.

A mix of new people with fresh ideas and other members who have local knowledge and history is ideal (where possible)

Agree with term limits - councils can get very stale if it's the same faces year on year for decades on end. Noting that there may need to be some greater flexibility in smaller communities where strict term limits could cause issues because there are insufficient people willing and able to stand for Council. Two term limits may be appropriate for metro, but perhaps regional might need to have three terms for this reason.

Agree with two terms but if people want renominate after standing down for a term, i think that is OK.

Agree, Councillors should only be allowed to serve for a specific period of time, the rotation of Elected Members, will allow for fresh new ideas and greater representation for communities, quite simply as demographics change so should the people who represent them.

Agree. Rotation out of councillors after a term length would create possibility for new concepts. Suggestion: A two year term with opportunity to be reelected after a two year break. ie: two four year terms is a career not an opportunity to represent!

Agree. Mayoral positions should have similar rules.

agreed, make it like the Legislative Council and have staggered terms to ensure continuity and consistency of governance

All boards benefit from new people coming on bringing new ideas, vigor, and connectiveness. Council boards are no different. The present system, voting and re election, often inhibits new blood particularly when a group of candidates get together campaigning on the same platform which is wrong, but many people in the community follow a noise not good reasoning.

There should be compulsory voting, credible vote counting (report suspicious voting papers)

As a first term councillor, I am supportive of this depending on how it is done. It is useful to have a balance of new and experienced councillors. We would need to be careful about not shipping a whole bunch of experienced councillors off at once. Also, councillors who have been around for 10+ years hold an understanding of the rationale behind historical council decision making that is often longer than many senior staff. This can be incredibly important to help newer members and staff understand situations in the context of this history - it is important not to lose this so strategies to help retain this knowledge (e.g. being able to consult with or bring in past councillors to meetings when relevant to provide background) would be helpful. One option could be to have 2 groups of councillors - e.g. one group who are 'all of council' councillors not attached to a ward who have a fixed term and another group who are local councillors for their ward who are able to renominate as many times as they want (or vice versa).

As again with Playford the ideas are just stale. Every year same old stuff. 22% of people vote and the same members get elected, very few changes. 2 Terms maximum, that's it.

Broadly 3 terms sounds good, but then there are examples of superb councilors who have stayed on the job for years. Also a couple of Mayors! The risk that especially in rural areas no one else will stand makes the process expensive. Perhaps a sub-clause allowing for further nominations to be called for following close of nominations if insufficient numbers have nominated and at that point existing councilors could nominate. Some thought needs to be given to whether a limited term is a once and for all or if people stand aside for one term and can then nominate again. Although new blood is good, experience counts for a lot and generally improves the running of councils.

Care needs to be taken not to have all councillors on a council being forced to retire at the same time. Corporate knowledge is very important but very few councillors grow/change with the times so long term councillors rarely add value to council decisions. The LGA should be told to NOT to give awards for long service as this encourages some councillors keep seats warm.

CEO < Traffic, ADMIN, Regulatory Services anything 2 do with Services! all should be on contracts along with members elected & have KPI's. The Mayor especially should only every be 1 Term. The rot is still in the building

Consequence of limiting council member terms would result in turnover of members and promote fresh perspectives

Risks include loss of knowledge and experience

Considering that the most efficient Councillors are the most experienced, then if the people want to vote for them this should be the way.

Continuity of elected members provides knowledge and confidence in Council. However, Council recognises that new members do provide opportunity for fresh perspectives and renewal should be encouraged. It is difficult to determine if term limits would assist in achieving this or not. Should term limits be introduced, Council recommends a maximum of not less than three consecutive terms to ensure the stability and continuity of Council.

Council is not supportive of term limits and believes this undermines the value of having experienced Members on Council. Efforts should focus on generating higher numbers of quality candidates in elections to achieve a balance between continuity and refreshment of the elected body.

Council Members should be up for re-election every 2 terms, if re-elected they can stand for a further 2 terms

Council nominations need to be visible to the community as soon as lodged as this will aide fence sitters who are unsure – i.e. if there aren't enough nominations, they would apply.

Councillor should have to vacate after 2 terms, with 4 year gap but then be able to reapply for re election after a 4 year gap.

Councillors and Mayors should be limited to two terms. Too many people are re-elected time after time because people recognise their name. A limit of two terms would encourage diversity.

Councillors atm are taking all the positions in council, making spots unavailable for young people with fresh ideas and knowledge of technology that the older generation doesn't have.

Councillors should never be limited to the number of terms that they can serve, the public will decide when the time is right for them to leave by no longer voting for them.

Experience makes for more efficient councillors.

Councillors shouldn't be doing continuous terms. One re-elected roll over at most.

After a term Councillors should give opportunity to other potential candidates to become Councillor and in the mean time. Get back to community to see what's happening. Or sit on a council sub-committee (providing better management & reports) & gaining knowledge for their next term.

Disagree - would not get sufficient nominations.

Disagree with suggestion. Long standing councillors hold critical history and knowledge that is otherwise lost in changeover of staff/elected members. It is a decision for the community through the election process.

Disband Council

Doesn't work for a younger person, with your in front of them.
Stop rollovers, rollovers, rollovers and rollovers

Don't think it's relevant

Don't limit the number of terms. Some councillors are good, why get rid of them if they want to stay.

Don't necessarily agree. Many government board positions legislate a requirement around maximum term that a person can be on a board. Not sure if councils could have something similar. Prevents "bad actors" but may unduly punish good and committed council members.

Eight years (2 x 4 years) is an appropriate limit as a Councillor. A person who is elected mayor should be permitted two terms in addition to any period that they have served as a Councillor. A person who has served as mayor should not be permitted to stand as an ordinary councillor.

Elected persons have been elected by by people not a committee, the people are the ones to determine when a Cr is no it doing their job, why push out experienced persons, if your going to push for this then the same should be State Govt politicians.

Ensure maximum turnover of councillors

Four terms max

From experience working with councillors it takes them 6-12 months to fully understand their role, and that they are there for the greater good of their community and not just to resolve their pet issue, or to represent the group they are a member of. So allowing councillors to continue on for multiple terms means you retain their experience in the chamber, and don't spend so much time trying to educate new councillors.

Given we don't have term limits at the state or federal level, it seems inconsistent to apply term limits for councillors

Highly agree, limit to 2 terms.

I absolutely agree with this suggestion. The same people seem to get elected time after time based on very few votes. They have their sporting club allegiances that ensure they get re-elected. There needs to be a disruption. Greater turnover, will help encourage more applicants. There should also be measures to stop councillors form the same family being elected at the same time. This has been a problem in West Torrens.

I absolutely DO NOT support limiting terms of Councillors. It should be up to the community to decide how long a Councillor represents them, not legislation. If a Councillor is effective, well-liked and basically doing a good job - leave them be. If the community decides that a Councillor has been in their position too long - they will not be re-elected. Local Government should follow the same rules as State and Federal Governments.

I accept that introducing term limits would achieve this goal to some extent but overall there seems to be more of a problem with not enough people standing so this proposal should not be advanced any further

until more people are standing in general. Also, elected members gain experience over time and develop relationships with the electorate which is a good thing.

I agree

I agree entirely with term limits.

I agree that terms should be limited

I agree that terms should be limited to encourage new candidates to nominate.

I agree there should be a term limit. 3 Terms maximum.

I agree to limiting to a max of 3 terms, however im also mindful that in the last rpund of elections, multiple positions were left vacent. Often councillors run because there is no one else. I would say term limits are good, but you need to have good candidates. Too many get on to councils with a set objective but the realise they need support of otgers in the room. Throw their toys out of the cot when they dont get their own way resulting in costly by elections. It comes down to reumerations pay peanuts get monkeys.

I agree with limiting to 2 terms. A councilor can still run for mayor after serving 2 terms. This will encourage experienced mayors.

I agree with the above suggestion.

I agree with this - it also opens up the opportunity for new perspectives

I agree with this in theory; however, you do run the risk of having all new councillors elected - you would lose all the combined knowledge and experience. It's a bit like a teacher's tenure - time for new ideas and thinking.

I agree with this suggestion. Unlimited re-election preferences privileged voices and potentially excludes others.

I agree.

I agree.

I agree. Even eight years may b too long. If someone was prepared to re-nominate after a four year break, I would support that.

The demands of modern society are such that it may not be productive for people to carry long terms of office due to burnout and perhaps the ability to stay on top of the fast pace of progress.

I am a bit conflicted by this idea. There are benefits to having experienced elected members carry through the chamber following elections, however any idea to encourage more people to nominate should be considered.

I am really undecided about this as I can see benefits and disbenefits to having set terms for Elected Members.

The benefits are their knowledge, familiarity with the role and its requirements, continuity for the Council and community and the ongoing relationships Elected Members develop with the community.

Disbenefits are that Councils may be 'stuck' with the same Elected Members, limiting fresh ideas and new perspectives from new Elected Members, and ongoing turnover and lack of continuity is disruptive. A lack of nominations may also be an issue

It also takes time to become au fait with the role of being an Elected Member; the responsibilities associated with this and the time it takes to build effective relationships with the community.

I believe reasonable term limits are generally favourable.

I believe that while term limits could be helpful, it may also leave unfilled vacancies within councils if no candidate stands for the role left by a vacating councillor

I believe the terms should be reduced to two years (four years is a huge commitment, particularly for younger people) And a maximum serving of 10 years

I completely disagree with term limits for Councillors. If people are willing to stand and serve their local community and they're voted in then why impose term limits. It doesn't exist for Federal and State Members of Parliament so why should Local Government be burdened with this.

I disagree with this as so few quality candidates get elected to council. Most elected members are either unsuited to office or have no idea about subject matter they will be required to review or make decisions on, let alone legislation requirements. Council administration keep pushing their own agenda which is often in conflict with the interests of the community, so communities keep getting dysfunctional councils.

One argument I would agree with, is limiting council terms to 3 or four terms would help break up factions in council.

I disagree. It takes time for residents to familiarise, and trust councillors.

I do agree but if Councillors are elected for a short term will there still be some form of accountability shown by them for their poor decisions. It is very easy to spend some else's money if you know you are only there for a few years. It is very sad when older members remain on council without the understanding to fulfill their duties.

I do agree. A term of up to 8 years seems very reasonable, giving people ample time to make a significant contribution to their council, but not allowing poor performing councillors to stay in positions of power for too long.

I do not understand the logic of term limits for Council. If the community is not happy with their representation, then it is up to someone to come and challenge them with fresh ideas. This frequently happens in Mitcham and I do not see it as a broader issue. It is not hard to beat an incumbent councillor if they are inactive, unresponsive and failing to represent the local community.

Do we also need term limits for State / Federal Government?

I don't agree.

I don't know that it would make any difference as they should all go through a re-election process anyway.

I don't think term limits will help, particularly in regional areas. Needs to be seen as more of a "doable" job for people to take it on. You have to be independently wealthy or retired / semi-retired to be able to afford the time in a regional council.

I don't think that term-limits are a good idea. If there was to be term limits I think they should also be separate for Councillors and people running for Mayor.

I think there are people who add great value to local Councils who have been there for many many years and it would be a shame to move them on. This also applies for people who have come back to Council after a large gap. I think that mandatory voting is a good way to turn over Councillors. I think the people who get voted on time and time again and become "stale" are people who carve out a corner of the community big enough to get them elected year after year without being accountable to the rest of the electorate. Abolishing wards would also help to get rid of single-issue elected members who might run the same platform every election that only pertains to a small section of the community.

I remain neutral on this question for the following reasons. If elected members fulfill their skills and knowledge criteria then and regularly communicate with their electorate AND make themselves available to their community the skills and knowledge base would be important to retain .

This question is totally inadequate because it fails to address the history of the candidate or elected member. Some should be removed from Council well before their term expires as they are totally inadequate to represent where as others need to be retained for their knowledge , skills and ability to democratically represent their ward .

I see no benefit in 'moving people on' who might be doing a great job.

I strongly disagree with this statement; it will deter younger people from nominating if they know there is no chance of longevity, "If I can only do it for 8 years, I may as well wait until I am retired and have more spare time". As a young, elected member a two-year term would mean after 40 I would be unable to stand again. It should be the elected members decision if they have more to offer and the voter's decision if they feel that member has more to give.

I strongly disagree with this suggestion. Such a suggestion is not in keeping with the principles of a representative democracy. There are NO term limits for State or Federal parliamentarians - Local Government should be NO different.

I strongly disagree with this. There are natural mechanisms in place - being the election process. If a councillor is no longer in touch with or meeting the needs of the community, the community can choose to no longer have them as a representative by not re-electing them.

Having some continuity can be beneficial. Councils often work on projects and initiatives that span many years or decades even and it is not uncommon for one council to start a project in one term and not see the end of it until 1 or more terms later. There is also a huge amount of training and on-boarding that goes into getting new Elected Members up to speed with the current state of things, so it can be helpful having some more experienced members around. There needs to be a balance - but our current council is a mix of EMs in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th terms and there is benefit to all of these varying years of service. The longer serving EMs bring a wealth of historical knowledge about issues and decisions and know their community well. Newer EMs bring fresh perspective and new ideas. Balance is key and I don't feel that term limits would achieve this.

I do also think there is something to be said for candidate numbers being low where current EMs who are performing well re-nominate and higher where they are not. Running for Council is a big task, as is being a councillor. It is a huge commitment and not for everyone. If current EMs are underperforming, this can motivate community members to put their hand up and run against them. If they are happy with how they are represented and their EMs are performing - there may be less competition. It's not necessarily a bad thing.

I support a three-term limit, but not a two-term limit. Term limits of three terms will strike a good balance between enabling new candidates to have a chance of being elected, while also enabling councillors sufficient time to become proficient in their role on council. Often, the first term is about learning the ropes – so enabling a further two terms will be important for ensuring a level of expertise is maintained within the council. Preferably there should be mid-term elections (biennial) to enable a regular flow of new members while expertise is retained.

I think 2 terms. There is a perception that a ward belongs to an elected member if they are there too long and standing for election can be seen as a 'life sentence'.

I think a greater issue with long term councillors is the culture within the council that encourages. Cliques, bad attitudes and the unpleasant culture that can arise in that environment is something that makes serving in my local council completely untenable for me. I've no time for the stress and nonsense of dealing with some lifer councillor's little kingdom. I think term limits would significantly reduce the chance of this type of culture developing.

I think arbitrary limits on Council terms is a negative direction to pursue. It risks losing valuable skills, knowledge and experience for the sake of a superficial change of the deck chairs. Allow the community which we serve to make that decision.

I can't imagine such a change in the State or Federal sphere for the same reason. Don't treat the electorate like mugs.

I think compulsory voting would do a better job of increasing opportunities for new candidates and fresh ideas, but I also support term limits of three four-year terms specifically. I honestly think that any elected member serving for more than 12 years is probably getting in the way of a better candidate.

I think it will leave councillors under staffed as such - if quota it not made

I think it's healthy for limited terms. It would certainly generate a momentum in council and the community to need to be seeking nominations.

I think limiting terms could increase diversity but i think the terms allowed should be reasonably large say 4or5x4yearterms

I think limiting the terms is a great idea as my council has a lot of cultural issues caused by the older generation that has been on council for 10-30 years. It has been impossible for me as a young first-termer to integrate as they look down on me and don't let me participate without their informal consent.

I think that 2 terms of four years as a maximum is a great idea. Reinvigoration and changing influence is necessary.

Some rotation system would need to be implemented to ensure that a completely new group doesn't appear every 4 years. Some stability is essential.

I think that is right, we should ensure that there are fresh perspectives and talent in these positions

I think the suggested 2x4 year term is too long, a 2x3 year term with a 1 year break

I think there should be a maximum limit, I only ever hear from Ward councillors at election time, and some have been on the council for a long time. They don't respond when contacted either.

I think this strikes at the heart of democracy and is not supported. The community should be allowed to elect someone as many times as required.

I totally agree with this suggestion. Most councils are populated with the same people year after year. They are usually from an older generation, male and very fixed in their ideas. It detracts other people from wanting to apply as they feel it is futile and that they will never get elected or their ideas heard.

I wish there were some who this could apply to, but equally there are those who serve their communities well and this would be detrimental to councils if they had to drop out because of limits on tenure. Bad. Oh councillors are hard to get rid

of as they need so few votes to get re-elected and party politics get in the way or have undue influence.

I would suggest three terms. This will allow for the elected member to see through a 10 year strategic or financial plan. Two terms is too short.

I'd suggest 3 terms (12 years) is reasonable.

If a community are happy with their Councillor and continually renominate and support this Councillor why not!?

If a councillor is successively elected, that results from electors exercising their vote or being uncontested; the electorate has spoken

If a councillor is elected and doing a good job for the community and is held accountable by members of the public, there is a balance of actionable progress that is adhered to. The length of time served is a level of commitment by the will of the public and the councillor. Regular assessment, time of service, is best to maintain commitment for the public.

If candidates are not performing then they are often voted out.

If councillors are not allowed to stand for election due to numeric requirements, electorates may be left unrepresented. Current elections do not deny future nominations.

If someone has the time and energy to serve their community for several terms, it gives the council experience, history and stability, then they should be able to seek re-election. LET THE VOTERS DECIDE.

If terms are limited, I believe 3 terms should be the minimum. Most councillors are only getting the hang of their role and learning more about their community in the first term meaning their contributions become more valuable as they progress. I do believe that after 4 terms you have been given enough time to contribute to your community and new members should be given the opportunity. If a councillor is

elected as mayor, their previous time should not be counted, however, mayor's should be limited to 2 terms only.

If the people want to vote for experienced and proven performers then do not stop them. If they are so well regarded then they are likely to be excellent mentors for young bloods coming to the floor ! Absolutely reject limiting the number of terms of service.

If they're winning against competition because they're popular then that's that. if they're just always winning because the nomination pool is stagnant then maybe some change is needed (like looking at the wards).

If voted in, candidates should have option of realizing a positive and progressive vision - they should be able to maintain stability - and the ethos of proficiency with longer terms - increased confidence and less chance of destabilization.

If voters don't like a councillor, they can vote him/her out of office. I would consider an age limit though - no one over 75.

If we are going to do this for Councils then we should do the same in other levels of government, I am not sure what makes local government different in respect of the proposition you have put here.

I'm neutral on this. I think up to three four year terms may be a good idea.

In my council there are a few councillors who have been on Council for over 20 years. I attend 80% of council meetings and I think this length of service is not helpful. My council still has Wards and the longer serving Ward Councillors bring petty issues (like a street tree lifting a footpath) to the council meeting, which may have been appropriate in the past. The newer councillors tend to contact the staff or managers to sort out issues like this. I think 3 x 4 year terms should be the limit - that would also give others the chance to stand for council without feeling that they are "taking" something from a long serving councillor.

In my view there should be consideration given on Age of candidates - if there is minimum age required i.e. 18 or over to vote or run in an election - there should be an age where you shouldn't be allowed to run - Some members who have been on Council for 30 or 40 years are too old and unable to maintain the level of engagement with the community and the change will bring someone new with fresh ideas etc.

In some regional areas there may not be the number of people to put their hand up for election if someone is doing a. Good job they should be able to stand for more than two terms but long serving elected members and mayors who recieved complaints of improper behaviour should be discouraged to run for more than 2 terms

In the case of SA it is clear, being a Councillor is a 'job' for life and most often for older men. This has to be challenged, and again if voting was compulsory and those standing had to provide full value statements on a number of issues that can then be questioned by voters, you might start developing a vibrant local democracy.

Is this being suggested simply to address the perception that we don't get enough candidates? I ask again, is this really a problem? How many terms would be appropriate? I believe it takes two terms to come close to getting your head around local government. If we restrict the terms to this length, we are

opening up Pandora's box and potentially having councils dominated by those who are likely to be naive. Through no fault of theirs, but the fault of the system. I ask again. Is it broken?
I suggest the best councillors in history have been long-term councillors &/or Mayors.

It has been suggested that limiting council members to a maximum of two or three terms may 'open up' vacancies to a wider range of candidates, who may otherwise be dissuaded by having to run against a long-established incumbent member. This could be viewed as undemocratic and socially unjust, especially as the State Government does not limit the terms of its own Members of Parliament. It is a choice to be made by electors as part of the democratic process.

It is important to have some continuity, but change is also required to ensure progress is made, and a range of views are represented

It is so (sorry for the phrase) piss easy to get elected to council currently in most areas with a basic campaign. We are struggling to get good candidates. Why get rid of the proven to be electable ones?

It is the view of this Council that if all councils moved to a 'no ward' system, then this would naturally create more interest and increase turnover of members rather than introducing term limits.

It is undemocratic to limit the term a candidate can run for council. Could be viewed as ageist if limiting terms of older councillors and undemocratic if limiting terms of councillors who have served for a long time. Let the voting public decide which candidates they want. If going for a limited term of office, then this should also apply to Federal and State Government candidates.

It takes several terms for Elected members to 'mature' and more to further develop their skills. Limiting the terms will limit this type of experiential growth and it will matter when the experienced Councillor and their knowledge is lost to the Council.

Councillors are elected by the people so, bearing in mind your interest in the 'will of the people' as expressed through some of the earlier survey questions, surely voters decision to keep incumbents for as long as they like is what matters?

By the way, new Candidates guarantees only that you're going to get new faces, not ideas, better leadership or increased community connections.

It would be good to get some fresh ideas and get rid of some councillors that are old and tired, but only if there was enough people to nominate to replace them. Two terms may be too few. Maybe 3-4 terms.

It's a democracy! Perhaps term limits should be implemented at a state level first - lead by example

It's not the best idea. Great knowledge can be lost. It would be better to educate more people so they have the confidence to run for Council, then the people can decide

Knowledge and skills derived from learning and experience is valued and ought not be lost or diminished, arbitrarily or otherwise

Less Councils. Less Councillors

Let the community choose the best person for the job, regardless of how many terms they have served.

Let's introduce this for State and Federal MPs too! Now, there is no interest from those in Parliament for that, is there? In our Council alone, we have turned over about 1/3rd of our Council every 4 years. If we had the above term limits we would have turned over almost 2/3rds of our Council and also ended up electing, by default, some who received less than 5% of the vote when up against popular long termers. Surely, this is anti-democratic. I can understand limiting US Presidents to two terms to help prevent a despot, but in local Councils? C'mon!!!

What about the Councils that barely have enough candidates to run - take out the veterans and they don't have enough candidates.

I have never supported term limits, and over the years I have seen many newbies say there should be a term limit, but none, once having reached that limit, support it any more. Terrible idea regardless - let the decision of who gets elected to the community by election, and if opponents want to use longevity on Council as a political weapon, they have the right to do so.

Limit them. It's ridiculous how many community members say they want change, but the small number of candidates facilitate the election of something that is contrary to community preferences.

Limited term - eg 2 consecutive terms - but be able to nominate again after the next election (ie unlimited number of terms but no more than two consecutive terms)

Limited terms

Limiting Councillor terms may well result in fewer candidates not more. There is also a danger that past experience and wisdom is lost in favour of non meritorious quota restrictions.

Limiting length of terms enables broader representation and sound succession planning. 3 terms should be the maximum.

Limiting terms can open up vacancies, but where nomination numbers are low, this could further reduce the number of eligible candidates.

Multiple term Members can provide guidance and context for new Members, bring a level on continuity and consistency to the Chamber and enable stable, long-term strategic thinking.

Limiting terms of councillors may increase opportunities for new candidates and fresh ideas, but we should not discount the experience and knowledge of our longer term councillors. As a new councillor this term, experienced councillors knowledge has been invaluable in ensuring that the council transitions smoothly through elections, and by sharing their knowledge often allows for quicker decision making on ideas previously tried. Shorter terms may deter from people running for Mayor, as they may not be confident in their skill set to undertake this role. However, I do not believe that councillors should serve indefinitely on Council, as the need for fresh ideas is important as well. I think that four terms may be adequate before standing down.

Limiting terms would encourage others to consider standing

Limiting the number of terms an individual can run for council may not be the answer to allow others to nominate. But it may help new nominees have a chance of successful election; there seems to be a tendency to vote for the same candidate because they are known (rather than any assessment of their effectiveness) and with non-compulsory voting, there is more of a chance of "manipulating" re-election by encouraging supporters to vote (I'm not suggesting foul play). Knowing that the "usual suspect" will be running for council again, is disheartening for those who would like to have a go. Furthermore, there

needs to be new councillors joining council to bring in fresh ideas and energy; for me, this is the main reason for limiting council terms. My preference would be for a maximum of two four-year terms.

Limiting the term provides for new ideas and energy. It stops individuals sitting on council for decades with no real accountability for their performance.

Limiting the time that can be served by a councillor can be considered - but only in conjunction with limiting the time that can be served by State and Federal MPs, as the same principles should be applied to all levels of government

Local Government councillors should be able to serve as long as the community want them exactly the same as State and Federal politics

Long serving council members bring with them a range of experience and knowledge. It is up to the voting community to determine if a nominee is no longer suitable and/or the most valuable person to have in the role.

Long standing Members can be overbearing, especially towards new Members. It is a soft kind of bullying.

Certainly, the maximum should not exceed 3 terms but 2 terms may be too short.

long term Councillors can become very entrenched in the system and are very difficult to challenge. They do not always represent their communities but focus on their strongholds of loyal voters. We could and should do better than this.

many smaller communities will have difficulty in attracting candidates on a ward basis and may need larger constituencies to ensure sufficient number of candidates, such as council wide boundaries to enable enough scope to attract candidates.

Mayors should only be allowed 2 terms. The current system heavily favors incumbency. There is no point in limiting the number of terms for councilors when there is insufficient nominations to create an election.

More volunteer counsellors the better, there shouldn't be decisions made by a few people, every rate payer should be able to help make decisions for the community, we're suppose to be a democracy, but some how the minority seem to have more say in our community than the majority, just like our government.

We pay rates and taxes, but don't have a say, with the way our money is spent.

Most councillors don't really get a good understanding of their role until well into their first term and so aren't really performing until their second term. I think a limit of three terms is reasonable.

Most of the Councillors that I know see their roles as a stepping stone to bigger and better personal opportunities. The whole current structure of local government should be evaluated. so that the community as a whole and NOT the councillors themselves benefit.

My view is three four-year terms. Running for mayor should be excluded from the Councillor term limit. That is, can run for three terms as an elected member then as Mayor for 2-3 terms.

Needless restriction to place limits. The community will decide whether someone has exceeded their usefulness.

New councillors offer a fresh outlook and may be more in touch with community needs

New Elected Members bring “fresh” eyes and new ideas to the Council and long-serving Elected Members have experience and knowledge which contributes to stronger connections and understanding of the community.

No more than two four years terms to limit corruption and nepotism.

No term limits to be considered - This should only be considered if also being considered at other levels of government.

no two terms should be sufficient, also the new candidates will better represent a ever-changing demographic.

no why would we discourage those who are the vast representatives that want to serve and are doing well for their community, if this is what Govt is looking to do then the same rules should apply to those State Govt MPs.

No, as it is very hard to get ANYONE to stand for election

no, doing this might mean losing some good people as well

No, otherwise we may encounter no candidates

No, we wouldn't want to prevent competent people from standing for office and continuing to represent a community when they have been doing a good job. It feels like throwing the baby out with the bathwater- yes it would be good in some circumstances but there are more circumstances where it would have a worse impact.

No. Are you proposing to bring in term limits for MP's?

No. Councillors are representing the people. They are engaged only if re-elected. The people make the decision.

No. If the majority of voters are happy, then that should be respected.

No. The wealth of knowledge that comes from a range of knowledge base and experience is vital. This won't increase participation

Not sure

Once on a council it can be hard to dislodge someone but not impossible with a good campaign. It would be a shame to loose the knowledge and experience of a good, hard working elected member through artificial term limits. If some one has over extended their time on council and are no longer adding value the electorate will generally know and not re-elect them.

One doesn't improve democracy by abrogating it. The rules ought not stand in the way of the voters and their preferred candidates. There were countless positions at the last election that saw fewer nominations to positions. We should not be restricting candidacy at a time when we are too few candidates.

One term only. Get rid of "bench warmer" councillors

People should not be allowed to nominate to be a Councillor if a member of their immediate family is employed by the said Council. Eg: Husband, Wife or Sibling. Either direct employment or through a contractor. This brings potential conflicts in decisions made by Council.

People's lives can change almost overnight with illness, a change to a personal relationship, career change forced or voluntarily, the list of personal adversities continues. Also the candidate may not contribute or attend meetings as was expected by the Council when elected.

I therefore suggest that the councillor be placed initially on a 2 year term, then on a 1 yearly extension by the Council for a total period of 4 years. At this juncture the councillor may elect to run for election again under the same principles of engagement as the first term. This will keep the standards of the councillors high and also will refresh the cohort on a regular basis.

Perhaps need to change to 2-year terms as 4 years is far too long for volunteers

Political parties should not be allowed to be involved in councils. This would make it easier for new candidates to get involved, as it would remove the need to have a party machine behind you to get elected.

Ratepayers should have the power of VETO. If a Councillor becomes belligerent, Ratepayers should be able to petition Council to have that Councillor removed. Same for paid staff of Council like CEO's and other Department heads, Ratepayers should be able to raise a petition to have an employee sacked.

Rotation of terms to give members a break and allow for fresh ideas. Possibly a mentorship to EMs are open to the idea.

should be retired and no more than two four-year terms for all Councillors and Mayors unless no other new candidates nominated

Similar to state and commonwealth terms, we must allow the community decide if the elected members are worthy of a 2nd/3rd term.

Some councils would be hard pressed to have Councillors if forced to expel those who have served and wish to continue!

Sometimes you need to keep a stable base of Councillors (eg you could have all new Councillors following an election).

strongly agree

Strongly agree with the idea of term limits. The average age of councillors is very high and may not represent the ideas of younger generations or promote longer term planning and thinking.

Strongly agree, this would encourage new ideas and people

Term limits are a good idea. Also councillors must declare any business associations that could be a conflict of interest

Term limits are always necessary, but it can also be a catch-22.

Term limits are fundamentally undemocratic in my opinion. If someone is doing a good job they should be allowed to run again.

Term limits are not supported. It is up to the community to determine if an Elected Member should be re-elected.

Term limits be determined only by the electors. It would be undemocratic to initiate term limits for local government where such term limits do not exist at State or Federal level.

Term limits for council Members should not be introduced.
Need to appreciate gained experience

Term limits should be in place for Councilors. They should be allowed two terms following their first of 4 years (maximum of 12 years), and mayors should have the opportunity for an extra term following their first (8 years). This will open up the space and allow some concentration of power for Councilors over the Mayor.

Term limits would be beneficial; suggest 3 terms x 4 years

Term limits would have the effect of limiting the pool of candidates available to small, rural councils who already struggle to attract candidates.

Term Limits

New policies and ideas are not necessarily better policies and ideas. With reasonable length of tenure should come increased understanding of the council and the ward, links with others in the council and the community, the ability to make things happen, and to recognise when a new proposal is an old proposal from years ago dressed in new clothes. Of course, 20-40 years doesn't sound, prima facie, healthy for the system or the individual but is likely a symptom of lack of new interest and commitment from those who might replace them.

Perhaps a better way of encouraging people to develop the competence, confidence and familiarity with the role and environment is to introduce some sort of short "internship" (perhaps by another name) which would enable potential candidates to work with current councillors (representing wards other than the one/s they might contest). There could be a range of different levels of involvement and commitment to meet the range of interests.

That's fine in metro councils but not so much in regional areas. It's much harder to get people to put their hand up and I know of one council in regional SA that had no Mayor. The Mayor is a very vulnerable position and I think over time it will become harder to find people to do the job

The ability for elected members to nominate their Mayor from within their cohort should be removed. The Mayor should be elected by voters at large. Candidates for Mayor should have served at least one term as a Councillor. All elected members should be limited to three terms in total.

The issue may arise whereby there are vacancies that are not filled at an election resulting in a supplementary election.

The most efficient Councillors are the most experienced. If the people want to vote for them do not stop them.

The most efficient Councillors are the most experienced. If the people want to vote for them they are obviously the preferred candidates and should be permitted to continue on in their role.

The problem is finding people of reasonable intellect that wish to participate across a broad range of issues. We should not have councillors who are interested in only getting a new road or similar one purpose participation. For that reason perhaps 3 terms would be a better initial requirement. We may have problems getting enough suitable people otherwise.

The problems around councillors goes well beyond them. Local Government in its current format is no longer fit for purpose.

The suggestion is not supported

The term they serve should depend upon their performance as measured by surveying their peers, council staff the mayor and the CEO and ratepayers. If feedback is positive they should be allowed (in fact encouraged) to continue.

There are benefits and risks to limiting terms. It would also mean losing experienced members. Limiting terms would perhaps need to reflect senate elections so that terms are staggered to avoid a room full of new members with no clue. I also believe it would need to be 2 terms as a councillor AND 2 terms as a mayor or we will end up with mayors who have never served on council and have no clue.

there are other ways to encourage new ideas, elected members should not be the source of ideas!

There does need to be some sort of continuity, eg we can't keep CEOs or some other staff for very long and therefore they have no idea of the "history" of council's behaviour or decisions and regurgitate stuff over and over.

There is an opportunity to ensure strategic vision remains current and is freshly considered periodically. It may also reduce entrenched oppositions in the chamber.

However, the risk is that councils lose good candidates / members who have the support of their community, and possibly cannot fill vacancies. It may also cause instability / lack of meaningful progress against a particular strategic direction. This could ultimately reduce meaningful representation especially for regional councils

There needs to be a turnover of council members to ensure that there are fresh ideas and new perspectives, whilst this does mean that there is a loss of corporate knowledge, long term council members tend to not want to participate in mandatory training or keep up to date with legislative changes.

The best statement about length of service on a council is that if you cannot achieve what you have stood for council for in 3 four year terms (12 years) what you want is not achievable.

There needs to be some continuity which would be negatively affected by term limits.

There should be a maximum of 3 or 4 terms. This maintains corporate knowledge and allows new ideas and ways of doing things to be considered

There should be no artificial restriction. If people want change they will vote for it.

There should be no cap as ultimately the community decides and could reward a high performing member, or vote them out.

There should not be any restrictions on how many terms a Council Member may serve.

There will be some councils who cannot attract candidates if they are faced with restricted terms

this is a difficult question. I think there ought to be term limits but happier for them to be on the longer side. I think people with a strong connection to their community shouldn't be prevented from nominating, particularly if they do a good job.

This is a good idea. Perhaps it could be slightly more nuanced, allowing a maximum of 2 continuous terms and then a break of the the number of terms served before a councillor is able to run again. Eg if a councillor serves 2 terms, they need to sit out 2 terms before running again.

This is a good idea. In some councils in metropolitan Adelaide, some councillors have grown a bit 'stale'.

This is up to the voters. The main thing is to allow a variety of candidates, and that will only happen if councilors have free and flexible conditions, rather than a tempting income.

This may work in well populated areas, but not in regions.

It is also something I would like to see happen in State and Federal Government

This is not necessary at councillor level as anyone can nominate, their is no limit to the opportunity to be a candidate.

I think you should let the people decide who they will vote for and not take away their choice of representation at the local govt level.

This should be left open as it is the constituents that vote councillors in. If someone is not doing their job, don't vote for them.

If someone is doing a good job, they shouldn't be forced out because their term is up.

Three 4-year terms would be a good maximum.

To start with any LGA has to show a willingness to become involved with their outlier communities which have their own wards. The ward that I represented was a very community minded community however the professionalism of the candidates and the previous representatives were so poor because sensible professional people who could offer so much to the Council were so disillusioned with their LGA the attitude was; "Why bother?"

Totally, there should be a 2 year limit and they can not be on the council for another 4 years. Only after having a 4 year break can they put themselves up for election. A lot of people stay in it for the money and show nothing for there time as a councillor. The same for a Mayor they can only stay elected for 3 years then they MUST step down and not be allowed to stand again for another 5 years giving room for new people to try for Mayor.

Traditionally women have a higher one termism

Turnover after one term means a loss of corporate knowledge so there is a view that Elected Members take the first 18 months to get their stride and understand the processes.

Two terms is sufficient.

Two to three x 4 year terms would allow for a councillor to develop the skills, and knowledge to be effective in the role, allowing for fresh ideas and contemporary practices. However, this practice should be reflected into other tiers of government

Unfortunately, only individuals with an agenda to change something for themselves would become a councillor.

The horse and cart is gone and we have technology that does not require councils.

Unlimited but 4yr terms

Varying views have been expressed:

- No.
- Tricky one, difficult to call - You may have a member who is doing a great job and has been serving for three terms and has the ability to do another term, but can also see that someone may be there for too long.
- 3 terms

Very Strongly Agree. Always need new faces & opportunities for fresh ideas.

Views were divided - some say No to term limits, some say Yes with two to three terms

We don't have enough new applicants to limit reelection. How about an independent investigation into how effective councillors are. How do they engage with their ward residents, how effective have they been in achieving positive outcomes?

We don't need ageism statements implying that new candidates have fresh ideas and experienced councillors don't. The opposite is true. Experienced councillors know how to get new ideas through the system and don't drain staff time, to get "new ideas" done. Many new ideas are not new! As a long term councillor, I believe I bring experience and historical know how. New councillors are manipulated by staff and often told "different" information about background of decisions. Not deliberate misguiding, but new staff often don't understand the system or the background. More experienced councillors hold staff accountable by reminding them of why decisions were originally made.

We have a 'revolving door' of administrators, all of whom have achieved nothing for our town so far. Shorter terms has not worked for administrators, so why would it work for councillors?

We support a capping on the time frame that elected members can serve the public
This should be capped to 3 terms / 12 years.

When State and Federal government limit their terms then I will consider limiting Local Government. Ideally no one should spend more than 16 years in any form of government as an elected member

Whilst I said the number of terms should be limited, I realise that in country areas this may not be as feasible as in denser populated areas.

Why does it matter? You will rule out people who are genuinely interested and committed. It is not democratic to limit terms. State and Federal are not limited - why should Local Government terms be? Let the community decide who they want to vote for!

YEEEEEESSSSSSSS! Get rid of the awful long term councillors that shouldn't be anywhere near running a business

Yes

Yes - perhaps a 2 term max

Yes agree. Also consider whether people are allowed to run again after they have served the maximum number of terms, and then had a break, then run again.

Yes and make them performance based some are very other are hopeless.

Yes as it seems it is the same people and it seems that once you are on council it is harder to get in than to get out.

yes however I believe they should be able to re-nominate after a break period of 4 years. Serve 2 x 4 years Break 1 x 4 years Serve 2 x 4 years and so on.....

Yes I absolutely agree and a maximum of three terms would be my suggestion. And during that time current members have to encourage people to be interested in running, as part of a succession program. I also think that some people should NOT be allowed to nominate, for eg an ex-CEO of the council they have worked for and still live in.

Yes I agree

Yes I agree but maybe only two thirds of total members have to have limited terms. Done in such a way to have some knowledge continuity.

Yes i agree on this too much older people who need to leave as they are to set in their ways and only attend for the money and dont contribute to Council or the community

Yes I do. New people and fresh ideas.

Need life experienced persons but also flexible thinking persons. Being on council too long can make some persons inflexible

Yes I think having limited terms allows for more options in terms of allowing fresh ideas and new ways of thinking

Yes that is probably quite true

Yes would also vacate seat if councilor only reelected due to no one else standing. Often too strong party support to go up against sitting member

Yes, agree with the idea that preventing the same incumbents for nominating for decades would force new blood into the system. I'd like to see this replicated at State and federal levels. Of course, we'd then lose experience, but I think on balance, encouraging greater diversity of views would be more beneficial than maintaining experience.

Yes, I agree a limit is helpful for fresh ideas.

Yes, I agree. Civil members should only have 3 terms to make a difference. If no difference is made then they should be out at the end of 2 terms.

Yes, I believe Councillors become stale after 2 terms and have little more to contribute.

Yes, maximum of two terms for mayor and three for councillors

Yes, Mayor 2 years & councillors 4 years

Yes, totally agree with this. This gives enough time for a new councillor to learn the requirements of the job and follow some longer term projects through to completion. If they only serve 1 term, then there are other 2 termers around to oversee the project.

Yes, we have some very long term Councillors and they need to move on for their own sake as well as everyone else's

You could have quotas or identified roles for this instead.

You need time limits so more progressive voices and diverse voices can be heard and make a difference

State and federal parliamentarians don't have limited terms, and they're given ministerial responsibilities that affect everybody. . At least councillors can only do damage in their local community, and then if they do, we will turf them out.

As a long term elected member 7th consecutive terms so far, I find this very insulting and disrespectful. We live in a free and democratic country and should not be restricted from running for council for up to 3 terms.

That should be decided by the electors to vote us out or not, not with a stroke of a pen, as a Senior Australian who gave the best years of my life doing what is a passion for me community work, have a lot of council knowledge and experience to offer to mentor new young, elected members I am not the only one many others in the same boat as I, It takes many years and dedication to gain the knowledge of the workings of the local government sector, to restrict elected members to 3 terms does not make any sense. reason being once you start to acquire the knowledge needed, your 3 term restriction is up and you are gone.

With all due respect local government, the tier of government closest to the people should be respected not restricted.

I note, a small observation both State and Federal members of Parliament have no restrictions on how many terms they run for, why impose it on Local Government? likewise, our volunteers, we don't put a time limit on them to serve, and say, you got to go maybe a new one will have better ideas, that's disrespectful nonsense.

Limiting the number of terms that an Elected Member may serve as counter-productive to attracting and retaining quality candidates. Simply ruling a line through a potential candidate with multiple terms of experience in that Council is ludicrous. If they have been successful, the voting public will support their renomination, if they haven't succeeded, then the public will vote for some one else.

Limiting the maximum term for Councillors may encourage public support for introducing the same restrictions to State and Federal Government levels. The same arguments to reduce renominating Councillors could easily be applied to these higher levels of Government.

No limits should be set

Lack of nominations once the initial cohort have finished their term

Council could see some merit in limiting terms (more like 4-5 terms) but felt there were risks as it could remove experienced and hard-working people from the candidate pool. One of the younger members of Council believed the experience of longer serving members was beneficial to him, the community and to Council's overall functioning. Performance of the members – not longevity of the term – should be the determining factor and it was felt the community would ultimately decide if they wanted a member to continue in the role.

Opinions amongst Members varied regarding term limits for council members. Advocates for the introduction of term limits emphasized its potential for increasing fresh ideas and cultural shifts. Whilst opponents argued the introduction of term limits would guarantee the loss of experience and wisdom and would hinder councillors' ability to build strong connections and in-depth understanding of their community

Council does not support term limits for council members. Term limits to state and federal members of parliament are not applied and this should continue to align for local government members.

No. It is up to individual Elected Members to determine their capacity to continue in the role and ultimately the community will determine if an Elected Member is re-elected.

Though there is great benefit in an experienced Council with members holding office for several terms, we understand that limiting terms could others to stand that would not otherwise consider running against a long-term incumbent member.

Ultimately, however, the length of anyone's terms of office is determined by the electors and we should trust the democratic process as we do in state and federal elections.

We would also flag the difficulty of supplementary elections and how term limits could be applied in a fair and equitable way for those that are not elected to office in a periodic election.

Term limits for Council Members should not be introduced as experience and knowledge assist newly elected members to learn from.

Council is of the view that the democratic process is properly served by enabling the community to make the decision whether or not to vote in a candidate over a series of Council terms and that no external restrictions should be imposed.

Continuity of elected members provides knowledge and confidence in Council. However, Council recognises that new members do provide opportunity for fresh perspectives and renewal should be encouraged. It is difficult to determine if term limits would assist in achieving this or not. Should term limits be introduced, Council recommends a maximum of not less than three consecutive terms to ensure the stability and continuity of Council

No, this would be detrimental for smaller regional councils and also contrary to the democratic election process. The consistency of tenure in local government enables longer term strategic planning.

Introducing term limits for council members is a subject worthy of consideration. The debate revolves around the balance between valuing experience and dedication to public service, and the potential benefits of introducing more frequent turnover to bring in fresh perspectives.

Proponents argue that experience and commitment are crucial for effective governance, and success or failure is more closely tied to individual competence, which may develop over time. On the other hand, proponents of term limits contend that regular turnover can foster new ideas and prevent stagnation in decision-making.

To establish a fair approach, mirroring the rules observed at state and federal levels—where there are no term limits—could be considered. If there is no compelling research indicating that extended service by council members hampers decision quality, adopting similar rules as higher tiers of government may be sensible. This ensures consistency in governance practices unless evidence suggests a necessity for divergence.

If this matter is given further consideration potentially along with timing of elections, an option may be that only 50% of positions become vacant in any election, similar to Commonwealth senate positions to enable continuity.

Council is not supportive of term limits for Council members.

This would result in the loss of experienced Council members, which in turn would be a loss for the community.

Efforts should concentrate on encouraging a higher number of quality candidates to nominate, which would result in a healthy mix of experienced and new Members. Ultimately, the voters decide.

Loss of experienced and knowledgeable longer term Council Members, which may also impact the community.

At this time, does not support term limits for elected members.

Council supports in theory the idea of fixed terms for elected members, noting however the following:

- The difficulty in prescribing a universal term limit – what is the magic number as many members are still active and effective in term 5.
- The differences between rural and urban where it can be more difficult to attract people to stand for Council

Council proposes a 4 term maximum elected members can serve and also suggest that Mayors should be required to serve a term as a Councillor before becoming Mayor.

I fully support the suggestion of term limits. Sitting Councillors (particularly Mayors) have a huge incumbency advantage. They have a profile, enhanced by the opportunity of promoting themselves in community activities, as well as frequent ratepayer funded “Community News” publications.

I assume that it will apply to Mayors as well as Councillors. I fully support this suggestion, for the reasons given in the discussion paper. Given the age demographic of Mayors and Councillors, which is unlikely to change in the immediate future, a three term limit seems sensible

Some members who have been representing their communities for an extended period do a remarkable job and as such I am unsure whether limiting terms would be beneficial. Sadly there are times when some council members either lacking capability or unable to devote time can no longer fulfill their duties and perhaps fresh ideas and approaches may be needed

This needs to take into consideration the level of expertise on council. If there are totally new councillors for all the council then they have no expertise amongst councillors so the need for change must take this into account.

We are of the view that mayors should only be allowed 2 terms (8 years) before they have to stand down as they can dominate the council if on there too long and become stale or fixated.

We would support Councillors having maximum 3 to 4 terms= 12 to 16 years. However, somehow elections should ensure a mix of longer term and new members as well as equal gender balance and diverse backgrounds. A council of completely new members would struggle for some years and would give some questionable Mayors and CEOs too much power. Prospect currently meets these requirements well with two out of 8 councillors being from a Vietnamese background and the 8 councillors are made up of 5 women and 3 men. Five of the councillors have had more than one term on council and one person has a wealth of time on council.

No, term limits should not be introduced. Recruiting members is difficult in the current circumstances in regional areas. Placing term limits would require more frequent recruitment. It is good practice for the business continuity of the council for members to have experience in the council gained over time that they can share with new members. If a councillor is ineffective, they are not likely to be re-elected Loss of quality council knowledge. Increased administrative burden on council staff. A greater scope for errors in decision making.

No. The point of elections is that there will be a natural turnover of members over time. Our group considers however that a term of 4 years is often too long for people to commit to. The pace of life today is such that there is greater mobility in employment and locality of living. It is suggested that a two or three year term would encourage more people to nominate for council, as the long-term commitment will be lessened

Our members have mixed views on this question. We believe that all the expertise should not be lost at once. It is important to have a mix of experienced members and new members, as is the case at any level of governance, which is not to suggest that one is more important than the other. Some think that a two-term candidacy may be sufficient, others consider that there ought to be no limit. Some consider that there should be a limit on the period the office of Mayor and Deputy Mayor is held by the same person i.e. two term limit

I am not convinced term limits would be very helpful. If someone is doing a good job as an Elected Member and they keep getting elected, that is how democracy works. In saying that, I am not opposed to further exploration into term limits for Mayors – in that they serve a certain term limit – and then have the ability to re-join the Chamber as an Elected Member should they wish to run again in that capacity, with the opportunity to return as Mayor again after a break. Again, I'm not sure term limits would work for regional areas.

could result in adverse impacts being felt by youth for those that start their involvement at an early age. It could also be an obstacle to those who wish to progress through the Council from Councillor to Deputy Mayor before taking on the Mayoral role. If terms were limited this progression could be stifled by legislative restrictions resulting in potential future Mayors stepping back from that role and limiting succession planning. The role of an elected Mayor is one that requires an investment of considerable time and covers a very wide scope which takes time to be across. Restricting terms may eliminate the future leaders of our community from the sector.

There is also the potential in small regional areas to limit the number and diversity of candidates for elections. Younger people lead busy lives and have more dependent families and, if nominating for Council, possibly do not have the capacity to take on the extended role of Mayor or Deputy Mayor in their initial terms. If restrictions are placed on how long they serve, then future Mayors may be lost to

these legislative restrictions.

If term limits are introduced, consideration needs to be given to how this would work. Could an Elected Member who has reached the limit step down and then renominate after a set period? If so, how long would this break need to be before they renominate? How would the term limits work for those that may have been elected through a supplementary election and reach their limit mid-term? These issues and other will arise through this process and thought needs to be given to all scenarios prior to its introduction.

In general Council does not support the introduction of term limits for Council Members as it does not support continuity and knowledge within Council and could be considered undemocratic.

Yes, I support term limits for council members to be introduced.

We would suggest that a two or three term candidacy would ensure a mix of new and experienced councillors

Given the often-stated desire for a consistent set of rules across the three tiers of government, I suggest when term limits are introduced for Federal and State MPs, then at that time, also introduce them at the local government level.

It seems odd to me that on the one hand the sector says it wants more people to nominate for Council and on the other, dedicated, experienced members of the community who are willing to continue serving their communities could be subject to term limits

Need a balance of new and existing member, to provide new ideas as well as stability.

Split terms would be a way to ensure that there is not too much turn over of members at one time, as it can take a long time (over a year) to fully learn the role. Continuity is also important, as large projects take time from concept to delivery

Limiting terms would inadvertently exclude passionate and experienced community members who have dedicated themselves to serving their ratepayers.

Longer terms on the council should be viewed as a positive attribute rather than a negative one.

Experience and local knowledge gained over time are invaluable assets in effectively addressing the needs and challenges of a community. By allowing experienced council members to continue serving, communities can benefit from their deep understanding of local issues, established relationships with stakeholders, and insight into past decisions and their outcomes.

Term limits would also disrupt continuity and stability within the council. Constant turnover in leadership positions would hinder the implementation of long-term projects and strategies, leading to inefficiencies and inconsistencies in governance. Especially when you consider a Long-Term-Financial-Plan of Council spans a minimum of 10 years.

Topic 3: Change the method of voting (3.2)

A choice of both options is far more democratic

A combination of both can work. I suggest that the four Saturdays prior to the counting of votes, a polling booth be set up within the Civic Centre to allow for those wishing to vote personally.

A combination of both is preferred.

A combination of in person and postal would be good.

A hybrid Online/in person/postal system would be most convenient

A pre poll like state election might be better than postal

A trial for attendance voting could be considered for future.

Access for older residents must be considered postal voting and early voting in the local area at nominated times would be good

All opportunities for voting need to be taken including attendance, postal and pre-poll.

Expand optional voting so that even a single 1 is counted as formal. Trying to make voters mark at least as many preferences as members to be elected means that currently many do not vote if they only have a preference for one or less than the current requirement and why waste time voting informally?

Allow voting to start 2 weeks before at the council offices and on the final Friday and Saturday at voting booths at one school in each ward.

Votes should be counted by an independent body of Rate Payers– not the Electoral Commission.

An exhaustive summary of the candidate should be distributed with the voting papers. Candidates must live in the council area. If they leave during their term then they are stood down and replaced. Holdfast has a current Alderman who lives in Canberra but still collects his stipend and holds the seat. Ridiculous!

Anything that makes it easy to vote is good.

As per current state and federal elections - but allow longer times for anyone to vote. Ie, in person, allowing a week or so to do it for anyone (not just unable to get there on particular day) and with postal option if that's not possible.

Attendance or postal.

Attendance voting discriminates against people who live further away from the polling booth, which is usually situated in town. This would discourage those on farms or from other towns to vote. Postal voting ensures that all electors have the same access to voting.

Attendance voting is the most efficient and less costly method of voting.

Voting could be done in the Council offices plus at least one major shopping centre for each ward. Voting could be done over a period of 2 weeks. Each voting booth would have at least 1 attendant who would mark off the names of each person from the electoral roll upon presentation of at least 1 form a prescribed identification such as Driver's license, Passport, Proof of Age card, or combination of Medicare Card and Pension card.

Counting of votes by hand only with the use of computers and computer algorithms terminated.

All counting to be done by an independent body of Rate Payers– not the Electoral Commission.

Attendance voting is the most efficient and less costly method of voting. It relies upon people making their own way to the ballot booths thus making the previously required Data Centre at Hindmarsh redundant.

Voting could be done in the Council offices plus at least one major shopping centre for each ward. Voting could be done over a period of 2 weeks. Each voting booth would have at least 1 attendant who would mark off the names of each person from the electoral roll upon presentation of at least 1 form a prescribed identification such as Driver's license, Passport, Proof of Age card, or combination of Medicare Card and Pension card.

Counting of votes by hand only with the use of computers and computer algorithms terminated.

All counting to be done by an independent body of Rate Payers– not the Electoral Commission.

Both should be available.

By combining State and local government elections you will immediately increase the voting public enormously.

Candidate summaries should be standardised and word limited in their responses.

Combination - similar to state/federal. Attendance or postal

Compulsory voting in postal form. My view is in attendance would be cost prohibitive for many councils

Consideration needs to be given to electronic/ online voting too.

Council believes that the current postal voting method is adequate for local government elections

Council elections are the perfect level of government to test out electronic voting, this needs to be moved ahead.

councils should have prepoll centers and in person voting on election day.

Counting of votes by hand only with the use of computers and computer algorithms disallowed

All counting to be done by an independent body of Rate Payers– not the Electoral Commission.

Current methods seem fair and reasonable.

Disband Council

DO NOT make it so that you have to go in. I have mobility issues and can not go into vote in person. There still needs to be both kinds in person and postal

electronic

Electronic compulsory voting

Electronic remote voting on phones would be best.

Electronic voting

Electronic voting

Electronic voting is not supported currently, pending its adoption at the state or national level

Electronic voting must be considered.

Electronic voting please

Electronic voting should be brought in to encourage participation

Electronic voting via a protected password

Electronic voting with appropriate safeguards.

Electronic voting would be great.

Electronic voting would be my preferred model (ie online voting).

Electronic voting! It is 2024 after all.

Electronic voting. Technology allows for secure and anonymous online voting.

Electronically

Electronically either online or potentially using a QR code or App, depending on the feasibility. It will definitely appeal to the younger voters who are underrepresented

Go electronic -

Have both as a option.

Historically, turnout under postal voting has proven to be higher than under in-person voting. Nevertheless, in the 2023 WA local government elections, the Town of Cambridge reverted from postal back to in-person voting, and received a reasonable turnout rate. This demonstrates that there may be benefit in councils offering both options. Perhaps the in-person option should be held at the main council office on election day, along with an event that draws attention to the election, emphasising its importance, celebrating all participants, and at the same time offering some family fun.

I actually would prefer that voting can take place electronically as well as by attendance. With the decline of timely postal services, the 2022 LG elections were problematic. I would be really interested to know how many postal votes were received by the SA Electoral Commission after the cut off date? I bet they were posted well before the date though. Gone are the days when you knew if you posted a letter by 6pm, it would reach a same-state destination the following day. There were letters that I was mailing out during the campaign that took at least 5 days to arrive in the same post code.

I believe postal and online voting should be available to everyone.

As online voting would be easier, you would see greater voting response but would still have to offer postal voting for those that are not tech savvy.

I believe that attendance voting is a better way for people to participate in the process of democracy.

I don't know why we couldn't have online voting for council elections- tie it up with mySAGOV for security.

I don't mind really however it always takes too long to count.

Maybe councils could pilot a first and do it online and see how it goes so as to have it rolled out for all elections.

Not that hard.

At least when people turn up to vote at a polling booth, for instance, they should enter their vote online immediately so as to save on costs for counting manual votes and also speed up the results.

Allow votes to be cast AND COUNTED progressively so as to speed things up.

I don't really mind how people vote - just as long as they do.

I feel like encouraging both methods allows the action of voting to be an event that is actually something people can go to and do instead of a letter that people routinely forget to post

I find postal voting is too open to perceived corruption and attendance voting on a specified date or at an early voting centre would be much safer.

I have been OIC & 2IC at both state and federal elections and it works well. Council elections in their current format by majority postal vote isn't working, and is more susceptible to fraud or vote stacking.

I live in an area where we do not have home postal delivery. My post box is in a different council area. I do not receive voting slips from my Council, I receive voting slips for the Council where by Post Box is. In fact I receive more information about my Post Box's Council, than I do about where I actually live. I believe that if we register our emails with the council, then they could email us information instead of information being placed in our mail boxes. I would be happy to be able to vote online for a council election.

I personally know that one councillor managed to retain his position for many years by visiting aged care homes and gaining votes.

I prefer postal but could see a benefit to in person voting options as well

I prefer postal votes. It will be great when voting can be done online, but I know there are many security hurdles to overcome before we get to that stage.

I prefer to attend as I want to be an active part of the process but I want the option to postal vote if I have a conflict on the day.

I think a combination of in-person voting and postal voting should be considered. Similar to the other tiers of government in-person and postal voting provides convenience and flexibility.

I think it should be either postal or attendance voting.

I think it should be the same as State and Federal elections. One Council's fiasco is a bit of a beat up in my view but it's not a good look. Besides, there is something to be said for the social occasion of going to the polling booth and having a snag. But, I think remove the "reasons" for being able to postal or early vote and let anyone vote postal or early if they want to register or whatever.

I think it would be worth offering attendance and postal voting, particularly if voting was made compulsory

I think less people would turn out for in person voting?

I think postal voting for local elections is appropriate.

I think that compulsory voting is more important than HOW people vote...

I would like to have to have the option to do either if that is possible.

If compulsory - in person

If not compulsory - postal

If elections were to be compulsory keep postal voting. Make an assessment of results and then if needed, move back to a combination of postal and personal voting.

If voting becomes compulsory it is a good idea to keep postal ballots to lessen the grumbles about the burden of voting. I always prefer in person but am happy to do the postal thing.

If voting compulsory with state elections then attendance compulsory or use postal votes system

If voting is compulsory, either method is appropriate, although postal voting does offer convenience and would avoid the electioneering (and environmental waste of how-to-vote handouts) that occurs at polling booths. If voting is optional, it doesn't matter which method is used - people will make the effort if they want to vote.

If we cannot vote for councillors, we should at least be allowed to vote for the administrators. The ones that have been chosen for us seem to be universally mediocre.

if you able bodied you vote in person, you also have proof you voted, The only ppl that cant & vote by postal is essential workers & the disabled. NOT aged CARE & espoeicially not dementia care, thats open to fraud.

In person at council premises - and each ward could set up a booth in a public space ie mall. .

In person or via mail. I would not like online as it would give those who can advertise online a greater advantage.

In person voting works when voting is compulsory, there's too much apathy from people with voluntary voting and in particular voluntary postal voting

In person voting, even if not mandatory may increase turn out, as voters are more familiar with having to present in person on a nominated day (or pre-polling booth).

In person, postal or online voting are variable options for ratepayers and residents to vote. Helps those with disabilities or who do shift work on interstate/overseas at time of voting.

In relation to voting, Council seeks consistency in voting across all three tiers of government such as compulsory voting. Voting procedures should provide for flexible methods of voting to ensure

accessibility, inclusivity, and the integrity of the electoral process. This could include early voting, postal voting and on-line voting

In relation to voting, Council seeks consistency in voting across all three tiers of government such as compulsory voting. Voting procedures should provide for flexible methods of voting to ensure accessibility, inclusivity, and the integrity of the electoral process. This could include early voting, postal voting and on-line voting.

Introduce electronic/online voting.

Investigation of electronic voting systems is supported, but not at a cost to local government

Is on-line voting a potential 3rd option? The national census can be done on-line, why can't casting a vote in a local Council election include this. With the 24/7 work cycle and travel difficulties in regional/rural/remote communities, an on-line option would be good. Outside of Adelaide there is almost zero public transport available making it hard to vote in any election if you're not near a polling booth. Australia Post has a rotten track record of delivering anything these days...

it has to be easy

Just make it consistent and similar to state and federal, it's so confusion and not exciting doing postal ballots

Just make the rules/options the same as for state and federal elections to avoid any confusion.

Less Councils. Longer terms. Fewer Councillors. Postal OR Attendance voting allowed.

Let people know where to vote

Local Council is required to maintain a meeting place in every HUNDRED (public consultation). Hold a voting booth there with info on council and the nominees. Some face to face.

At least Council staff/councillor would see their own town hall for the first time in a long time and more regularly. (prompting maintenance on a heavily used community asset)

Local government should be abolished and if not, councils should be amalgamated eg Eyre Peninsula should be one council. Some rural councils have less than 3000 or so people but about 50 or more "staff", most of whom are on over \$80K.

Make it the same as the other 2 tiers of govt

Making it easy for our Elderly and those others who have difficulty getting to vote in person with postal votes

More voting options the better. For most people, declaration voting in out-of-council-areas would be the most convenient as you can just hop down to the booth on your lunch break or whatever.

My opinion is that voting should stay voluntary

No - it's hard to understand why people don't vote when it has been made so easy with postal voting.

No to postal voting as this can be tampered with

No, I think the system is set up well enough that there's not really any better way to allow a ratepayer the opportunity to vote. If they want to then they will.

No, there is no risk of voting fraud

No. A postal ballot paper sent out to every eligible voter keeps it simple.

Not all rate payers have access or technical competence or computer access for online voting

Not fussed how, so long as it is set in legislation and not changeable like in Victoria :)

Offer the same degree of flexibility that is provided for state government elections.

On line

Once again, forcing only in person voting would cause frustration for people as it can be inconvenient. Setting up limited polling places in busy places in addition to postal voting could encourage more voters, however, the chance of double voting would obviously have to be considered.

online

On-line

Online could be added as another way to vote

Online options should be available

Online or digital. Come on, let's trial it already and be progressive!

Online or postal

Online voting

Online voting is my preference

online voting must be a thing, its works elsewhere overseas.

Online voting option

Online voting should be available

Online voting should be available.

Online voting should be possible in this day and age.

Online voting through registration system

Online voting would be very accessible otherwise flexible options (in person and postal)

Online voting would engage the younger generations much more, as much more instantaneously. No messing around with envelopes and voting slips and going to the post office.

A hybrid postal/online system could be implemented with an Unique Individual Voter Code on the Postal

Vote Envelope that could be entered into a secure app such as myGov and ensures that only one vote is lodged.

Online voting. It's the future. We need to focus on making it work.

Online voting?

Online would be best as an option.

Online would be good

Online would be great

Participation in elections should be made as simple and as equitable as possible. ECSA have made it clear that improving access via technology is not currently a viable option, therefore, voting participation options should be increased via as many analogue means as possible. While voting in person can be adopted, it should not be at the expense of postal voting, which is a very convenient and accessible way for many people to vote.

People need attendance voting so they can meet the candidates who are serious about representing the community.

People should be able to do postal or drop in to council.

people should not be forced to line up for hours to vote at a booth, this discourages some from voting

Perhaps have polls for people to return their postal votes to, as a bit of a reminder?

Polling booths will turn many off standing due to the effort required to organise canvassers and it is less convenient, and more expensive.

Possibly online voting.

postal and in-person is fine.

Postal or absentee voting as per State and Federal election guidelines. Local Government elections should be in person preferably. Councils should not have to cover the costs of running the election, costs are ECSA responsibility.

Postal or walking into a council office to vote in the same timeline as postal. Not a specific day.

Postal votes can be responded to by anyone who picks it out of a letter box. having to attend and verify you identity is better

Postal voting does not work.

Postal voting does raise some questions around lost ballots, when they need to be mailed by, if they arrive in time etc. that are in many ways circumvented through in person voting. However ballots can be less restrictive and allow more time to sit and read through material etc.

Postal voting draws a lot of complaints and allegations of misconduct. I.e. theft of ballots. Also, incorrectly completed ballots (i.e. not signed) risk the voter not having a choice.

Postal voting failed to meet its stated goals of increased turnout. It has also enabled scenarios which have undermined confidence in elections. The last two elections for the City of Adelaide have seen allegations of vote tampering which have gotten traction in the community. Regardless of the substance of these allegations, attendance voting with a secret ballot is an Australian Tradition with extremely high levels of confidence by the community. The public also understand state and Federal elections better so bringing Councils into harmony has educational efficiency.

Postal voting has been shown to be open to manipulation. It should only be available for the elderly, people who are away or with mobility issues.

Postal voting has not increased the number of electors voting and should cease

Postal voting has not met expectations has distanced the manner of voting from the 'personal touch' and interest in local councils that an in-person voting day used to bring to local governance

Postal voting is best, but postboxes can be limited and hard to get to. Additional boxes at libraries, shopping centres etc are needed.

Postal voting is good and online voting would also be nice.

Postal voting is much more likely to succeed. You can't forget, you can't make an excuse not to attend. No queues to worry about. Quick and easy to fill in and post a form.

Postal voting makes sense when voting rights are partially tied to property ownership. But maintaining a physical polling place, even if only for a certain period, eg. a week, could increase turnout. It needn't even be at a council office - it could be at a shopping centre, in a main street etc.

postal, in person and online should all be options

Preferable to use both methods.

Pre-polling should be available

Provide both options to optimise voting

Ratepayer should be automatically enrolled (regardless if you live there or not).

Reduce the number of councils

Regional and Metro can be different methods to the proposal to change the method of voting

Returning to in-attendance voting. The combination of compulsory voting with postal and online methods would be most convenient for voters.

Secure electronic voting eg. Brazilian electoral voting system

Should enable Online voting with safeguards such as pre-registration and voting validation by one-time use two factor authentication via MYSAGOV.

Online voting will enable community members to vote whilst away and MFA will ensure legitimacy of single vote for eligible jurisdiction if eligible in multiple council elections based on residency and ownership.

Should stop postal voting, and make it compulsory. As I door knocked I saw so many postal voting documents lying on the ground near full letter boxes. We saw illegal voting by people filling in vote for others.

still have postal voting but have pre polls available

Support a combination of both methods of voting, to include the ability to lodge a pre-poll vote.

Support the introduction of Electronic Voting in addition to postal voting

Surely you can give the option for people to vote using their mobile phones. We put a man on the moon over fifty years ago.

The current system of postal voting is sufficient

The current system works. The poor turnout is a result of disillusionment with Local Council. People do not see the value in it. Increased rates does not mean an increase in services or indeed, maintaining the Status Quo. One only has to look at the maintenance of Council "assets" (paid for by ratepayers) to see that the money is being spent on employing more over-educated idiots, OR feasibility studies on new Council Buildings now known as Offices NOT Council Chambers.

The majority support was to keep postal voting

The method for voting isn't important. But people need to know that it is compulsory (like state and federal elections).

The method of voting has previously made no difference to the level of voting, so either is as good as the other. Which one would be less expensive?

Of course, it may be prudent to consider digital voting, assuming it can't be undermined that is.

The November 2022 council elections reduced the number of ballot boxes to one in the main office of each Council. The previous option of a ballot box at all council outer offices should be reinstated. Consideration could also be given to providing ballot boxes at libraries.

The State Government should invest in exploring electronic voting. Australian will always beat a path to the most convenient option. After the initial outlay, electronic voting will be the cheapest option.

The support for investigation of electronic voting systems is divided.

The vote should occur at the same time and by the same method as voting in the state election.

the voting process needs to enable the maximum number of people to cast their ballot. As electronic and other means become more secure they should also be considered.

There are still so many inaccessible polling booths for other elections, I think postal voting for everyone is fairer. It also gives people time to research the candidates as postal votes usually come information and before the deadline.

There could be a hybrid system with the choice of electronic voting or postal voting.

There is a need for legislative change to minimise the risk of voting fraud

There is a number of postal votes that end up as informal votes due to incorrectly signed or in the wrong envelop. In person voting removes this simple human error.

There is no need for legislative change to minimise the risk of voting fraud

There needs to be a mix of postal and attendance voting, to ensure property owners who reside interstate are able to have their say.

There should be additional options other than just via post, e.g. online.

There should be options for both methods of voting. Different people have different needs and allowing them the flexibility to make the choice that works for them is important for fairness.

There should be the ability to undertake electronic voting using two factor authentication and identity clearances to ensure people do not vote twice.

This will also be of benefit where people may be voting in multiple council areas because they own investment properties or businesses in more than one council area.

The way people vote should be optional to maximise participation. Just make it as easy as possible.

This is probably in my opinion, one of the key reasons for such a low turnout for Council elections. The vast majority of people who have not / do not pay attention to Council elections are fundamentally bemused that they do not have to go anywhere to vote - they do for every other election.

The continued decline of mail also means that a significant proportion of the population does not check / have a letterbox anymore. Those that have letterboxes, tend to have snails or other things in them which eat the ballots before the residents pick them up. The effort to then go and get a second ballot is quite considerable. Furthermore, voting then involves a two-stage / double the effort process. 1. Filling out the ballot. 2. Actually bothering to post it. A lot of people do not know where their nearest mailbox is and the additional effort involved in having to drop it off, quite often kills things.

The 2022 Council elections also saw an additional week for people to get their ballots back. From a campaigning perspective, this is a massive issue. It meant four weeks of door-knocking at a time where some people have voted, others haven't and you really have no idea how much of your own time you are wasting trying to chase / encourage people to vote. This additional time however, also allows people to put off the decision to vote / have the ballot papers get lost. I believe that there should be a much more compressed timeframe for voting, in an effort to get people to do it straight away. If people don't do it right away, their chances of voting decrease significantly in my opinion.

I would have no issues moving to attendance voting. This would probably need to have some quite strict rules around it, given the fact that people tend to hand out how-to-vote cards which requires a significant amount of effort / volunteers.

Preferably though, I would like to see online voting be a thing for Council elections.

Until the electronic system is reliable, in person like State and Federal with pre polls and postal votes

Varying views have been expressed:

- In person on a particular date.
- In person or via mail. Online leaves open people who can advertise the most at the time getting the most clicks and then winning that way.

The system works well. Very few cases of fraud.

Varying views have been expressed:

- Should be explored.
- Online voting but in person i.e. a booth with a computer. NOT online at home. This will result in those with ability to advertise online getting more votes.
- If ECSA can accept online change of details why not online voting?
- The opportunity for more people to engage with the election process
- Fraud, Those with more money (supported by vested interests) getting more votes as they can target online voting with advertising.

Review of preference distribution model to be more reflective of vote.

Via an Iga smartphone app.

voting card and ID must be produced at the time of voting

Voting in Local Government elections should be by postal vote until the risks of online voting have been resolved and online voting becomes widely available

Voting in Local government elections should be the same as in state or federal elections. Having local government elections conducted differently sends the message that they are not as important as the state or federal elections.

Voting in person is a more honest and accountable method. Legislation states that a candidate cannot fill in the voting papers for another person, this does happen which is false support to that candidate the more desperate people are the more they will do to get elected.

Attendance voting is more costly but more accountable.

Take away preferential voting or similar

Voting is not compulsory, you will get less voting if you force them to attend a polling booth. I think postal voting is working well.

Voting on-line is my preferred method. Postal voting is okay, but on-line can be quick and easy, with a brief overview but also access to detailed information for those who want it.

Voting to be on line also

Voting using a ratepayer's ID could be then done electronically. This is the computer age after all.

We believe the postal voting has served us well in previous elections. The paper proposes a possible return to attendance voting to increase voter turnout, 'particularly given the increase in pre-polling and postal voting in recent state and federal elections.'

Considering the cited stronger uptake of postal voting in the other spheres of government, it seems counterproductive to return to attendance voting, a punitive rather than constructive move.

We were disappointed by the refusal to consider electronic voting. The statement that 'Australia is not yet in a position to introduce any large-scale system of online voting without seriously compromising the

integrity of our elections' seems a rather tragic indictment of national affairs.

The paper goes on to argue that three council elections held in NSW in December 2021 were declared invalid due to an error with the iVote system. Considering the Electoral Commission South Australia's acknowledgement late 2023 that two Adelaide Plains councillors had been incorrectly declared elected due to a problem in the computer software used to count votes in complex elections, this hardly makes a convincing argument.

We support in person voting and postal votes the same as state federal elections

Whilst i think that attending a polling booth would make the election much more open and transparent and less open to fraud or intimidation of voters, i understand that having to attend a polling booth can be a major inconvenience and therefore a deterrent to some community members - particularly the elderly, the disabled, those without access to transport, and families with very young children whereas postal voting alleviates some of those issues

Why can't we have online voting, then you could justify making it compulsory and when you log on to vote (could be done through MYGov for security) the voter has to read teh bios of candidates then vote, it would be similar to the Census.

Why can't we have online voting. We do our banking and so many other things online why not voting in council elections. Particularly with the younger generations using the post is seen as passe so postal voting seems to me to be past its prime.

Why not consider electronic voting?

With the reduced service that Australia Post provides for letters these days it would be good to amend legislation to ensure that councils provide a "ballot/drop box" for postal votes at a convenient location at council's principle office and other convenient locations within the council area - provided that appropriate security is provided e.g. the box is sealed and fixed so that it cannot be stolen.

Would be great to do this digitally.

Yeh, make it electronic! There are so many security measures and ways of proving the right person is behind the screen. Get rid of the paper vote (which anyone in the house can fill out) and get rid of the led pencil please.

As many options as possible should be offered to make it easy for people to vote.

Postal voting is proven to provide a higher turnout in local government elections across Australia and should be kept. It is also less expensive and is more popular to residents, who are not required to take time out of their weekend to attend a polling booth.

Council is open to investigations into online voting to better understand the complexities and risks but hold concerns with the risks associated with online voting. Any future moves to online voting will require secure and reliable technology to ensure elections are valid and people have trust in the process. There are risks associated with technology security and reliability should a move be made to utilise online voting.

There would be need for an effective education program to inform the electorate of any changes to voting methods.

The option of postal voting provides an accessible option for many, rather than having to vote 'by attendance at a polling booth'. With changes to Australia Post systems, there may need to be some consideration as to time allowed between posting and receipt dates for votes to be lodged – and this has greater effect in regional areas. ECSA could possibly improve their administrative processes by ensuring all regional voting papers are distributed before any metropolitan (or near metropolitan areas) Councils.

Electronic voting may appear the next logical step, but this does raise issues of ability to increase vote interference or tampering. Electronic voting should not be introduced for local government elections in isolation, but rather its should only be introduced if Federal or State election are conducted on this basis. We do not support the introduction of electronic voting for local government elections.

If any such investigation is to be undertaken, this should not be done in isolation for local government elections only. If any such investigations are done, it should be with a view to introduce at a Federal or State level.

One risk of investigating at local government level only is cost – and this may provide the State Government with another opportunity for covert cost shifting ie local government can pay for assessment and introduction of a system that the State (and maybe Federal Gov) can then use.

There is no doubt that some voters resist being forced under threat of penalty, to attend a polling booth between certain times on a particular day to have their name crossed of the Electoral Roll. The steadily increasing number of invalid votes at State and Federal polls may in fact be 'protest votes' by those of that mindset.

Anecdotally, the number of invalid postal or pre-poll votes at State and Federal levels is less than those received via declared polling booths. Pre-pollers and postal voters want their vote to count.

Until totally secure online voting can be assured, that method of voting should remain unavailable.

Council supports the current postal voting system. Council is not against the concept of electronic voting but would want to ensure community members without this means would not be disadvantaged. If this is to occur, a long lead time, testing and communications would be required. Electronic voting may pose difficulties for some members of the community – support for them would be required.

It is unclear how legislative reform would minimise the risk of fraud – more information would be required.

Position: Ballot voting

Making the voting process easier for electors also has the potential to improve voter turnout, however as discussed in other areas of this submission, the costs of introducing more simplified voting options such as electronic voting or polling booths appear to outweigh the benefits at this stage

No support for investigations of electronic voting

Electronic voting (in a broader context) introduces many other security and authenticity risks to the voting process that appear have not been fully overcome by those that have previously trialed such an approach. Examples of electronic voting systems previously cited have indicated that they were costly exercises when considering the cost per elector in comparison to the current postal voting method. These costs would have to be borne by councils (and subsequently ratepayers).

Council are of the view that increasing promotion and marketing will have little impact on changing voter behaviour, if there is not a clear understanding or push for voters to participate. Education on the need for, and importance of, participation by electors in elections could have some impact, as education campaigns are more likely to change voter behaviour than simple promotion or marketing campaigns.

It is very difficult to target the sufficient audience required in local government elections without spending the level of funds needed to undertake a comprehensive education campaign. In State and Federal elections candidates are supported by political party platforms, where the ideology of candidates and what they represent is clear and education campaigns are focussed on the key topics of each party. In local government elections, candidates have very specific, individual and varied platforms and education campaigns are not focussed at individual candidates but rather local government elections in general. Unless electors have key issues they need addressed at a local government level, it is not always easy for electors to understand what they are voting for and what impact voting has on their everyday lives.

Postal voting is the preferred method for voting

Voting methods available at local government elections should align and be consistent with state and federal elections. This should include polling booths on election day, postal voting and the availability of pre polling locations

The introduction of postal voting has increased the level of Voter turnout albeit marginally and not to the extent originally envisaged, however there is no evidence to suggest that a return to attendance voting will increase Voter Turnout.

History will show that most citizens tend to vote based on issues that are current at the time.

The Council does not support electronic voting systems as there is a risk of system failures, issues associated with the verification of votes and potential fraud which could jeopardise an entire election.

The visibility of polling places and in-person voting may increase the engagement of residents with their local council

How should people vote for their councils? Online, postal, polling booths, are supported.

I was disappointed by the lack of ambition about two elements of Local Government Electoral Reform: electronic voting and lowering the voting age.

In my view we must actively push for these reforms if we are to achieve the goals and objectives flagged in the Discussion Paper around increased participation in local government elections.

Many other jurisdictions around the world have embraced these reforms. Australia has the technical capacity to develop design solutions to secure electronic voting and there is evidence (for example from Wales and Scotland) to suggest lowering the voting age increases diversity of participation in elections, and in terms of candidates nominating for election. The South Australian parliament was actively considering electronic voting at the last State election in the context of the COVID pandemic. No convincing evidence was set out in the Discussion Paper as to why these options should not be prioritised in the current reform agenda.

The investigation of electronic voting system is supported

No need for legislative changes to minimise the risk of voting fraud for regional areas

Potentially large metropolitan councils could vote in person

The council does not support investigation of electronic voting - not conducive to an ageing population.

This topic is complex. The postal ballot system is actually fairly inclusive and readily accessible for most representors. However, the timeframes are relatively tight and regionals can be disadvantaged due to Post Office delivery times. Given there are also ballot boxes available at Council offices, the only real

alternative would be an online voting system, which whilst convenient, there are significant risks associated with this. It is also unlikely that this would be able to be a complete solution, with a significant portion of regional communities still having access to internet concerns, and or technology literacy concerns.

Until such time as this can be effectively and reliably rolled out at all levels (Federal and State also), it doesn't seem pragmatic to transition local government first.

NSW participated in online voting in 2021/2022 and there were three Council elections ruled invalid, this highlights the complexity of online compulsory voting.

This isn't a question that can be answered without understanding the supporting data – have the instances of voting fraud significantly increased, is it widespread or localised etc.

Opportunities include potentially reducing operating costs of conducting an election (distinct from costs to research and establish the system), and user convenience.

Risks include opportunity to commit widescale voter fraud / tampering, access to technology / internet in the regions, and cost to establish the system. There is also a factor of ECSA preparedness, resilience, and resources to adapt to the change – we would suggest offering some pilot programs initially should electronic voting become available (refer to NSW example).

The most efficient approach for ECSA administration should be adopted.

For those who prefer postal voting, it should remain an option.

If ECSA can ensure secure online voting, it is worth exploring.

The current manual counting process, especially for complex counts that only go to first preference at Council offices before being sent to ECSA, is time-consuming. Consider simplifying the system or directly sending electronic ballots for processing at the ECSA centre. Candidates may have scrutineering concerns, which may be offset by quicker results.

Different options to be made available for the community to vote including:

–Voting in person at their local Council office – costs would not be high to have this option available

–Postal voting – although there is a feeling that there is misunderstanding around this option

There is a need to deal with absentee voters better; consistency to not be on the roll, including PO addresses when registering – have to have a postal/street address

Post is the preferred method at the moment, noting the anecdotal evidence that people can receive their voting papers and lose them or put down to complete at a later date but forget to do so. Voting on line is not supported at this point due to concerns about access, reliability and costs

Electronic voting systems would presumably be costly to establish and as the technology is not yet widely utilised in Australia is somewhat unknown and uncharted territory. The online voting system or electronic ballot return utilised in some states in America have been reported to be vulnerable to hacking, are prone to producing errors and inaccurate results, risking public confidence in the results. Investigating the options and costs associated with electronic voting systems would assist councils to consider and provide informed feedback on whether the sector would be supportive of such a move in the future or whether it would be cost prohibitive.

Another alternative would be to investigate the feasibility of having locations where residents could cast a vote, as opposed to conducting the elections via post, which is increasing in cost election on election. Given the low voter participation in the return of ballots via post, councils incur significant expense for limited return.

More research into the cost of alternative options is required before councils could consider a move away from the postal system and make an informed decision on an alternative voting method.

Making voting available online for constituents could drive up the voter turnout rate in council elections. We believe that if the above transactions and processes can be achieved safely and securely through online portals and electronic methods, voting in a local government election in a similar capacity would drastically incentivise the community

How should people vote for their councils?

Postal

- Postal voting is a very convenient method for the community.
- It is noted there were numerous complaints during the last election with residents not receiving voting material or receiving incorrect voting material.
- Delays by Australia Post meant some voting material wasn't reissued.
- If postal voting is to be continued - the Council should be able to reissue in the last week of the voting period

In Person

- If compulsory voting was introduced, voting in person could be introduced.
- If compulsory voting is not introduced, voter participation will likely decrease

It may be useful to increase enforcement to deter voter fraud

Making it easier for people to vote would improve voter response.

Electronic processes could be compromised by bad actors (e.g. hacking the website). That said, the postal process isn't immune to interference

It is clear that postal voting has increased the proportion of the public voting. The increase of voting from 20% to 30% and above is a marked improvement. The 34.5% turnout at the 2022 council election was quite good and consistent with voluntary voting patterns in other countries.

Postal voting benefits independent candidates who do not have the resources of the major parties to staff multiple polling places and to print costly how to vote cards

Postal voting has not worked. It is convenient for some, but it has removed the 'personal touch' that in-person voting brings to state and federal elections that also use pre-polling (but not at a council office, that is open to cronyism or incumbency by elected members). In-person voting should be the main method. Postal voting can be the option for especially district council if supported by the ECSA.

The current method of postal voting should be retained, and it is not considered that changing to in person voting would substantially improve participation. In respect to fraud, a small regional Council legislative change is not considered to be needed. An alternative would be to the simplification of the CEO/Supplementary Roll or simply removing it altogether and using the House of Assembly Roll only. Based on issues that have been experienced with the online nomination process and the Lodgement of electronic campaign donations concerns are held as to the viability of electronic voting. If it is to be given serious consideration, then it needs to be secure and robust and there is a lot of work to be done before it should be implemented. There maybe those who currently vote who will not continue to do so i.e., older residents if voting is shifted to electronic or remotely located residents if a move is made away from postal voting.

In respect to postal voting in regional areas, there are concerns that changing to in person would be prohibitive for those that live a distance from their closest polling booth. A hybrid system may be an option. Given the high return rates for this Council, it is not considered there is a high percentage of

people that put aside their postal vote and then neglect/forget to complete it. To circumvent the issues with the return of postal votes and the unreliability of Australia Post consideration should be given to allowing votes to be left at Council office in the last week of voting period

We can see merit in in-person voting (with a recommended two-week window), as this also creates a gathering effect for community, and would generate greater 'word of mouth' discussion regarding local government elections than postal voting does. However, in-person voting discourages the significant amount of people who generally do everything online

I support the continuation of postal voting but note the serious flaws in this system in locations where Australia Post doesn't provide a street delivery service. Another problem is that the AEC does not require a postal address on electoral enrolments and they also remove people from the Roll when mail is returned, without first conducting sufficient checks. As well, many people do not register to be on the electoral roll.

I support a hybrid system which includes the option to vote in person on a polling day in the local area.

People should vote for their councils through a combination of postal and face-to-face voting methods, similar to the processes utilized in state and federal elections. Implementing

By offering both postal and face-to-face voting options, councils can accommodate diverse preferences and accessibility needs. Postal voting allows individuals to cast their ballots conveniently from their homes, while face-to-face voting provides an opportunity for in-person engagement and assistance for those who require it.

As technology continues to advance, it's crucial to explore the feasibility of electronic voting systems for council elections. Successful examples of electronic voting overseas, such as those in Estonia, Switzerland, and Norway, demonstrate the potential for increased efficiency, accessibility, and voter turnout. Investigating and adopting secure electronic voting solutions can further enhance the integrity and inclusivity of council elections.

Topic 3: Change the timing of council elections (3.4)

"Clear air" does highlight Local Government elections, however, I do agree that the close alignment between State Government and Local Government elections allows the development of close working relationships. This 'close alignment' needs to be defined. e.g. If Local Government elections were held in the first half of the year following the State Government elections there is still ample time to develop close working relationships.

1. Aligning council elections with state elections may influence voter behaviour and political dynamics, as voters may be more likely to consider local and state issues together when casting their ballots.
2. Holding elections concurrently may foster a sense of civic engagement and collective responsibility among voters, encouraging broader participation and awareness of local government issues and candidates.
3. Aligning council elections with state elections may potentially increase voter turnout, as voters are already engaged and motivated to participate in the electoral process during state elections.

2 years after state in Spring or Autumn (to mitigate against hot weather and cold weather campaigning)

2022 was a full on year, but generally it's fine to have SA and local elections in the same year.

5 year terms for Council this will save money as well

A change in election timing is supported, to prevent confusion and reduce voter fatigue.

A set date for elections is the way to go. Nothing to do with the State or Federal government elections which can be called early, and that is again something I think should be changed. Certainty of a set date and a set year is necessary in this modern complex society.

Absolutely February, October, September, August

Absolutely not in same year as state elections

Again, those that care take the time to vote for who they want to represent them.

I would like to see an earlier election in August or September to get away from the busy period at the end of the year.

Agree that election fatigue is real.

Agree with statements regarding voter fatigue, next election add an extra year to the candidates terms

Changing the timing of council elections is supported to avoid voter fatigue

Changing the timing of council elections to reduce voter fatigue and better distinguish between State and local elected representatives

Compulsory elections

Compulsory elections would overcome any 'enthusiasm' issues. However holding elections in a different year to State Government may make it easier for people to differentiate between local and state members.

Consider having the elections together as per previous comment. Its only two extra pieces of paper or make it electronic and then it could be held whenever.

Consider running at exactly the same time as State election

This would do away with holding a separate election and reduce voter fatigue with another election and reduce chance of clashing with a federal election

Consolidation of elections in one year is important to reduce voter fatigue. Unfortunately local government elections come last after Commonwealth and State. I think it is ok to keep the timetable in November so long as there is more reform approved for compulsory voting and in-person voting combined with postal voting.

It is important that the State Government fully funds ECSA to undertake the new process and provides adequate funding for staffing.

Contrary to popular belief. Having the elections on the same day is the only way you can get the highest turnout of voters, because people are motivated to vote.

Could council elections be held at the same time as state elections? Possibly one extra form to complete.

Council believes that council elections should be moved to a different year from the State Government elections. This would decrease workload on the Electoral Commission, and reduce voter fatigue/confusion

Council elections not in the same year as State elections.

Council elections should be held in conjunction with state elections.

Council elections should be held periodically, irrespective of state elections.

Initially it may be the same, but if a council resigns or voluntarily calls for a new elections, or if half of the residents petition to have a new election, then the timings could diverge.

Council elections should be moved to a different year from South Australian Government elections, two years apart to retain a four yearly cycle

Council elections should be moved to a different year from South Australian Government elections. The month of November is considered by Council to be the right timing. It allows new Members an opportunity to understand fundamental information around Council planning and budgets prior to the ensuing year's consideration of these matters.

Council elections should be moved to a different year from State elections.

Council elections should be the year after fixed term State Government elections.

Council elections should held on the same day as the State election, at the same polling place. You will get a greater voting turnout that way for those that choose to vote at a polling place.

Council elections should not be held in the same year as State Government elections.

Council elections should occur at the same time as State elections. You should vote at the same time for both. This would increase participation and turnout and save money. If need be, counting for the Council elections could wait until counting is finished for the State election.

Council elections should ve held at the same time as state elections

Definitely. Its all a bit much when there is more than one election in the same year.

Disband Council

Do it all at once on the same day in the same voting centre with mandatory voting. What's one more form on the day?

Do them at the same time so voting happens once

Early autumn

Either have it on the same day as the state election or have it in a different year

Elections should be in the later part of the year, so as not to impact on annual budget planning and end of financial year processes.

Every 2nd year after State Elections, depending on when the Federal election is called

Federal elections held every 3 years could pose an issue with the possibility of two elections held in the same year

Flexible terms would make sense. Alignment with state elections tends to mean fixed terms, degrading the democratic process.

For heavens sake - look at the costs!!!! Run it with State elections - councils already cost us too much.

Four years is good

Get rid of councils then we won't have to.

Have a three year term for on election cycle to bring third tier elections into the year before the State election.

Have Council Elections on the 2 year mark of the State Government term to avoid being held anywhere near the State Election year.

Have local council elections at the same time as state elections? More turnout, of course, but counting process might be a bit more difficult logistically. No reason not to postpone counting or have the state election day be the first day of a week of a local council voting period.

Have them on the same days as the state elections.

Hold council elections in January when people are on holiday and have time to vote

Hold it with state elections?

Hold them in spring

Holding council elections mid term for state elections would increase interest in candidacy, voting and ease the burden of administration.

I agree that the timing is exhausting for many.

I agree voters suffer from vote fatigue having everything in same year

I agree with the concerns about election fatigue, however I also agree that having state/local governments closely aligned can help allow for better coordination.

I believe council elections should take place on the 2 year mid point of the state elections to allow for suitable time away from state polls for people to more acutely engage in the election

I believe the timing of council elections does need to sit with that of the state elections, because council is a creation of state government.

I disagree with the lead in statement. The notion of "voter fatigue" is a media "beat-up" and derogatory of people's interest in how they are governed. People will engage with the election process whenever it occurs, regardless of how much interest they may have in it. Timing, from my perspective, is a non-issue.

I don't think it matters too much, provided it isn't so close to another election that candidates cannot campaign effectively due to being overshadowed by a State or Federal election.

I don't think the timing makes much difference.

I feel Council elections should be held every 2 years not 4.

I feel there would be a better turn out, a pooling of funds if council elections were held at the same time as state elections. there would be more transparency as well as to which political party a council candidate is affiliated with.

I fully agree that council elections should be held in a different year from state elections to maximise interest and avoid 'government fatigue'.

I think changing the timing would be good to address voter fatigue, 2022 was a big one with all three levels of government having elections.

I think it would be better for local elections to be held say half way through a Parliamentary term, especially if they are compulsory. It would give clear air to the election.

I think leave it the same. I don't think it matters in the scheme of things

I think November is too late in the year. End of year is really busy for councils.

I think the current system is the best. Predictable 4 year terms and Council decisions have that certainty too.

I think the next term should either be cut short or extended to put it two years out from the state government elections.

I think voter fatigue is very real and having the Federal, State and Local Council elections lining up in 2022 was not ideal.

I totally agree with this sentiment. People were over elections last year due to the trifecta. Council elections always tend to be given the least priority in resident's minds.

I wish they were. It at the end of a year...ie November. I wish they were in April or May and in a different year from State or Federal.

Ideally council elections would be offset from state government elections, halfway through the term.

Ideally hold elections post State elections so the local councils strategy can integrate with the elected State government direction.

If Council Elections are to take place the same year as a State or Federal election, they they should be held on the same day. As mentioned above, the three levels of government should be treated the same. We need to stop treating local government like the poor, ugly sister of the others.

If they cannot be held at a different year to state elections; they should be held at exactly the same time as state elections and allow people to/have people vote in-person at the same time as voting in the state elections. As much as I don't want to use the US as an example; they have many elections all on the one day and it doesn't bother people; if anything having it all at one time would greatly ease the effect it has on people's lives. Especially casual voters who are not that involved in the political system.

If voting for Council elections became compulsory it is only logical that it does not coincide with State elections. State elections are every four years so it would make sense for local government elections to take place in the third year of the state election period..

If we go for online as I suggested in 36. timing may not be a significant issue

If you could time together might save \$

If you were changing the year – you would have to bring it forward – extending to a five-year term (even once) would be too long.

In conjunction with state elections

It is an advantage to have both in the same year, as residents get worked up, connected and are "in the head space" for elections.

It is not a difficult process to vote and as such I do not feel that timing is a factor.

It should be held at the same time - this will increase voter numbers and reduce costs

It works well. I would keep it as it is, 4 years, aligned with state elections. Don't mix with the elections otherwise it becomes confusing.

Keep the time of the year the same. A new council should have enough time to learn the business of the council and have an impact on the budget and plans for the coming financial year. October/November is optimal.

Last time was really silly - three elections in one year.

Please just push out this current council term to the following year - easy. November to February or something like that - yes, February is good - start of the new year etc.

Local Government Elections should be held during the year following the State election.

Holding Elections on a different year to the State Elections will better support ECSA who often appear to be stretched for resources and reduce voter fatigue.

The November Election is problematic as it is closely followed by the Christmas break which disrupts the induction of new Councils. There is also limited time before the new Council must commence the development of the annual business plan and budget.

It is recommended that council elections are held in October as this provides more time to induct the new Council before they commence the annual business plan and budget process.

Local government should be abolished and if not, councils should be amalgamated eg Eyre Peninsula should be one council. Some rural councils have less than 3000 or so people but about 50 or more "staff", most of whom are on over \$80K.

Make terms longer for fewer Councils.

Make them in September or October the year after State election.

Maybe held in conjunction with the state election. Why have two separate elections?

Mo

No need to change anything but make voting compulsory. It's not hard work.

No, though I think in SA the poor turnout could be explained by the fact there were three elections in 2022 at each level of Government.

Nomination period should be up to two months and no more two months for campaigning

Not an Issue as far as i can see..

Not in a Federal election year either

Not really, as for me meeting the nominees in person would be more of a priority especially those nominees for my Ward.

November creates management headaches - need to have new members through training well before financial planning commences early in a calendar year. Elections in July - it may be winter but it is South Australia no Antarctica!

November is a good month as it gives enough time for consideration and decision-making on the budget. November is close to the end of the calendar year, which complicates training newly elected members, due to the shutdown over the Christmas and New Years' holiday period.

November is not a good time of the year for an election, as little can be achieved before the end of the year, and then Members are rushed for the development of their first budget, whilst still undertaking mandatory training

November timing is probably appropriate given the timing of mandatory reporting and planning.

Often we have had enough of voting being in the same year. To have it a different time would help to bring out the numbers. May I suggest this is tried before making it compulsory to see if more people would vote.

People who don't want to vote will complain whenever you make them vote, so this is not the answer. Currently in the Act if I run for state parliament I am automatically granted a leave of absence - that timeframe is short so a council can carry an absence (or two) if I am successful. Any longer period of time and there would need to be a supplementary election which is a costly exercise for rate payers - average metro around \$35K, closer to \$100K for a Mayor.

With local government often used by political parties as a training ground there will always be those that

run - and often are successful. The way things are give the community focussed the abiltiy to give it a go without costing their rate payers unnecessarily.

perhaps in the second year cycle of state elections in same manner as Summer and Winter Olympics - every 4 years but 2 years apart. (unless world pandemic affects it!!)

Personally, the timing has always made sense to me. If it were to change I think it would make sense for the 'new' council to start in line with the financial year.

possibly half way between State elections

Re your statement above: "that citizens struggle to have interest in and enthusiasm for another election, and choose not to vote" This is what needs to change, ie the belief that citizens will tire of voting. People need to be reminded that in a viable democratic society there are obligations as well as rights. People have got too complacent and should appreciate the right to vote, ie have a say, when many around the world can not.

Run them at the same time save money

Same time and place as state elections.

Separation form other levels may give bigger opportunity for voters to understand what are state, what are Aust Govt and what are LG issues. They often get confused and affect outcomes.

Seperate local, state and federal elections

Should be at the same time as state elections.

Should be held the same time as state elections to reduce costs

Should not be held in same year as Federal or State Elections if you can be avoided to encourage voter participation

Should reduce confusion with respect to state and local issues

Should take place in a year that doesn't include state or federal election.

shouldn't be the same year as federal elections

Switch to away from elections so that its not tied to political activity.

The change of timing is critical.

the date needs to be changed as ECSA has consistently proved that they are unable to cope with two elections in one year

The elections should all be at the same time.

The fixed term of State government presents a splendid oppertunity for a direct offset, making councils as far away from state elections as possible. This would also mean local elections would happen at the

quietest time in state politics, minimising the risk that state politics 'bleed over' into council elections. please spare us from ever having a triple election year again!

the lack of interest reflects the importance most people place on the role of local council and lack of concern or understanding of the decisions being made by their elected members. Most media representations of council business has been negative lowering the regard of councillors and the work they do on behalf of the community.

The message gets confusing - move away from State government elections.

The reality is communities work 24/7 so it needs to be open over a whole day to vote

The timing is not the issue. Ratepayers are not interested in council voting as they are a lawless entity who violate the essence of democratic rule and engage in legislated theft!! I wonder how many people would vote to eliminate councils and transfer all decisions to our state government? This time ratepayers were asked!

The timing of Local Government elections should be changed and moved to a different year than the State election

The timing of state and local government elections all being conducted in the same year creates voter fatigue and a low percentage voter participation for the non-compulsory local government election.

The timing of the Local Government Elections in the later part of the calendar year also creates challenges for new elected members. New elected members are faced with a substantial amount of information in their first few weeks of being elected then abruptly commence a summer break.

The voter turnout statistics provide that voters in local government elections haven't been affected by other elections (Federal or State) as the turnout has remained static for a period of the past six elections.

There should be a crossover period such that the elections are held in August but the new members do not commence until November. That way they can undertake mandatory training, attend meetings as observers and get an understanding of the council business before being thrust into their first meeting when they really have no idea what they are doing.

There should be a gap between Council, State and federal elections to overcome voter fatigue with council elections be moved to a different year from South Australian Government elections. Also to allow undue stress put onto the ECSA system.

There should be a gap between Council, State and federal elections to overcome voter fatigue with council elections being moved to a different year from South Australian Government elections. Also to allow undue stress put onto the ECSA system

They definitely needs to be in a different year to state elections. Local messages/issues are often lost in the State & Federal election cycles as it is. Give Council elections the recognition they deserve and the more interest may well follow.

They need to be as soon as possible.

they should be on the same date as the State elections. Voter fatigue is a furphy. If theyre already there voting they will cast a council vote too

Timing of Council elections in our area is at harvest time. This means that our farming community is working long days, seven days per week to get the harvest in. A different time would be very beneficial for these electors. Council Election messaging also gets lost in the Black Friday/Christmas messaging.

To coincide with state elections

To enable ECSA to maximise its ability to support, they can't run concurrently.

Varying views have been expressed:

- Not sure that there is ever a good time, considering the work pre and post election that is required but maybe September might be worth considering.
- Works fine as it is, leave it
- Should be timed (and/or resourced) in a manner that the SA Electoral Commission can engage 12 months prior to enable Councils to plan and action activities. "Real" engagement by ECSA in past elections has not been until AFTER the State Election (i.e. not until April prior to November elections)
- The Mandatory Training may be achieved more efficiently if elections were held earlier
- If you go before state election, then it can be mixed up with the Council elections. I like Council elections being held after as it means that the issues are solely local.

Voter fatigue is a real thing! Especially if/when there are also by-elections taking place.

Voter fatigue is a real thing. There is NO benefit from having those elections in the same year, so why set it up that way.

Voter fatigue is real, particularly every 12 years with the 3 levels all going to the polls. At least separate the State and Local. Keep them a year apart. And Local being in March rather than November is worth considering. Starting a new Council on Christmas is fraught with danger because of the sheer weight of indication needed. The wrong time of year for heavy induction. Or maybe July or August to avoid complicating the budget process.

We support council elections occurring at the same time as state elections to reduce costs.

We support the status quo because of the benefits arising if both levels of government are elected for the same term. Sufficient preparation should be able to be made in the years in between state and local government elections to accommodate the Electoral Commission's increased workload in an election year.

Should the Electoral Commission indeed find itself unable to accommodate the workload through effective forward planning, state and local government elections may be separated in two consecutive years. To accommodate the resulting change in terms, we suggest the first local government election following such a change be based on an extended five-year term.

What would be the implication of having the LG election on the same day as the state election?

When the weather is suitable for a democracy BBQ

Whether 'voter fatigue' occurs, and whether it depresses turnout, is a matter requiring empirical research. I would be happy for ECSA to guide the decision as to when the election should be held. But if

I had a choice, I would hold more regular elections – biennial mid-term elections, as in Western Australia. This allows new candidates to flow through more regularly, while retraining experienced members. Holding biennial elections does not appear to cause voter fatigue nor depress voter turnout in Western Australia.

Within 12 months, not necessarily different year

Would make party hacks decide what they wanted to be if could not resign without paying for by election
Year prior to State Gov elections.

Yes election and candidate overload is something that fatigues people from voting.

Yes, council elections should be moved to a different year from SA Govt elections

Yes, they should occur in August/Sept after financial statements are published.

Yes... stage them half way though the SA State Govt elections terms .

State and Council elections should be held simultaneously.

To follow the pattern of the Summer Olympics and the Winter Olympics being staggered every 2 years then LGA elections should be evenly alternating with the state election. However a 5 year term to allow this synchronisation is difficult.

I think state and council elections should be held at the same time with voting in person at a booth.

I do agree that election timing in conjunction with other elections in the same year creates election overload for the voter, however as natural attrition takes place and the younger generation come into voting age, it is beneficial that educating the upcoming generation of new/young voters the value and importance of Local Government, It's not just Rates, Roads and Rubbish, from my experience, most people have no understanding of local Government's value to the community and have a bad point of view of councils and need to be educated for awareness and to build trust.

'Voter Fatigue' is a recognised symptom within the electorate as evidenced in 2022 and compulsory voting at Council elections may only worsen that situation.

4 year terms for Council may also be a discouraging aspect for many potential candidates. It may even account for 'Councillor Fatigue' where successful candidates 'burn out' before the completion of their full term of office.

It is worth considering

No

Position: Yes

Voter fatigue has the potential to significantly impact turnout at local government elections. Council concurs with the concerns of other councils that have previously expressed concern at the capacity of ECSA to effectively manage and resource State and council elections within close proximity to each other. As Council Elections follow State elections, the quality of service provided to councils has the potential to be compromised as ECSA cannot commence the council election process until it has

effectively concluded the State election. In addition, ECSA appear to use the same/similar individuals in conducting the local government count.

Position: Yes

Consideration should be given to allow local government elections to occur just before a new financial year (with budget already approved). That gives members 3/4 year of understanding what gets included in a budget, and develop skills and understanding in budgets within local government prior to having to establish their own budget as a newly elected council.

Council is of the view that the benefits of change outweigh any risks, given the current low voter turnout (particularly in large metropolitan councils).

Not considered an urgent issue. Noting that the Federal election is not a fixed term where 2022 saw all three tiers of Government run elections, Council noted that the Council elections could move by 6 months as this would mean State and Local govt elections would not be in the same year. Moving it to May the following year would resolve the clash.

Council elections should be moved to a different year from South Australian Government elections

Council resolved that the timing of council elections be reviewed to consider a different year from state and federal government elections. Consideration could also be given to holding the local government polling day at the same time as the state election polling day, providing an opportunity to share the expense and resources required on a polling day.

A change to legislation to move the Local Government Elections to the year following the state and federal elections is recommended. We note that the City of Norwood, Payneham and Saint Peters has also raised this issue in the media recently.

Additionally, councils generally commence the budget process in January of each new year, a long, complex process with many considerations requiring time and space to give adequate regard to the multi-million dollar budgets and flow on effects to the long-term finances of council.

Although Sa Council elections are fixed to be held every 4 years in November, It is difficult to avoid clashing with Federal elections or having 3 elections in a year (as in 2023) due to the long period within which a Federal election can be called

Having state and local elections conducted in the same calendar year contributes to voter fatigue and poor 'turn out', clearing the path for fringe groups to organise effectively

Yes – move away from State Government and federal elections

Leave as is regarding the month- however avoid the same year as State elections.

Yes, council elections should be moved to a different year from South Australian Government elections - suggest a year after state elections.

Yes, particularly if mandatory, to prevent community apathy. This may increase engagement / focus on council elections, and also allow ECSA to appropriately stagger workload / resourcing across State and council elections. This provides the opportunity for LG sector to shine

No, the current timing allows for the new council to be elected and conduct some induction / mandatory training prior to budget framing / setting early in the new year.

Yes.

Timing (and/or resource allocation) should align with the South Australian Electoral Commission (ECSA) engaging 12 months prior to the election date, allowing Councils to effectively plan and execute activities.

Historically, substantial ECSA involvement has occurred only after the State Election, typically in April preceding November elections. This poses challenges for Council Administrations and potential candidates who commence preparations earlier, leading to discrepancies in anticipated timeframes and planning activities.

With fixed election dates, ECSA should have the capacity to plan and allocate resources well in advance, facilitating seamless coordination and planning for all stakeholders. A lack of pre-planning and coordination often results in a negative scenario between ECSA, the Local Government Association (LGA), and Council Administrations, leaving limited time for corrective measures within the tight March/April to November timeframe

Council elections moved to a different year as the South Australian State elections:

- Terms to be extended by 12 months to allow for this so not voting at the same time
- Voter fatigue being felt
- If biannual could alternate between State and Local elections

Recommends legislative change to ensure council elections are held in a different year to the State Government elections. Supports transitional arrangements to extend the term of current elected members for approximately one year, to give effect to this change

Yes, Council recommends elections occur in March of the year following State Government elections and that the lead time to voting is shortened as four months from nominations open to voting is too long

Yes, voter fatigue is a real problem and having both state and council elections in the same year does cause some confusion in the community regarding the different tiers of government regarding who people are voting for. It could be one of the factors contributing to low voter turnout in local government elections

We are of the view council elections should be every 4 years in November.

Should council elections be moved to a different year from South Australian Government elections?

- Running the state and local government elections in the same year puts increased strain on ECSA's finite resources.
- A move to a different year may increase the local government elections profile.

It would be preferable that Local Government elections are not in the same year as those for the State Parliament, even though they are seven months apart. As there are no fixed dates for Federal elections, it is still possible for these to occur in the same year however, and this cannot be avoided

Our group has no objection to having state and local elections in the same calendar year or for local elections to be at some other fixed time, provided it does not coincide with, and a sufficient period distant from, a state election

If feasible, yes, council elections should be moved to a different year from the SA Govt elections. Definite voting fatigue.

Yes, the timing of elections should be changed to offset the chance that State/Local Government Elections are held in the same year and also to move away from a traditionally busy time of year with a review to determine the best fit for all Councils. The risk to this is the impacts it would have on the current Members when the change is made which will have the result of extending or reducing their term. Timing could also be changed to better align with the appointment of the LGA President given the issues faced as part of the 2022 election process

Yes, there seems merit in moving local council elections away from same timing as the South Australian Government elections.

In the last Council elections, the Electoral Commission was too busy dealing with problems evolving from the State elections to address problems with local council elections

Council elections should be moved to a different year from South Australian Government elections. By doing so, it would allow the Electoral Commission to allocate the necessary resources and attention to conduct council elections effectively and efficiently in alternate years. Separating council elections from state government elections reduces the burden on electoral resources, ensuring that adequate staffing, technology, and infrastructure are available to manage both processes smoothly.

Additionally, spreading out elections helps mitigate against voter fatigue. With elections held in separate years, voters are less likely to experience overload or exhaustion from frequent voting cycles. This spacing allows voters to engage more meaningfully with each electoral process, promoting informed decision-making and enhancing democratic participation

Topic 3: Consider candidate information (3.7)

official online videos

1. Organise Public Forums: Host community events where candidates can present their platforms, answer questions, and engage directly with voters.
2. Use Technology: Utilise online platforms and streaming services to broadcast forums and town halls, making them accessible to a wider audience.
3. Coordinate Debates: Arrange structured debates that allow candidates to discuss key issues, challenge each other's positions, and demonstrate their knowledge and preparedness.
4. Host Informal Events: Create opportunities for candidates to interact with community members in informal settings, such as coffee shops, parks, or local businesses.
5. Door-to-Door Campaigning: Encourage candidates to engage directly with voters through door-to-door canvassing, allowing for personalised interactions and grassroots outreach.
6. Distribute Voter Guides: Create comprehensive guides or resources that outline candidates' positions, backgrounds, and qualifications, helping voters make informed decisions.

5 minute social media posts where they must answer a series of questions that would give rise to their suitability or not

A short video bio option might be useful, similar to the candidate profile where all candidates have the same opportunity to submit something within predefined criteria.

A simple meet and greet event held by the council of candidates would help

A standard question and answer sheet should be filled out by all candidates of where they stand on all issues. eg Environment, development, housing, elderly, youth etc.

A structured debate held by the council with set and equal rules.

A website with all the candidates information available to compare their views of various topics.

All candidates should have to declare if they are(or have been) a member of a political party

allow Community to organise forums at community centres

Arranged meetings, short videos published on social media, questions and answers could be helpful.

As above, there should be opportunities to meet the candidates and ask them questions.

Basic back to the roots of like country meetings in the town hall or community centres& regular meetings, sausage sizzles in out parks open area get togethers in schools like they do with elections

Being able to “say what you think” in election material that accompanies ballot papers will encourage more people to run as candidates, and will encourage more people to vote.

And it will lead to greater engagement with the community, with Councillors being able to be held to account for what they said in their election material.

Broadcast a short and not overly challenging a short Q&A with the candidates

By using social platforms, public meetings & question and answers sessions. Having a set list of questions for all candidates to answer as part of their profile.

Candidate disclosures should include:

- a) Political party membership or affiliation within 12 months preceding an election;
- b) What direct, indirect or associated interest the candidate has, or has had in the preceding 12 months, in the industry of land use controls, transactions or development (e.g. lobbyist, developer, planner, real estate);
- c) Whether they are a resident within the area (or ward) of the local government entity and on the state electoral roll.

Candidate disclosures should include:

- Any direct or indirect during the preceding months, any commercial, industry or employment concerned with land use, transactions or development (e.g. developer, real estate, planner, lobbyist)
- Political party membership or affiliation within months before election
- Resident within the area (or ward) and on the state electoral roll

Candidate profiles to include more mandatory information (political party membership, community connection, membership of community organisations, qualifications, leadership attributes, experience etc. Perhaps also a candidate introduction video. ECSA could organise a community event where candidates can introduce themselves and potentially debate key community concerns with a moderator.

Candidates are required to provide a profile with the nomination form that contains some information about themselves. The Regulations detail what can or cannot be in the profile, and this seems to be sensible, except for Part 5 (2)(c)(iv) which states: -

(c) the profile must be accurate and must not— (iv) comment on decisions or actions that have been made or taken by the council or on the decisions or actions of past or present members of the council. This provision seems a little ridiculous as the candidate's platform may be one that is in opposition to a council decision or policy, and one that the candidate seeks to alter. It should be removed from the Regulation as it only serves to protect a council from criticism.

The Regulations state that the candidate profile must not exceed 1000 characters. This assumes that spaces are counted as a character, and so the profile can only be about 200 to 250 words in length. This is considered to often be insufficient for a candidate to set out their credentials and platform for election. The regulation should be changed to 2000 characters, as this profile statement may be the only opportunity for a voter to be able to compare the candidates.

The Regulations require a candidate to declare any current or past membership of a registered political party in the preceding 12 months. This time frame is too short as evidence shows that politically aligned candidates have often decided years in advance that they will stand at the next council election. They will then resign party membership a year in advance so that they do not need to declare membership. This regulation should be changed so that they must declare any party membership during the preceding council term.

Candidates in council elections should declare any employment arrangements associated with a political party in the 12 months leading up to an election

Candidates more active in promoting their election to councils

Candidates need to make their own opportunities.

Candidates should be given the opportunity to provide more extensive information on their experience and their motives and plans if they should be elected.

Candidates should be required to declare membership of any political parties over the previous four years (expanded out from 12 months) and should also be required to declare membership of any de-registered political parties over the previous four years.

Candidates should be required to include their work history, the number of terms they have served on Council as well as current and previous Board roles and any associations they may have.

Candidates should be required to include their work history, the number of terms they have served on council as well as past board roles and any associations they may have

Candidates should door knock as politicians do

Candidates should have a certain number of events listed to attend to speak and listen to their residents, (these should not be business events), these events should be publicised on council website and also included in each rate notice that is sent to all ratepayers.

Candidates who have failed to be elected in other levels of Government and are using the Council role to elevate their chances at the next State / Federal Election should sign a declaration like the one stating if they belong to a political party

Community forums, Q&A sessions, personal interactions. Candidates can organise their own engagement opportunities too.

Consideration could be given to having more information presented than the current 150 word bio.

Consideration should be given to public funding of election coverage by media outlets to facilitate this role in an impoverished media sector.

Council arranged locally based forums at different times during the election period; Interviews/videos with candidates to be made available on line.

Support for candidates available from the LGA if required.

Council is broadly comfortable with the current arrangements in relation to information candidates are required to include with their nominations.

In relation to the potential role for councils to play in enabling all candidates to reach potential voters, there are risks. While 'meet the candidate' events and similar efforts could be made, there is potential for accusations of bias. Providing links to the ECSA information and allowing voters to make their own inquiries is appropriate.

In relation to candidates being required to declare any employment arrangements associated with a political party in the 12 months leading up to an election, Council believes they should – in the same way party membership should be declared. The declaration should include who their employer is – with high level details only to give voters the opportunity to determine if they feel the candidate may be subject to political bias / influence in the district.

Council believes all other current information requirements are sufficient.

Council livestreamed a meet the candidate session which was host by a neutral emcee and provided residents the opportunity to ask questions either in person or on-line. This was a great way to promote the candidates

Council websites using paid presenters to interview proposed candidates using a scripted interview format that is applied to all would be useful to assess candidates ability to speak and communicate ideas

Councils are overseen by elected members, many of which may nominate in the council elections. Placing this responsibility with councils, and the choice to resource (or not resource) this approach in the budget has the potential to be impacted by politics. On this basis, this should primarily be the responsibility of ECSA

Councils could provide forums to allow this to happen in a structured and equitable manner.

Councils should be responsible for providing community forums that nominees speak at

Councils should not be involved in organising 'meet the candidate' forums as there will also be a bias to some candidates. For example, the council wont organise the forum near the council meeting night because the sitting members wont want to to be then.

These forums are best organised by community groups (although some of these will also be biased as to how they organise it)

Councils should not have any compulsory obligations imposed on them in relation to assisting candidates

Currently, the amount and quality of information available to electors about each candidate is at the discretion of the candidate, subject to a 1,000 character limit . The information provided is often insufficient to enable electors to make an informed decision about how to vote. When this is coupled with optional voting, an elector who is uncertain about the relative merits of the candidates is likely to say “I don’t know who to vote for, so I won’t vote”.

Digital links with video uploads of candidates talking about themselves with a question / answer opportunity.

Digital platforms

Disband Council

Doorknocking? Worked for the QLD Greens.

downhill meetings debate of candidates, and stream it live

Due to the need for impartiality, the current arrangement whereby the council distributes the nomination and a photo of the candidate to all residents is sufficient

Each candidate has to introduce themselves in person to the community and tell voters what their values are and what direction they want council to go in

Early awareness about campaigning so that candidates can manage all their resources, including time, to get out to meet their community.

ECSA could host candidate sessions, way too hard as a council to hold these under current legislation and places the Council in a position of appearing to support particular candidates

Education background or work experience should be listed separately from the profiles

political position and residential status should not be disclosed in the profile book

Education level, relevant experience, local government training is information that should be included in the candidate's nominations

Email communication.

Encourage local forums whereby candidates can present their position and enable community members to ask questions

Ensure there is no media censorship, especially on social media!

Factors that could discourage individuals from nominating for their local council include inadequate policing of unauthorized electoral material, a lack of understanding of the functions and importance of local government, constituent abuse, an aggressive or toxic culture within the council, and the demanding workload and time commitments associated with the role

Far better media and direct comms. Be it media, mail or public access to councillors at public gatherings or even in the main street.

Feedback of our Councillors and our community on their experience with the Electoral Commission SA website during the 2022 periodic general election, has highlighted the need for comprehensive review and improvement of the site. Users find it difficult to navigate and information hard to locate. In the interest of transparency and appeal to future elected members, it is critical that associated systems like the ECSA website are well promoted, accessible and user friendly. It is also important that assistance with the site is at hand and responsive when difficulties are experienced.

Financial support for campaigning materials would help candidates connect. Council could host community forums and engage an independent facilitator. Candidates ran their own but many were biased.

flexible q&a

For each Council to run a website for each endorsed candidate

Force them to door knock at least once in their Ward within 6 months before the election.

Forums. Q&A sessions

Fun public events to meet candidates

Gawler had an open forum. streamed. I don't think you can do much more than that.

Get interested for a start, don't say candidates are bribing people by holding bbqs for a meet and chat

Get the councils to host a candidate session/s

Greater digital platforms and less mailbox material

Have all candidates listed somewhere.

Having a candidates/Members physical address being published on nominations and registers of interest is discouraging people from nominating, as it is a security concern for single persons, and those with young families. This is perhaps more of an issue in regional and smaller Council areas where there is less anonymity

Having a local candidates forum organised by the council or electoral commission at a set time during the election campaign.

Hold met the candidate forums.

I believe that councils should play a stronger role in promoting local elections – and there are many exciting methods and opportunities that councils could use to do this, as previously mentioned.

Given councils' hesitation to appear impartial, they should be given clarity by the Minister/ECSA regarding the types of promotions they may run.

I believe that residency in a Ward should be a prerequisite for eligibility to stand as a candidate. I note that this appears to be the situation in Queensland

I guess the mailouts are the best way but with more disclosure as I mentioned before. I often feel I am really voting blind.

I like the idea of online zoom meetings

I suggest the Council should run a section of their main website where every Candidate has a place to add their own details and election platform even if some of those details may be derogatory to Council. This section of the website should be capable of being updated as regularly as requested with photos and stories.

I think a Q&A website might be useful.

I think there are enough options, but little is done to communicate to the CALD community and the Disability community eg Auslan interpreters

I think this is really tricky. I spent close to \$6,000 on my election campaign last year. A lot of this was spent on flyers and advertising, providing residents with more information on who I was and what I stood for. I also door-knocked over 4,000 homes. This is a substantial financial cost though, one that a lot of people could not justify. It does tend to restrict the chances of getting elected to only those with significant financial backing. The benefit though, is it does mean you have to be serious about it if you want to be elected, especially in competitive wards which is the case for my Council.

I think that some potential investigations should be given to providing financial compensation for those running campaigns, with proven expenditures that have been designed to get information into the hands of voters.

I wish there were more, but social media is deceptive and unreliable. Many half truths are recorded or lies are told and there is no accountability.

I wouldn't bother.

If it's possible to stream any community meetings where candidates present or ask candidates to film answer to a set range of questions, that would be great. I'd like there to be the opportunities for references included from community members / colleagues.

If pay is to increase then mandatory community participation hours should be considered

If there isn't sufficient candidates that have put up their hand then that results in each nomination being accepted without a community election. This then means that it's futile in having an opportunity for a community to hear from the candidates if there's only the minimum number that are standing for election.

Increase Q&A sessions or public meetings, and equally assist candidates with funding to distribute (neutral and factual) candidate information/policies/ideas etc.

Increase the resolution of the photos they provide with their profiles, please...

Information relating to employment arrangements associated with a political party should be published as part of the candidate profile

Information relating to employment arrangements associated with a political party should not be required to be published as part of the candidate profile

Information sessions

Integrate candidate forums into existing community activities and social life eg meetings of sports clubs, library events etc - so that it is not something 'extra' people have to go along to, but part of what they are already participating in

It may be useful for candidates to be able to link their skills to the skills required to be a councillor

It should be left to individual candidates to decide what information to provide

It should be up to the candidate to communicate how they wish. I do not really support Q&A sessions or forums - some candidates are more polished than others. I have seen very capable candidates torn to shreds by Community Associations, residents, etc never to put their hands up again. Also, candidates with political machines behind them have the ability to reach more people. I chose to communicate via facebook and did not knock on one door, and this worked for me. Communities need to take some responsibility in how they inform themselves.

Local government should be abolished and if not, councils should be amalgamated eg Eyre Peninsula should be one council. Some rural councils have less than 3000 or so people but about 50 or more "staff", most of whom are on over \$80K.

Make it mandatory for candidates nominating to council to attend community forums and public meetings, and to even campaign.

Mandate the channels of communication so as to minimise the vitriol on social media.

Mandatory 'meet the candidates' meetings are so important to speak to the candidates and ask them questions. We had one for the Mayoral candidates which was organised by a candidate and supported by local media which attracted around 60 people. 3 ward candidates got together at a local pub for a 'meet n greet' but they were friends so really only attracted their friends. (I was one of 2 non-friends who showed up). They had put it on their FB pages expecting a crowd, having no idea how to actually promote the event to the wider community. In their minds, 'people weren't interested', not that they had no idea what they were doing. Basic 'how to' community engagement information should be made available to candidates.

Maybe recorded interviews? That would give a much better insight into the candidates personality and motivations. If not interviews, then candidate videos.

Meet and greet afternoons with each candidate making a short presentation about themselves and what they want to achieve as an EM

Meet the candidate evenings

Meet the candidate forums

Meet the candidate online sessions

Meet the candidates event in each ward

Meet-and-greet 'town hall' sessions.

Minimum word-count and mandatory criteria for inclusion in candidate profiles.

Meetings are the way to go however as stated above are generally poorly attended.

more chances to publicly question and thus establish truth.

More events where local council can speak

More factual media coverage

More information and tighter restrictions on misinformation and misrepresentation.

More information online. For those who do not have a computer(older people) can perhaps call the council and have this information posted to them. Or provide a booklet that can be picked up at their local council.

More meet and greet.

More meetings using Zoom

More publicity and send invites for us to meet candidates. Council have each ratepayers address at least. Advertise in newsletters, community notices, front and centre easily available on website.

More q&a opportunities.

Newsletter. Community notice boards specific to council approved notices at all shopping centres

No idea

No, there is no role for councils to play in enabling all candidates to reach potential voters

Nominations for Council – compulsory disclosure of membership of boards, associations and membership based interest groups (not just political parties)

Not everyone will have time to hear empty/ uneducated / people-pleasing promises at public meetings.

Not necessary for DHS checks

Not sure

Once again, a lga smartphone app.

Online chatroom with Q&A

Online forums

Online forums and video clips of the candidates speaking and talking about themselves and their interests, aspirations etc. would be beneficial.

Online options. Videos of candidates would be more tangible than a photo and blurb

Online Q&A sessions would be great - Short video showing who the candidates are and what are are all about. Just like on Married at First Sight or all those reality TV shows.

Online via a council website that is managed via moderator/s

Online videos.

Only when people of a Council area see a pro-active Council doing good, that will speak volumes and people will want to get involved with something good. That is the very reason I choose not to stand as a Councillor, why would you ?, bash you head against a brickwall would be more fun.

Open forums for the community as well as sessions for clubs and other recognized organisations.

Organising and promoting 'meet the candidate' sessions.

Our local residents Associations join together to host a forum for candidates in Mayoral and Council elections and these has been valuable and well attended

People can contact if they choose - access is adequate as is

Possibly an opportunity to respond to a set of questions offered by each individual council on local issues and even a question and answer session with council and the public.

Provide funding for communications based on means test

Providing an Electoral Commission and/or council election website, displaying those 150-word statements and providing candidates with the opportunity to have a link to their own site if they choose to have one.

Public Forums

public meeting with chance to have vidoe link

Public meetings

Public meetings focused on issues relevant to Wards and LGAs

Publish their actual agenda and policies.

Put on meet up events

Radio, council website, emails.

Really unsure with this one.

Retain requirement for members to include information on political party membership

Review promotional material.

Run a forum of candidates prior to the election and provide 3-5 minutes for the candidate to express why they have nominated and what commitments they make to the community of what they stand for .
Provide time for two questions to come from the meeting to the candidate.

Social media is now very prominent. Most people are on social media and can ask candidates questions etc

Social media profiles

Social media, radio, corner meetings

something similar to the country cabinet concept

Stop allowing members of parliament stand to be able to be elected

Take them to each local hall for a night

tell the community to contact the candidates

That should be up to Councils and not legislated - legislation would put financial and logistical pressure on councils that might not be able to sustain them.

That would be simple - more community EVENTS ! More opportunity for candidates to engage with public and COMMUNICATE in person and in writing - a formal information and profiles page - in the past the profile descriptions are so shallow -as to seem almost a joke ! More detail please !

The community needs to be motivated to be interested in the candidates

The current word limit for Candidate Profiles is too limited and increasing the limit from 150 words to 250 would enable Candidates to provide this additional information.

The info booklet was good. So then ensure Councils are posting each candidate in rotation on Council social media. This will allow Councils to share candidate info on socials where it is high engagement. There are too many for the EC to do this.

The information should be truthful – one candidate who made false claims on his electoral material was referred to the Ombudsman by ECSA but the Ombudsman said it was up to the constituents to know for themselves that the claims were not true. While this is unconscionable, the candidate got elected and the constituents now know he was not truthful in his material

The problem that people rarely choose the most outstanding candidate.

There are enough opportunities for those who care to find out.

There are enough opportunities if people wish to seek them out. The letter that comes out is good.

There is currently limited information provided to voters to enable an informed decision in local government. In State and Federal elections candidates are supported by political party platforms, where the ideology of candidates and what they represent is clear and education campaigns are focussed on the key topics of each party. In local government elections, candidates have very specific, individual and varied platforms and education campaigns are not focussed at individual candidates but rather local

government elections in general. Unless electors have key issues they need addressed at a local government level, it is not always easy for electors to understand what they are voting for and what impact voting has on their everyday lives.

Ideas on some extra information that could be included with a nomination could be:

- One page profile in addition to 150 words in ballot paper
- Questionnaire - all candidates given the same opportunity to answer the same key questions (published with their profile/candidate statements)
- Short video – 2 minutes to 'speak' to the voter about their campaign platform

There is no role for councils to play in enabling all candidates to reach potential voters

There is no role for councils to play in enabling all candidates to reach potential voters - this is a role for ECSA and LGA as councils should stay at arm's length.

There is perhaps a role for the LGA here but not the local council themselves to have to put on a town hall Q&A due to resourcing and impartiality concerns.

There needs to be a live streamed debate for each Council. It should include local hot topics and each candidate has a chance to introduce themselves, talk about their platform, and then they are asked to answer questions at random to see the varying views.

There should be a number of events preset for Candidates to attend. This calendar of events should be publicised on the main Council website which should be visible from a clear, large format link from the main page.

I suggest the Council should run a section of their main website where every Candidate has a place to add their own details and election platform even if some of those details may be derogatory to Council. This section of the website should be capable of being updated as regularly as requested with photos and stories.

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They should publish video interviews with each candidate on the council website prior to voting. All candidates to be asked the same interview questions to show each persons personality and views.

This is fundamental to Council's role to engage with its community. Meet the candidates forums and other impartial support should be provided

This was a simple process, Failure to lodge shows the candidates inattention to detail and maybe a red flag when they go on to deal with complex financial decisions

Town hall - like meetings with an introduction by each candidate and questions from the floor.

Town meeting and BBQ or coffee sessions

Transparency in relation to political affiliations is important.

Union membership / professional body membership should also be required as part of the nomination process, or to be distributed with voting materials, to assist voters

Use a digital human billboard which is part of the communities which can act as a central place to update the community on events, issues, etc

Use the councils webpage, so we can access it online.

Using QR Codes on the pamphlets to provide an even more in depth profile would be a great start. I'd also like to see candidates record a short (2-5 minutes max) campaign video talking about what made them run, what they intend to do, and why we should vote for them. Ideally this would be attached to the QR code as well as distributed via the councils or electoral commissions social media.

We do not support changes to the candidate information included in the ballot pack. The paper comments on voters having to make their own efforts to find more information about people running for their council.

Voting is a right, but it is also a privilege and a responsibility (Australian Electoral Commission). We may put reams of information in front of voters, and it will still rely on their own efforts to read it. At the same time, it is also the responsibility of those standing for council to ensure that the community they aim to represent knows them and what they stand for.

At the last election, Council held a Meet your Candidate night that was livestreamed and recorded excellent attendance both in person and online. The format of the night was strictly reglemented to ensure fairness and impartiality was maintained at all times. Each candidate was held to a strict time limit and questions and answers not permitted.

We believe that any involvement of the administration beyond this would be inappropriate and pose the risk of not being seen as impartial.

The paper notes that candidates having to provide additional information, for example a Police Records Check, may dissuade people from standing. We know from discussions amongst ourselves and other candidates that the existing disclosure requirements, especially around financials, were felt by many to be somewhat intimidating and onerous. We understand the requirement for information on personal interests to be recorded but wonder if such information could be held behind closed doors until and unless a candidate is elected.

We need to engage effectively first. Meet the candidate evenings, have minimal success in my experience, attracting that small percentage of the community that want to take an active involvement in the City's affairs

We need to have the opportunity for candidates to stand in the first place.

Weekend forums at local parks

Would be good if Councils could run a meet the candidates session for people to talk to candidates face to face.

Yes if done in an equitable way for all candidates. E.g. provide council hall at no cost and invite all candidates to talk. Provide equal space in a council website, Facebook site, newsletter etc with disclaimer not Council's views

Yes, candidates should declare any employment arrangements associated with a political party in the 12 months leading up to an election

Yes, information relating to employment arrangements associated with a political party should be required to be published as part of the candidate profile

Yes, the declaration should include the place of employment and where relevant, the name of the member of parliament

Yorke Peninsula Country Times do a good spread about candidates in the lead up to an election. Perhaps if all nominees are asked a few additional questions to allow the public to get to know them better.

You can have as many ideas as you want but until you improve the performance of councils and get a hard cap on REAL DOLLAR rates you are wasting your time.

You could require that each candidate has to provide a short (1 minute) video bio. Recording community meet and greet sessions would be useful, so that those who can't attend can still watch it. Also, having an online portal where people can ask questions and the candidates need to provide responses would be useful - the questioning doesn't need to be live, but it should be public (both question and answer).

Zoom maybe

Council supports the re-introduction of real time disclosure of candidate nominations, to be published/displayed in a public place, particularly in rural areas.

The current Candidate Profile is somewhat limiting (voters can't get much of an idea from the limited words available to candidates).

Councils can play a part in promoting all candidates to their communities.

We have run Meet the Candidate Town Hall sessions for a number of elections – and this generally attracts a good audience of interested people. The LGA could possibly provide some guidelines for such sessions to assist in a fair and reasonable approach.

Status Quo is sufficient, information that is considered detrimental to the candidate, due to seem to discriminate or due to perceived bias from electors should not be compulsory to disclose.

The body corporate of Council must be seen to be totally impartial and free of any influence or favouritism of all potential candidates. Permitting Councils to provide a platform for candidates to 'make themselves known' places that impartiality at risk. Candidate A may flood the site with information, while Candidate B submits nothing. Those that wish to see a conspiracy will perceive it.

In addition, there would be an additional cost to each Council to monitor the platform to ensure its content and submissions. That budget line would also need to be approved by the 'outgoing' Councillors, once again placing them in a position of conflict of interest if they are re-nominating.

The current ECSA online and hard copy information pack, rules of content and supervisory role serve the purpose well and provide for candidates to link their own social media, web site or other promotional sites to that ECSA controlled source. Don't fix something that isn't broken.

Omitting information may present a risk as a consequence of changing candidate information requirements

- Everything they do now.
- As it is now but minus the political party
- No, it is up to the candidate to do the work. The only concession here is that Council may facilitate a 'town hall' information/question session for candidates.
- For transparency – yes, candidates should declare any employment arrangements associated with a political party
- If you are going to keep listing people's political party then yes. But ideally both should be removed as it is not relevant.
- Same candidate information required as part of the nomination process as is minus political party. Less people may apply if you expose people too much especially if they haven't even been elected. I.e. the current system forces me to tell the world sensitive information such as who I bank with, who I do super with etc. Which opens me up to fraud and scam artists. Why force this on people who haven't even been elected? What we have now is enough. If people don't provide enough information they don't get elected.
- Perception of/actual/inconsistent use of Council resources to assist candidates in performing private activities (i.e. campaigning).
- Perception of Council/Administration involvement in political/campaigning activities. Potential claims of unfair/unequal support of candidates

Position: Maybe

While Council is of the view that this is predominately the role of ECSA, there is the potential for councils to host Q&A or panel sessions with candidates within their council area. Having said this, it needs to be carefully balanced and managed to ensure councils don't breach caretaker provisions in advantaging particular candidates that may not be available on the scheduled dates.

Position: Yes

Transparency is important. While this information may not impact some voters decisions, it may impact others.

Position: No

While it shouldn't be incorporated as part of a candidate profile, it could be part of a questionnaire that all candidates answer.

Improved transparency and information for voters.

The ECSA portal required candidates to provide a short statement about themselves, provide contact details, identify which ward they lived in and if they were a member of a political party.

The word limit on candidate statements is too limited and a greater number of words should be permitted, ie, increase from 150 to 200 words.

It is incumbent upon candidates to promote themselves and for voters to determine their preferred candidates.

Candidates should be able to provide a more prominent link in their bio with information that is supplied to voters.

Clarity should be provided in nomination kits regarding whether candidates need to

include 'middle' names. This caused confusion and frustration for candidates during the 2022 Elections.

Additional costs to stand for Council will deter people from nominating. Remuneration is not high for the amount of time that Council takes up. The allowance is taxable, although if it were made exempt from tax this could be beneficial. A request for a tax ruling for it not to be taxable could be sought.

While the lack of nominations is predominately a concern of regional councils, various strategies were discussed. These include improving public awareness of the role of local government with an emphasis on the potential positive impact a councilor can have on their community and increased funding and support from state government. To increase nominations from marginalized groups, it could be beneficial to consider quotas or special grants to help fund election campaigns.

Candidate Information

I think this is the primary issue in poor voter turnout.

As noted in your discussion paper, the information upon which I must make a decision is limited to a "profile" prepared by the candidate plus their (current) political party membership if any and a tick box for the candidate's residence with regard to the area being contested. I have often found it difficult to find any further information on a web search.

It would be interesting to know candidates motivations in standing for council, which I guess may range from the altruistic and community-spirited to council as a prep-school for a state or federal political career to those hoping to advance an agenda consistent with their business interests. Each of these can be entirely valid reasons for candidature. The problem is that we don't know about them and candidates are not therefore subject to scrutiny with regard to them.

None of this will be apparent from the candidate's self description on their profile. Nor will historical voting patterns and agendas of renominating incumbent candidates necessarily be evident.

Nomination of current party political membership is a poor proxy for party affiliation. All party membership over an extended period – eg ten years – should be divulged and perhaps information from the candidate about how they think this affiliation may affect their debating and voting on council. Given the low rates of party membership perhaps additional information, such as history of letter-boxing, canvassing and scrutineering for political parties may also be indicated. Profiles often refer to the candidate having engaged in voluntary work of an unspecified nature. I have wondered whether this work was primarily letter-boxing or handing out how to vote cards for a party at elections. Again, this is not to say that party involvement is a bad thing for council candidates, but we do need to know and to hear the candidates thoughts on the implications of this for their period of tenure.

I have sometimes found myself thinking that I don't have enough information about the candidates to ethically lodge a vote.

I think this highlights the importance of independent journalism in a democracy. Compare council elections with state or federal election – the scrutiny of all aspects of the candidates' history and policy intentions, the issues likely to be important in the forthcoming parliament and their positions on these, and their effectiveness as presenters, negotiators and debaters. I know you don't want to make the path to candidature too onerous, and this links with your question about training for (current and) potential councillors, but independent research and scrutiny could help candidates strengthen their skills, clarify their own thoughts with regard to issues they are likely to face, and raise the profile of the election and hence enhance public interest and participation. This, or something similar, needs to be done to raise interest well before consideration of compulsory voting.

Of course the how is less clear. Perhaps on-line/live town hall debates or interviews by experienced

journalists and/or a dedicated web page on the council website where candidates can be questioned directly or can answer submitted questions. Libraries could be briefed to facilitate access to these sites for those not able to at home. It would be great if investigative profiles and campaign updates could be published in The Advertiser and/or via a local radio station at least a couple of times during the election. Journalistic scrutiny need not be hostile, but should expand our understanding of the candidate and their understanding of themselves and the task they are wanting to undertake.

In terms of equity and impartiality the Council's role should be very limited in this respect. As stated previously, the Candidate Nomination forms should be provided to Councils in hard copy for placing on noticeboards and Councils could then promote the availability of this information to their community.

Amount of candidate information provided to voters

We are aware that the LGA provides information to candidates to guide them in preparing their council statement and strongly support this.

All candidates should have to state whether they live in the Council area and which Ward (if wards are retained

There are few checks and balances carried out on candidates before nominating as a candidate for local government election. Criminal history checks should be implemented as a minimum standard. Other desirable attributes could include financial literacy and relevant experience or qualifications.

There be a legislated set of minimum requirements about the information candidates must provide in the summaries they are required to provide for dissemination by the Electoral Commissioner before each election. This should include at least:

- whether the principal place of residence of the candidate is within the Council area
- whether the candidate has business premises (as owner or occupier) within the Council area and if so, the nature of the business.
- the candidate's occupation
- company directorships and other company offices held (e.g. chief executive officer, chief financial officer)
- membership of or affiliation with political parties
- membership of or affiliation with professional or trade organisations.

If candidates are to be limited in the length of their profiles by a character count, the number should be substantially greater than 1,000 characters. (The character count for the previous sentence is about 130 excluding spaces.)

Section 23 of the City of Adelaide Act requiring disclosure of campaign donations should be retained. Elected Councillors should be required to disclose to their Council and the Electoral Commissioner donations received during the time they hold office and within a year after leaving office as a Councillor. The purpose of disclosure is to reduce the risk of undue influence by donors and bias or conflicts of interest, actual or perceived.

Councillors' political party membership or affiliation of candidates should be disclosed in the summaries candidates are currently required to provide for dissemination by the Electoral Commissioner prior to each election. Partisan political party positions have no place in local government.

Information relating to employment arrangements associated with a political party should be required to be published

There is no doubt that if councils were enabled to conduct promotion suited to their particular council area, this would increase engagement, as who better to understand and engage with their communities. However, this is also fraught with danger for staff, as a result of resourcing pressures (this is not councils core business, and elections must always be done on top of usual workloads without additional resourcing), and the sensitivity of content used to promote elections (councils must remain impartial, not supporting any particular candidate – these requirements are extremely stringent, complex, nuanced, and council staff are not necessarily trained in this area).

If this were to be an option for consideration, it needs to be optional and supported by ECSA / LGA via staff training and adaptable / standard templates and resources still provided.

Whilst it is necessary to place some limit on candidate profiles, the current restrictions make it difficult for candidates to express their background, connection to the council and key focus areas. Perhaps some prompting questions for consideration of candidates may also be of assistance in delivering high impact profiles.

Yes, as outlined above, meet the candidate sessions and the like are typically extremely well received / attended. However, there must be clear guidelines and support to staff in navigating bias / advantage of any particular candidate over another.

Yes – if you work for a political member or candidate this should be disclosed.

This should not extend broadly to State Government employees.

The same information required for their Primary Return and Campaign Donation Returns should be mandated, with timing being relative. This information is already disclosed for sitting members seeking re-election, and there's no reason why newly nominating candidates should be exempt. If candidates are reluctant to share such details before or during the election process, they will face challenges upon election. This approach would also prevent a recurrence of the campaign donations issues seen in the 2022 election, as candidates would be obligated to provide the necessary information during the nomination process.

Consideration could be given to a standardised questionnaire covering key policy matters, ensuring all candidates furnish answers for a more comprehensive comparison. The current process, primarily relying on bios, allows for too much ambiguity and favours catchy slogans or adept writers. This method fails to reveal potential concerns about candidates until after they're elected, which is not ideal.

Additionally, candidates should be mandated to participate in at least one 'meet the candidate' event, offering prospective voters a chance to pose questions directly to them.

No, the responsibility lies with the candidate to undertake their campaign activities. Any other approach could give rise to a valid perception that Council resources are being utilized to support individual political campaigns. Councils can facilitate the process by supporting media or community organisations, offering free or subsidised access to halls or venues for candidate sessions. However, it should be a requirement that all candidates are afforded equal opportunities to attend and speak. No other administrative resources of the Council, such as catering, promotional materials, or advertising, should be used in support of individual candidates

Council does not support including a National Police Check as part of the nomination process but does support disclosure of campaign donations as part of the candidate information to allow the community to have a better understanding of who they are voting for.

The community strongly supports local representation. This is evidenced by the change introduced recently that now requires all candidates to state whether or not they “live in the area”.

I believe that this did not go far enough. The community have expressed strong support to requiring candidates to live in the ward that they are seeking to represent.

I therefore submit that residency in a ward should be a prerequisite for eligibility to stand as a candidate.

I note that this appears to be the situation in Queensland. (Section 152(b))

The discussion paper makes note of feedback following the 2022 elections that a National Police Check may help people know more about the candidates. Council disagrees with the need for National Police Check unless there is an independent legal assessment made as to what is relevant to an elected member’s role. All employment should be declared or none at all, not just a focus on those working in MP offices

They should be required to provide the Council ward they reside in or work in; where they live, Political party membership; community involvement; sporting club membership, police clearance, religious affiliations etc

A National Police Check and Working with children and/ or vulnerable people check should be mandatory, however, results should not be made public, that could potentially lead to law suits. A behavioural assessment should be included in the process also

What information should candidates be required to include with their nominations?

- Political affiliations
- Live in the council area (and what ward)
- A Declaration form (similar to register of interest) which has the same public information as serving Council Members have

Is it fair for someone who has 'served their time' to have to release this information?

- Candidates should meet minimum eligibility requirement (similar to ASX director requirements, working with children check).
- That a candidate meets the minimum eligibility requirements to nominate is what the community should be informed of, not personal details.

It is important for councils to maintain an arm’s length process.

The information candidates provide to the public can be improved by including a legislated set of minimum requirements about the information candidates must provide in the summaries for dissemination by the Electoral Commissioner before each election. For instance:

- o whether the principal place of residence of the candidate is within the Council area
- o whether the candidate has business premises (as owner or occupier) within the Council area and, if so, the nature of the business.
- o the candidate's occupation
- o company directorships and other company offices held (e.g. chief executive officer, chief financial officer)
- o membership of or affiliation with political parties and
- o membership of or affiliation with professional or trade organizations

All aspects of local government elections should be administered independently by the ECSA and the conventions of administration applicable to state and national governments should apply equally within local government, the more so in relation to property and planning operational and policy decisions in the months preceding the commencement of an election period, which decisions should be precluded from being the subject of “confidentiality

Council administrative staff may be seen to have a direct or perceived conflict of interest in respect of an election applicable to their council. They must be precluded from being a Returning (Deputy Returning, or decision-making) Officer, and from providing administrative support in respect of their council or a council with which it shares a boundary unless the support sought by the ECSA is only available from that council or member of staff

The current information provided by candidates is insufficient and does not allow for candidates to express their vision for Council or help to identify those candidates who are more suitably skilled for the position. An opportunity could exist to specify questions to be responded to in the information included. Council involvement in this process should be considered carefully and potentially limited to ensure the integrity of the process is not compromised.

This risk of increased candidate information is that the process may be challenging for some persons but could also inform voters to those best positioned to represent them.

We support a compulsory standardised candidate profile, to be completed by the candidate, and hosted on the local council website. A link to this profile should be provided in the ballot pack.

It would be inappropriate for Council staff to be involved in promoting candidates and it is important that this role be carried-out impartially on a statewide basis by the LGA/ECSA to maintain confidence and integrity in the process.

There should be improved education and transparency around the financial impacts of receiving an “Allowance” including on income tax and any impact for those in receipt of Commonwealth pension/other support payments.

I acknowledge the 2021 amendments improved requirements for candidates during the nomination process to allow for an address or email address or phone number to be provided (Regulations – (5)(2)(d) Manner in which nominations are made). However, that change did not extend to the publication of electoral material (s27(1)(a)) and I believe it should be consistent.

This is an important safety consideration for candidates, particularly female candidates, who may live in rural areas, or who may have been victims of domestic violence

Candidates should be required to include comprehensive information with their nominations to ensure transparency and enable voters to make informed decisions:

1. Personal details: Full name, address, contact information, and any relevant identification numbers.
2. Statement of candidacy: A brief statement outlining the candidate's intention to run for office and their commitment to serving the community.
3. Platform: A clear outline of the candidate's platform, including their vision, priorities, and proposed policies or initiatives.
4. Qualifications and experience: Details of the candidate's relevant qualifications, skills, and experience, particularly those relevant to the role they are seeking.
5. Statement of financial interests: Disclosure of any financial interests or potential conflicts of interest that may arise from the candidate's candidacy or potential election.
6. Endorsements: Any endorsements or affiliations with political parties, organizations, or influential individuals.

8. Police check: A current police check to verify the candidate's criminal record history and ensure they meet the legal requirements for candidacy. This helps uphold public trust and ensures that candidates are fit to serve in public office.
9. Any other relevant checks: Depending on the jurisdiction and the nature of the position, candidates may be required to undergo additional checks such as background checks, working with children checks, or financial checks. These checks help safeguard the integrity of the electoral process and ensure that candidates meet all necessary criteria for holding office.
10. Declaration of eligibility: Confirmation that the candidate meets all eligibility requirements to run for office as outlined by electoral regulations.

Topic 3: Consider who can vote for their council (3.3)

People who have the bigger investment in Councils should vote. They are residents of more than 12 months and rate payers but certainly not foreign citizens.

Yes, option to video stream in if required

1. Permanent residents should be allowed to vote in local elections.

2 years is a good length of time for ratepayers and residents of our council to know the area enough and what is or isn't available to vote and make suggestions.

3 month residency to be able to vote

6 months is minimum for all types of voters. Online Enrolment for non-Australian citizens is allowed and confirmed with a copy of passport copy supplied.

A lot of people in Australia are on visas where they are not Citizens, but they contribute and pay taxes/. If you pay taxes you should be able to vote.

All citizens living in the Council area should be able to vote.

All persons over the age of 16 should be able to vote in Council elections - need to also represent youth needs too.

All property owners AND all adult residents should be able to vote.

Stop wiping the roll for property owners who dont live in the area, they have rights to protect their investment by contributing without having to renominate each election.

All residents should be able to vote regardless of whether they are citizens

Allowing non Australian citizens, overseas students or renters who have lived in area for only one month is crazy. They can't vote in state or federal elections so why in council elections. Should be you need to be an Australian citizen, have lived in area for at least one year and be over 18.

Whilst we have close to 17,000 residents we only have 12,500 rate payers who fund nearly everything.

Allowing youth 16 years and older to run, participate, and vote in local elections, with all levels of government decision-making having implications for young people's futures.

Anyone who lives in a community is impacted by the decisions of Council and should be able to vote for who represents them.

Anyone who lives in a Council area (for more than a month prior to the close of rolls) should be able to vote.

Anyone who pays rates should be eligible to vote.

Anyone with an ongoing interest in the area - residents, owners, businesses. In the case of Adelaide City Council where most of the people who work there don't live there, there should be special dispensation for somehow representing the interests of city workers. Perhaps a seat for a State Government nominee?

As long as someone has lived in the area for 30 days, I believe they can make an informed decision to vote or not as it should not be compulsory.

Australian citizenship should be a requirement to vote

Bring the age down to 16

Business owners who don't live in the area, but own and employ local people should be allowed to vote in that Council's elections.

Business owners within that council area.

Citizenship should be a non-negotiable requirement. A six month qualifying period of residence would be more appropriate.

Citizenship should be the basis for a vote and to be elected. It should not be based on property or temporary residence; it should be the same as applies to state government.

Consider the age. Many local decisions affect kids. Perhaps engaging young people from 16 years on will improve democracy literacy and also improve discussion and engagement about what matters to the young and future inhabitants.

Consideration could be made to allow younger residents to vote, e.g. from 16 years as has been proposed at times for other elections

Coober Pedy should be allowed to vote for its council, like other towns in SA, Australia and the civilised world.

Council does not believe the franchise for council elections be changed in any way and the eligibility to vote in council elections should be restricted to only those persons on the State Electoral Roll.

Disband Council

Dogs?

DON'T MAKE IT COMPULSORY

Eligibility to vote in Local Government should be changed to simplify the eligibility criteria and also to simplify the enrolment process

Encourage all residents to vote

Establish mechanisms for children and young people of all ages to participate in their local communities as active citizens, with particular regard to:

- a. The rights and active citizenship of children from birth to 12 years old.
- b. Meaningful models of youth engagement and participation that are diverse and representative, have influence and deliver real change

Every Australian Citizen should be allowed to vote in their council election.

Everyone should be required to vote to bring a focus on council nominees and council outcomes.

Everyone should have the chance, even if you have recently moved in you will likely be there a while and be impacted by the decisions made.

Everyone that lives in the area should be able to vote.

Farmers should only be weighted as one vote, not weighted as a gerimander

For local government, a person must be on the state electoral roll

Franchise for council elections should be changed

I believe that if compulsory voting is to be allowed, then businesses should not be granted the same right of vote. democracy is something to be engaged in by citizens and members of the community, not corporate or business entities

I can't see any real issues with allowing non-citizens to vote or people who have lived in an area for at least a month, unless there is there a risk that an electorate could be stacked?

I could support some non-citizens or non-permanent residents voting in council elections (subject to tenure of residency in Australia etc). In many cases, such people have studied at Australian institutions, earned Australian money, contributed to Australian economies and paid Australian tax. They, too, call Australia home. However, they could be voluntary voters.

I do believe that to have the right to vote in elections, you should be a citizen.

I don't like that you have to live in the areas prior to June of that election year to be able to vote. I think everyone should be able to vote, even if they've moved into the area a week before postals are sent out. Our state is undergoing massive housing development and redevelopment and there are 7 new people moving into my council every single day. Let them participate.

I don't think that you have to be an Australian citizen, as that doesn't seem democratic but I do think that you need to be a register resident for longer than 30 days, possibly minimum one year. This is to stop irregular, practices

I don't think you have to be an Australian citizen but you should have a period of connection to the area before you vote

I have 2 houses in different councils. I can only vote at my address that is registered with the electoral commission. I was not aware that I could vote in the other council, I just found out that I can apply to vote but the cut of date is months before the election and I have never seen any communication on this. I suggest that all residents can vote without applying to do so, anybody that pays council rates should be able to vote. The current system needs to be revised so property owners that have holiday homes or rentals are automatically enrolled to vote. This is a massive issue that has stopped me and most people I know voting.

I have no issues with allowing people who are not Australian Citizens to vote. I also have no issues allowing business or property owners to vote.

Despite the fact that this is encouraged, it is not well-known that people are able to do this. There is also a fundamental contradiction with this. While these individuals can register to vote, they must re-register each election as the voters roll gets purged. Unsurprisingly, this doesn't happen.

The City of Adelaide's voters roll however, does not get purged and so you get a much higher level of participation from business and I would assume, non-Australian citizens.

Consideration should be given to not purging the voters roll and making more of an effort to reach out to these people.

I strongly agree that only people who are Australian Citizens should be able to vote to shape the local council.

I support the franchise as it currently stands. I don't believe any change to the franchise is currently necessary – all people who should have a say, are able to have a say. I support voting among residents (including non-Australian citizens), businesses, and property owners, provided multiple voting is prohibited (which it is).

I think one month is enough time to have a say in voting in your council elections. I feel very strongly about non-Australian citizens having the right to vote on the representatives that will make decisions in their local community.

I think that people should have to live in the area for at least 6 months before they are able/required to vote if they are renting. But should be able/required to vote immediately if they are an owner/occupier of a residential address.

I think the same rules should apply as they do for state and federal elections.

I'd let permanent residents vote too, if they are property owners or business owners. The onus should be on them to enrol to vote with ECSA and ECSA (not council) should be in charge of maintaining the electoral roll.

If a person owns property or runs a business in the area they should be able to vote. Not sure why there is the one month requirement.

If eligible to be on the Electoral Role and or permanent resident of Australia. Not student visas.

If I've only lived there for less than 30 days - and am renting then I might move out again within that 4 years. Let's explore that a bit better. Being an Australian citizen shouldn't stop you from having a say in the area you live in. You might be holding onto your national citizenship for other reasons - it does not make your vote any less worthy.

If non-citizens can own property, they must have the right to vote on how their property rates are spent. No taxation without representation.

If people have lived in the area for more than 1 month should be able to register and vote regardless of their citizenship as a lot of Council decisions are made which will impact those people.

If they live or own they should have a say,

If you live (rent etc.) or your principle place of residence is in a particular Council area, then you should have the right to vote in that Council area, just like a State Election where you reside in an electorate.

If you live in the area you are impacted by council spending and decision making and therefore should be eligible to vote.

In my personal position I have been a longstanding member of my community and over about a 40 year period had been on about 25 community, service, social or sporting committees and clubs. I felt I was in a strong position to represent the local community and the ratepayers however the "system" doesn't want candidates that can truly add to the benefit and wellbeing of the whole area. To be told that "I was a live one" by the local CEO in my first few months as a local representative indicated that the CEO was unused to independent minded councillors.

It isn't correct to allow non-citizens to vote.

It should absolutely be a requirement that you are an Australian citizen to vote, I think most people would be very surprised to find that this isn't the case already.

Just make the rules the same as for state and federal elections to avoid any confusion.

Keep it to the Fed/State Electoral roll or business rolls. See the mess with the City of Adelaide!

Landlords shouldn't be able to vote- they don't really have a stake in the community because they just want to make money and that's not a good enough reason to have voting rights. We should elevate the voices of residents and that means landlords shouldn't have more democratic rights just because they're rich enough to own multiple properties.

Legislation should be changed to remove non-resident voters. Currently if you have lived in Australia for a time (?), you can apply to vote. This should not be allowed as it allows stacking of voting.

Local government should be abolished and if not, councils should be amalgamated eg Eyre Peninsula should be one council. Some rural councils have less than 3000 or so people but about 50 or more "staff", most of whom are on over \$80K.

locals need to have some idea on how their town/city works. You can't know who the potential EM's are if you haven't lived here long enough.

Lower the voting age to 16 years old for local government elections.

Lower voting age limits for the council elections to help prepare younger people for state and federal elections.

Make the eligibility rules the same as the other two tiers of government. No voting for body corporate landholders, that gives people the opportunity for additional votes which is undemocratic

Must be a resident

Must be residents on the state electoral roll. So ensure people moving into the council area have met the requirement and live there

My view is that voters should be Australian citizens. If they aren't and intend staying in Australia, they can vote when they become Australian citizens and not before.

New citizens or residents would appear on the surface to have little insight to local community politics if they have lived in the LGA for 30 days or less, but this review process should explore the truth of this further.

No but if you want to engage people give their registered dog a vote (1 per household) or run a novelty dog ballot concurrently with the election. imagine the media splash.

No collection of nominations by interested parties.

No it at this time.

Non compulsory voting for people 16 and over.

Not everyone who lives in a town owns property but they usually make meaningful contributions to that community. Maybe living in a place for 1 year regardless of owning property could make someone eligible to vote in a Council election. I believe you need to be an Aust citizen or permanent resident to vote.

Not sure why those who have more than one rateable property (e.g. home and a business) get to double dip in council elections. Should only get to vote once.

Not uni students who have just moved to SA!

On the matter of franchise, the ability to add electors via a supplementary roll is supported for property and business owners and to represent particular groups of electors (as is currently the case). It is however suggested that non-Australian citizens not be able to vote in local elections, as is the case for federal and state elections. While it is acknowledged that non-citizens are part of communities, they may not have an enduring or long-term interest in the area and therefore should not be granted the privilege of voting

Once you moved to an area you should be entitled to vote in those council elections.

One adult resident , one vote.

One potential change could involve expanding the voting rights to include ways to lower the voting age to 16 or 17 could engage younger citizens in the democratic process early on, fostering a sense of civic responsibility and participation

Only 1 vote per elector for mayor and area/ward (I believe this is the current standard but needs to remain.)

Only Australian citizens and only if they want to.

Only Australian citizens should be allowed to buy properties here.

Only Australian citizens with no political affiliation.

Only people who pay rates should be allowed to vote.

Only property owners and commercial tenants. Can be any naturalized or not

Only residents should be able to vote in council elections. Property owners or business owners can't vote in state or federal elections where they own, why should they vote in local elections? Yes, local government affects their business, but so does state and federal. It's unrepresentative.

only those on the Electoral Roll, to many new arrivals are persuaded to vote for a person from from their persuasions the vast majority are not citizens of Australia and or are foreign students who are pressured to vote for a particular candidate

Overseas property owners and foreign citizens who are Australian Visa holders should NOT be allowed to vote.

Interstate property owners should NOT be allowed to vote.

Overseas students should not be able to vote for who runs a local council so any changes needed to remove this are essential. Temporary residents of an area are not local representation.

Owning property that is rented out should not entitle you to vote. Unless you live or operate a business in the area you should not be able to vote.

people should be able to enrol to vote in the area in which they presently reside. Given the low turnout we are not in a position to be turning voters away. I oppose the franchise for legal entities or on any basis other than residency.

People who are absentee voters should not have to register every time. It should be automatic.

People who are citizens who own property and live in their property / mortgage and live in their property / run a business should be able to vote within that election. They should have lived in their area for at least 3 months.

People who have committed to living in the Council area should be able to vote for their Councillors. Putting time limits on this will not improve participation.

People who have lived in an area longer than one month will have a much better understanding of the issues in the community; will be part of the community and will have had the chance to develop some

community connections. This is essential to ensure they vote for the right person who can represent their views and raise issues on their behalf.

I believe that you should be an Australian citizen to vote.

People who have the bigger commitments in the suburb/district of the Councils should vote. They are residents of more than 12 months and rate payers. Never ever foreign citizens !!!

People who have the bigger investment in Councils should vote. They are residents of more than 12 months and rate payers but certainly not foreign citizens.

People who own multiple properties in a council divided into should only be able to vote in one ward. Not in each ward in which they own property.

People with second homes will not have the opportunity to vote unless another kind of supplementary roll is created.

Persons who own property and do not reside in a Council Area should have an automatic right to vote and not required to complete forms to be registered on the supplementary voters' role. This provision linked to a "noncompulsory" nonrequirement to vote for supplementary voters' role would be of benefit. The automatic inclusion, which once existed, is a positive. This is easy to reference now with the voters' roles being in an electronic format and updated regularly.

Persons who work within a council area and therefore are community members should be eligible to vote in a council election as well.

Persons, business lessees, business owners, bodies corporate or groups that are ratepayers, or occupy a rateable property, who are eligible to vote in an election should automatically be enrolled on the supplementary roll (this is based on an assumption that voting is not mandatory).

Persons, business lessees, business owners, bodies corporate or groups that are ratepayers, or occupy a rateable property, within the council area (often referred to as the 'property franchise') should automatically be registered to vote. It should not be optional. This should all be done by the State Government and Councils should not have to check and pay to update any voting roll. . If Mandatory voting does come in then an educational campaign needs to be developed especially for areas where holiday homes represent a large portion of the ratable properties. All ward candidates should get a copy of the complete number of electors in that ward not just the residential roll

Persons, business lessees, business owners, bodies corporate or groups that are ratepayers, or occupy a rateable property, within the council area (often referred to as the 'property franchise'). (Currently those falling under this category, who wish to vote in council elections, must self- enrol for each council election by completing an enrolment form.) This category should also be included on all council voting rolls including ward council rolls. (currently doesn't happen)

Property owners living outside the electorate should not have a vote; that is an archaic system which was once used for upper houses, and in the past, only landowners could vote in the UK. Every person who lives in the area should be entitled to vote. If a landowner wants a vote in a Council area, they should move there.

Property owners only

property owners should not have to nominate their representative each election. They have believed they are already registered to find at election time they were supposed to renew

Property owners who don't live in the council area should not be able to vote because they do not live there.

Remove the anachronistic and anti-democratic property franchise for councils. Maximise the ability for residents of the area to vote in council elections by conducting voter drives from non-citizen residents.

Removing or restricting voting to individuals fails to take into consideration who the key stakeholders for many local councils are, and alienates several voters who have a vested interest in how their area is run, whilst allowing property owners who potentially do not reside, work or spend time in the area a vote.

Residents and business/property owners should only be able to vote in Council Elections if they're an Australian Citizen. I find it disgraceful that non-citizens can vote in Council Elections when they're not allowed to vote in Federal or State Elections.

Residents and property owners should get the lions share of the opportunities to vote

Residents and ratepayers should have lived in the area for at least 30 days, if not more..

Residents only.

Residents within a council area who are not Australian citizens may also self-enrol to vote for their council, if they have been a resident in the area for at least one month immediately before the date they apply to vote (current). Change to should have been a resident in the area for at least 12 months immediately before the date they apply to vote.

Retain current system.

Businesses do not receive a voting slip but rather must apply. There is an opportunity to streamline this process to make it easier for businesses to participate in elections.

Clarity around eligibility to vote and the consistency in the application of rules continues to be an issue but does not require new regulations.

Retain postal voting which should be compulsory

Reviewing voter eligibility in the context of compulsory voting.

Same age and conditions as State and Federal

Seriously, if you don't live in the area (or reside overseas) voting should not be an option.

Should be for home owners and business owners only. Stop allowing business owners who also own a home in the same area having two votes. Renters should not be allowed to vote unless they have a long term rental agreement.

Should explore the idea that people who work in a council area should have the right to vote. You live in Gawler but work in Port Adelaide. you can vote in both council elections.

Simplify or remove the purging of rolls and how business owners need to register.

Stay as is

Supplementary Roll should be for businesses only that employ staff

That the South Australian Local Government Act 1999 be amended to allow young people ages 16 and over to:

- a) Vote in elections for local government.
- b) Run as a candidate in local elections.

The Council role should be abandoned which would remove the complications of eligibility to enrol and remove duplications. Removal of the Council Roll would also provide a more fair method of voting with only one vote per elector regardless of their number of properties or business.

The current eligibility to be on the voters roll, while cumbersome, should not be changed.

The current supplementary roll needs to be explained well in advance in all Councils' publications and communication channels

The Minister should conduct a full review of eligibility criteria and the enrolment process to ensure that those eligible to vote are enrolled automatically as far as possible to ensure that the franchise is working appropriately and to relieve the current burden on Councils.

The more voters the better, as it reduces the likelihood of an unhinged community member being elected with a small number of votes. Mandatory voting will certainly help address this.

the person should vote in the council that they have at closing of date of enrollment unless they can show new address when voting and the new address is updated first

The Property Franchise entitlement to vote provisions should be reinstated.

The residency time for non-property owners who are not on the State/Federal electoral roll should be consistent with requirements of other elections

The residency time for non-property owners who are not on the State/Federal electoral roll should not be changed

The rules that apply to State and Federal elections can be brought to bear in Local Government elections.

The thing that is missing is whether out councils are appropriate sized. One council for Adelaide from pooraka to Marion seems sensible. Involvement of the state government to coordinate council function in this area is a waste of resources.

the voters roll process needs to be reconsidered a large amount of time and resources is used to encourage people to enrol, enrolments are trending down each election cycle and the costs to get 30 applications to the electoral roll are starting not to be justifiable. the application process to be on the roll for non residents and property entitlements seems to be where all of the voter fraud issues are.

There are no additional regulatory arrangements needed in relation to supplementary roll applications to ensure the integrity of the enrolment process.

There is an opportunity to simplify and align local government voting to other levels of government. Too many different rules and approaches across levels of government are confusing for the community members.

There should be a method which by residents within a council area who are not Australian Citizens can vote in council elections without having to submit a special application

They need to be able to say if asked they have been in the area long enough to contribute in some way, not just passing through

This aspect needs publication if voting is not compulsory - many residents who lease property don't think they're entitled to vote - many !

This is Australia therefore only Australian citizens should be able to vote also you should be a resident of the council area that you are voting in.

This should all be done by the State Government and Councils should not have to check and pay to update any voting roll

Those with investment properties should not be able to vote unless they are living in the area.

Voters exercising their property franchise to self enrol in an area they do not live, should have limits on the number of councils they can enrol to vote in, because this gives wealthy investors a much bigger influence across the whole state. Voters exercising their property franchise should have to be Australian citizens.

Voters must be Australian citizens, there is enough current evidence to prove that international students and new arrived non citizen immigrants can be lobbied and their vote corrupted

Voting must not be restricted by citizenship or time of residence within council. Minimum in-council residency requirements lack logic, as the resident would be voting for the people who will represent them during their future time in the area. Such requirement would also preclude some people from voting at all if they no longer live nor can vote in their previous area.

Voting rights should be the same as any state or federal elections in terms of citizenship. If you own a property or run a business in different councils you should be able to vote in them as well as this effects where you live and work.

Voting should be 90 days of residency, as 30 days is not long enough to know the elected members or those nominating, much less what is happening in the local area.

Voting should be restricted to residents. Just because someone owns property in the district does not mean they should be able to vote.

While residents should live in the council area for at least a month, businesses should be there for at least a year.

Who can vote for their council

In discussing voting rights for non-citizen residents the Review states:

This reflects the general tenor of council elections—that local people who use local services should have

a say in the local decision-making body that determines them. I would have thought the same principle should automatically apply to those who own a property and pay substantial rates to the council for those services. Owners who are not resident are automatically disenfranchised at the beginning of each election year and have to take action to reapply to be on the voter register. Owners who are landlords or owning the property as a holiday or weekend residence are major stakeholders in the amenity and environment of the property and the council area and should have automatic voting rights as ratepayers.

You should be an Australian to vote.

You should live or operate a business in the council area to be eligible to vote.

Young people aged 16 -18 years.

Council believes that more stringent eligibility criteria for candidates needs to be part of the consideration of any new strategies to encourage a greater number of more diverse candidates. Strategies to ensure that potential candidates have more understanding of what is required of the role also need to include the behavioural standards expectations.

Only Australian Citizens should be able to vote (as it is with State & Federal elections)

If Non-Australian citizens voting entitlements are retained, then they should be resident for a much longer period than one-month ie suggest 12 months minimum. Persons, business lessees, business owners, bodies corporate or groups should be automatically included on Councils supplementary electoral roll – and have an automatic entitlement to vote.

Caution should be undertaken in deciding who can vote,(entitlement) let's not be fooled by, "the more people (entitled) to vote should increase voter participation", let's not create an environment for fraud and manipulation, need to be an Australian citizen, unless you are a permanent resident owning rateable property in the council area. and if you come from another council area and meet the criterium of permanent resident owning rateable property in the council area you moved into not 1month should be at least 6 months immediately before the date they apply to enrol.

Eligibility to vote in Council elections includes a far wider range of voters than at any other level of Government and may actually be contributing to the reported low levels of voter turnout.

The wide range of eligibility to vote may also be distorting the final results as the 'property franchise', 1 month residency, and non-residency rules may be open to abuse by candidates seeking office. Allegations of misuse in the 2022 elections involving international students continue to circulate. Many rural businesses employ short term seasonal contract workers (both international and Australian based). These workers may be eligible to vote in Council elections (where they qualify) and may not be aware of the local issues or even resident in the area at the actual close of polls. Most will never return to that area as they return to their home base at the end of the work visa or employment contract. Some may be registered without their knowledge and others may not even be residents when the polls open, having moved on to the next contract.

Some of these seasonal workers / part time residents may not speak English and may not fully understand the voting process or candidate information. There remains a significant risk that their employer, contract supervisor or other person in authority may influence their vote.

The eligibility to vote in council elections should not be restricted to only those persons on the State Electoral Roll.

Changing who can vote for their council may have absentee ratepayers objecting, but as they do not live in the community, they should not have influence on that community.

Varying views have been expressed:

- People should not be required to self-enrol for each council election.
- People who live in the electorate only.
- Same rules for supplementary role as for City of Adelaide

Varying views have been expressed:

- No, it should be open to the 'property franchise' people.
- Yes.

Varying views have been expressed:

- Yes and they should be required to be a resident in the area for six months immediately before the date they apply to vote.
- No

No additional regulatory arrangements needed in relation to supplementary roll applications

Varying views have been expressed:

- Property franchise people would be interested in good outcomes as they have a vested interest in the community.
- None

The arrangements for the supplementary roll should be the same as City of Adelaide

Position: Yes

There appears to be limited value in a council maintaining their own voters roll separately to the House of Assembly roll (used for state and federal elections). The resources and costs that are incurred by councils to encourage and enable property franchises to apply to be on the 'council voters roll' each election appears to outweigh the benefits. There would be greater benefit in introducing mandatory voting, and removing provision for a separate voters roll.

Having said this, this would remove the voting entitlement for business owners who invest significant funds in the economic development of the City. Potentially only providing the 'council voters roll' option for businesses in the City is a worthwhile inclusion

Position: Yes

The same voters roll applying to all levels of government elections would simplify the process for voters. In the experience of CTTG, sending out letters to property owners not on the House of Assembly roll appears to create more confusion, rather than value add to the process. This would also restrict nominations to those that actually live (not just own property) in a council area, which would likely be supported by the majority of the community.

Council's supplementary roll continues to decline despite extensive promotion and encouragement for franchisees to participate.

The data be released by ECSA after each election to confirm whether supplementary voters are exercising their voting rights. The system is expensive to run and there is no data available to confirm whether there is any benefit to Councils from the existing system.

The sector may require assurances that those with a cognitive deficiency or impairment cannot be coerced into voting.

Those authorised to vote at local government elections should align and be consistent with state and federal government elections, only allowing those enrolled on the House of Assembly roll to participate.

We support the continuation of the 'property franchise' enabling people to vote who do not live in the area of the election they are voting in, and do not need to be Australian citizens.

We propose an alteration to the ability of residents within a council area who are not Australian citizens to self-enrol to vote, if they have been a resident in the area for at least one month immediately before the date they apply to vote. While we absolutely agree with the general tenor of council elections – local people who use local services having a say in the local decision-making body that determines them – we believe that such residents should have lived in the area for at least 12 months before applying to vote.

Australian citizens who pay rates (ie owns property) in a Council area should be eligible to vote

- Australian citizens who are 18 years of age or older and who reside in a Council area, as currently is the case.
- In addition, people who are not Australian citizens, but who have resided in the Council area for at least 6 months and are 18 years of age or older should be permitted to apply to be enrolled on the voters' roll . In addition, ratepayers who are not residents, but who own or occupy property within the Council area, should be able to apply to be enrolled as electors, provided they, (or in the case of corporations or groups, their nominated or authorised person) are otherwise eligible to vote. They should be permitted to vote only once in the one Council area

The prescribed form for persons who are not citizens to apply for enrolment on the basis of a short period of residency requires the applicant to only tick the box next to the statement on the form saying "I have been resident at the residence set out above for a continuous period of at least 1 month immediately preceding the date of the application" and to sign the form . The date of the commencement of residence is not required. No witness is required. Thus, there is scope for false applications. We submit that these applications (and say based on a minimum of 6 months residence) should be made by statutory declaration. This would require an authorised witness and a declaration before the witness that the application is true . This would reinforce the importance of honesty in making the application. As Justices of the Peace and others authorised to take statutory declarations routinely require production of identification, this would further reduce the risk of fraudulent enrolments

Eligibility to vote in council elections should be restricted to only those persons on the State Electoral Roll.

Yes, the system of voting be based on one person one vote, as it is now.

Eligibility to vote in council elections should be restricted to only those persons on the State Electoral Roll

The supplementary roll is very poorly understood, rate payers assume once they have enrolled they are on the roll forever. If mandatory voting does not come into effect then an educational campaign needs to be developed especially for areas where holiday homes represent a large portion of the ratable properties

Yes, the eligibility to vote in council elections should be restricted to only those persons on the State Electoral Roll

Voting should be restricted to Australian Citizens, in alignment with the Federal and State systems. At a minimum residents should be required to have resided in the Council area for 12 months (rather than the current one month), to ensure they have an appropriate level of context to participate in elections. Persons, business lessees, business owners, bodies corporate or groups that are ratepayers, or occupy a rateable property, who are eligible to vote in an election should automatically be enrolled on the supplementary roll (this is based on an assumption that voting is not mandatory).

No, lease holders, business owners and other groups with an interest in the Council area generally make up a large percentage of voters and often have a substantial interest in Council elections, often having a higher level of engagement with local Councils than individuals

Yes, this should be a minimum of 12 months

Non-House of Assembly voters not having to re-enrol for each election, but to be re-checked for eligibility.

Contemplate reducing the voting age to 16. Young individuals often bear the long-term consequences of decisions, making their perspective valuable. Enhancing their involvement by lowering the voting age could be a means of giving them a more effective voice in the democratic process

- Principle user – strict rules on private/council land property
- Introduce strict rules around corflute signs – along the same lines as the State Government rules on these
- Council nominees to show a demonstrated engagement and participation within the community – need to have lived within the region for at least 12 months
- Only to be able to vote if a property owner in the area – consideration to be given to those who invest capital into the community

Notes the appetite for a restriction of the voting franchise in local government elections and recommends the establishment of a working group with OLG, CSA and the LGA to consider options and make recommendations to the Minister

Eligibility open to as many as possible hence suggest: voter is aged 18 or more, currently living in Council area and has done so for the last 6 months. One vote per business operating within the area.

There is not widespread awareness of the requirement persons, business lessees, business owners, bodies corporate or groups that are ratepayers, or occupy a rateable property, within the council, have to enrol to vote should they wish to participate in council elections. The process to prepare the voters roll is labour intensive and cumbersome to ensure accuracy. Improvements in this area would be welcomed

Rate payers - both residents, businesses once registered and property owners should get 1 vote. This should be the same for all those enrolled to vote in state and federal elections

Should the franchise for council elections be changed in any way?

Form One

- The requirements for non-citizens to be entitled to enrol to vote should be tightened to ensure that there is a reasonable interest in the outcome of the election. It is suggested that they:
 - be a permanent resident or have the right to work
- provide proof of identity, status and residence when completing the forms.

- Noting that candidates must be Australian citizens, it is important that candidates will be able to fulfil their term of office.
- This process should be managed by ECSA with consideration given to language barriers.

Consideration as to who can vote in council elections may result in a broader and diverse participation in Council elections. Risk is that there is no change as a result of broadening the voting pool.

In general, the current franchise is satisfactory and equitable as it provides for those who are already on the State electoral roll, as well as those who have a 'property franchise' and who wish to exercise the right.

Our group however is of the view that the current one month residency provision for non-citizens is far too short, and that it should be at least twelve months. This will help to avoid the alleged issues in the most recent Adelaide City Council elections

The people eligible to vote in Council elections and polls should be the same as the electoral roll for state and federal elections. They should be kept and maintained by the Electoral Office. This would provide consistency across elections for all sectors, minimize confusion and provide acceptable standards of integrity. Local government voter eligibility changes should be introduced gradually, perhaps over several elections.

There are other ways to address the involvement of temporary residents and businesses may be affected by these changes. For instance, business interests are well represented within the City of Adelaide by a statutory body, the Adelaide Economic Development Agency (AEDA), partly funded by the Council. They work closely with businesses, industry groups, state government agencies and other relevant organizations. According to their website, they deliver a range of programs designed to stimulate the city's economic growth with a focus on business growth, investment attraction, growing our visitor economy, residential growth, marketing the city as a whole and promoting Rundle Mall as Adelaide's premier shopping destination

The franchise ought to be the same as for state and federal government elections. For a local government, a person must be on the state electoral roll. Another view is to expand the eligibility of voting in local government by requiring non-Australian citizens who have resided in Australia for six months to obtain a statutory declaration.

The roll should not be automatically purged for 'persons, business lessees, business owners, bodies corporate or groups that are ratepayers, or occupy a rateable property, within the council area' that have previously registered. Informal feedback is that they rarely are bothered to re-register even though they are eligible

ECSA should be responsible for all local government elections. Electoral Commission of South Australia and its officers should conduct every election on a cost recovery basis and should not include council staff in an election in their area. Making a requirement to be on the state electoral role to vote and be elected would simplify process as it would be the same as for state government.

In respect to the CEO/Supplementary Roll, if it is kept, consideration should be given to allow people that are, at a minimum, permanent residents, and who have been living in the area for a minimum of 12 months. Restricting eligibility to only those persons on the State Electoral Roll is worth considering. If the process and the criterion for the Supplementary Roll is kept, then it needs to be simpler and more easily understood for transparency. If the Roll is removed, then it may mean that those not invested in the community will not have an opportunity to have their say minimizing the risk of manipulation and fraud.

Rather than altering people's eligibility to vote, Council would like to see a more automated process enacted in relation to enrolling on the council supplementary roll. While Council makes significant effort to advise its ratepayers of the opportunity to enrol, we still inevitably receive enquiries from electors who may have been eligible to enrol, stating they were unaware of the opportunity (and missed the cutoff date).

We understand that at present people falling under this category of persons, business lessees, business owners, bodies corporate or groups that are ratepayers, or occupy a rateable property, within the council area (often referred to as the 'property franchise') who wish to vote in council elections, must self enrol for each council election by completing an enrolment form (except in the City of Adelaide, where they are automatically enrolled).

It is our view that those listed above, including business owners, should be treated consistently (the same as residents) when it comes to automatically receiving ballot papers in the post.

If you asked a voter if they were going to exercise their property franchise at the council election, many would not know what you were talking about. Contemporary and easy to understand language should be used. Aside from the general failure of the expensive marketing agents to effectively promote voting in local government elections, another major area of failure is in the area of education. For example, many people who rent don't know they get a vote and I believe much more should be done to educate people about their eligibility to vote, even if they are not a ratepayer. The requirement for property owners, who live outside the area to re-enroll in each election year, has been a failure from when that change was made under a former Labor Government. If a Council can send those property owners a rate notice, they ought to be able to send them a ballot paper.

Large corporations or other groups or entities who own multiple properties get multiple votes and in Area Councils (one ward for the whole Council), those corporations could have a dozen to twenty or more votes, depending on the number of properties they own. I'm not sure that meets with community expectations and should be reviewed

Students who said they would vote if the age was lowered explained that this was because we care about the future and our communities, so we want to have a say on our rights and the future of our country, and participate in electing the people that represent us.

Students who said they wouldn't vote explained that this was because we need more information and education to feel confident and comfortable voting.

Students want more opportunities to learn and talk about voting at school from a younger age. Students also want more opportunities to enrol and to practice voting, including through 'open votes' with people we trust, 'mock voting' and practice ballots at school, as well as video tutorials and in-depth instructional guides. Students want guidance that supports young people to 'actually know what we're doing', while having 'access to the information we need to make informed decisions about who to vote for'.

Topic 3: Election promotion (3.5)

Additional promotion by councils is not supported. Just as informing candidates should be done uniformly and by a neutral party, so should informing voters. It is considered inappropriate to expend council funds on political advertising.

Alignment with the Federal and State elections would ease some of the confusion.

Candidate signage regulations should be aligned and consistent with state and federal regulations. This would remove any confusion between signage regulations for each election and reduce individual councils from the additional monitoring of illegally placed signs currently in place for local government elections.

Corflute's should be banned (not environmental) on all public property

Cost recovery from the State should councils have a stronger role in promoting elections locally

Could maybe retain one corflute per candidate on private and business fences with written permission

Council's should be given more legislative flexibility to hold meet the candidate sessions, providing an equal opportunity for all candidates to attend and answer a set range of questions. Alternatively, Councils could be given the legislative flexibility to support community groups in providing meet the candidates sessions.

ECSA and the LGA need to start working on local government elections (and communicating with councils) much earlier.

Electronic signs on private property should be allowed, it should not be a Council decision as those without the capability will vote against. There needs to be a consistent policy and encouragement of signage that does not produce waste.

If councils are not given the flexibility to promote at the local level, they should be given the opportunity to have input into the promotional material.

Impartiality should be at the forefront of decision making if councils were to have a stronger role in promoting elections locally

Incorrect information is an opportunity/risk which may arise as a consequence of councils playing a stronger role in the promotion of elections to increase voter turnout

Should the rules relating to council election signs be the same as the rules for state and federal election signs?

The additional unnecessary cost is a risk which may arise as a consequence of councils playing a stronger role in the promotion of elections

The mandatory promotional expenses included in each Council's election costs from the Electoral Commission of SA could be reconsidered and reduced to allow councils more flexibility and revenue to promote locally and refine the promotion to local audiences.

The rules relating to council elections signs should be the same as for state and federal election signs

The same rules should apply for council election signs to be the same as state and federal signs.

There is definitely a need for increased local promotion, but a solution needs to be found that has minimal impact on Council resourcing. If Councils are required to take on this role, then considerable assistance will need to be provided particularly for smaller regional Councils.

Use ECSA advertising material assisted by councils and LGA

Yes. Ban corflutes for all levels of government elections.

Supportive of ECSA & LGA providing a state-wide approach to promoting elections, but some additional local messaging could assist in greater awareness and promotion of elections. Councils are more aware of how to reach their communities, and perhaps some different messaging needed to gain attention.

It is important that a candidate when nominating feels that he is on a level playing field as the other candidates, if he or she are to have a fair go at being elected, obviously this is not the case as some candidates have a financial advantage and run an expensive campaign with glossy newsletters and fancy fridge magnets, some constituents also point the finger at candidates because of their political affiliations, Labor or Liberal and are accused of being bank rolled by their Political Party.

It would be ideal if a standard of a level playing field as such is created, I think the Status Quo deters nominations.

As discussed in Topic 2 (Election Promotion), but with the additional comment that the cost of any additional promotion should not be borne by the individual Councils, simply because the 'outgoing' Councillors will have to determine the budget commitment and this would be a clear conflict of interest by those Councillors considering renomination

Councils should not have a stronger role in promoting elections locally to increase voter turnout, due to lack of resources. If compulsory election then this will be covered by ECSA

Refer earlier answers around promoting nomination process.

As long as councils maintain a non-biased approach in the promotion of elections there should be no risks. Council already promotes elections through its own resources to complement other promotional activities undertaken.

- No, It is up to the candidate to promote themselves
- No, Council's (i.e. local ratepayers) already make non-discretionary funding contributions to LGA/ECSA statewide promotion.
- Perception that Council has responsibility/control of the election process
- Potential for perception that administration is assisting sitting members that are running for re-election

Varying views have been expressed:

- Display of candidate corflutes creates awareness and a sense of anticipation in an election process.
- Ban all signs, otherwise it is about who has more money (particularly when an innovative but potentially more expensive alternative in place of the current plastic corflute prohibition)
- Signage rules should be the same as State & Federal elections, otherwise environmental arguments are somewhat redundant.
- Standardised rules applicable to all Council areas. Emphasis in legislation that "candidates" are responsible. Consistent oversight by ECSA as election/political advertising. Avoid "community" funding/resourcing toward dealing with queries and complaints relating to candidates campaigns. Rules relating to council election signs should be the same as for state and federal election signs

Position: Yes, in limited aspects

Any promotion by councils of the elections (beyond sharing the existing campaign prepared by LGA/ECSA) should be focused on targeting specific matters only relevant to their council area (eg. insufficient nominations in a ward).

If councils play a stronger role in promotion of elections, there is a risk that this would reduce education/awareness being managed consistently across councils. ECSA could increase more resources into areas with historic lower voter turnout

Position: Yes

Often the community are not aware of elections without election signs. There is no benefit to banning corflute election signs for only one level of government. While it would be beneficial to limit the number of signs, the practical enforcement of this by councils would be extremely challenging (noting the current legislative framework is already challenging enough to enforce).

Position: Yes

Without mandatory voting, often the community are not aware of elections without election signs. There is no benefit to banning corflute election signs for only one level of government

Position: Yes

This applies to not only election signs, but election material in general. The most common issue raised to councils about election material is where the information is potentially misleading. The time and cost to deal with the misleading material is cost prohibitive and too time intensive for ECSA to manage within the existing framework, to enable an effective outcome before voting is undertaken.

Whilst Council do not have a specific opinion on who should be responsible for this process, they believe that only one body should be responsible (ie ECSA, LGA or Councils) to minimise costs and prevent costs continually increasing without Councils able to prevent this creep.

We would add that feedback from some community members indicated confusion about the process and timelines, citing some promotional material not indicating the different stages in the process clearly enough and critical deadlines being missed.

More use of all forms of social media would reach more of the community

Councils should have a stronger role in promoting elections but not if there is no increased cost.

No, councils should not have a stronger role in promoting elections locally to increase voter turnout

There is no doubt that if councils were enabled to conduct promotion suited to their particular council area, this would increase engagement, as who better to understand and engage with their communities. However, this is also fraught with danger for staff, as a result of resourcing pressures (this is not councils core business, and elections must always be done on top of usual workloads without additional resourcing), and the sensitivity of content used to promote elections (councils must remain impartial, not supporting any particular candidate – these requirements are extremely stringent, complex, nuanced, and council staff are not necessarily trained in this are).

If this were to be an option for consideration, it needs to be optional and supported by ECSA / LGA via staff training and adaptable / standard templates and resources still provided.

Clarity around elections signs is desperately required. Councils found themselves in a situation where they were required to pass bylaw resolutions on the fly, mid-election and constantly changing laws, requirements and enforcement considerations.

Staff were left attempting to explain / enforce confusing and complex requirements to candidates and

supporters, who were understandably frustrated, particularly where the 'corflute' sign restrictions only apply to local government and State / Federal elections are not 'walking the talk' on environmental grounds

No, Councils, representing local ratepayers, already contribute non-discretionary funds to LGA/ECSA for statewide promotion. With compulsory voting, the necessity to allocate funds for election advertising would significantly diminish. Utilising council funds for political advertising is considered inappropriate

Rather the opposite: ECSA has a bigger role to play and councils should remain neutral in the process. There is a risk that Council could be seen to promote for a specific candidate profile.

Current legislative provisions be invoked so that the LGA is provided with the funds and the capacity to play the primary role in the promotion of local government elections

No – councils already contribute funding to ECSA and it would be unreasonable in the smaller / rural regions to expect rate payers to contribute more to promote elections. Councils should be seen to be independent and impartial around elections to avoid any allegations of misconduct or influencing the elections in any way

This is fundamental to Council's role to engage with its community.

Following the 2022 elections there was discussion in the sector about the promotional materials used to encourage people to vote not being reflective of local communities. Having promotional materials branded in the same style and format provides consistency and promotes recognition of the campaign across council borders.

An option may be for ECSA to provide "templates" for the various promotional and advertising activities – such as advertisements, social media posts, website content, brochures etc - so they have the same "look and feel" across the sector but allowing councils to tailor and customise them with their own council specific images and messages.

Some councils undertake mailouts at their own expense, writing to businesses and other non-resident ratepayers encouraging them to enrol to vote on the supplementary roll, in attempt to increase the numbers on the roll and subsequently increase voter participation. This involves significant staff resources to prepare and funding to cover the postage costs. Although only anecdotal, there are examples where this process has been undertaken by councils and it has not achieved any increase to the number of non-resident ratepayers applying to enrol on the supplementary role.

Should councils have a stronger role in promoting elections locally to increase voter turnout?

- Councils already play a large role in local promotion.
- Better coordination between ECSA and LGA campaigns and collateral would be beneficial.

No. There are numerous promotion measures currently implemented (e.g. media publications, social media, website, radio, SMS, posters).

There could be opportunity for additional council forums or information booths to provide information to the community

Councils should have a stronger role in promoting elections locally to increase voter turnout. The LGA advertising programs encouraging people to vote are bland and general. They have a strong emphasis on portraying cultural diversity but fail to tap into local concerns. Councils are in a better position to know what local community concerns are and to be able to spur some excitement among their electorates.

Perhaps the Electoral Commission or the State Government could provide funds to councils to do this promotion work, especially for country councils which have a low-income base

There should be more notice of candidate nominations as and when received and the election processes should be wholly left with the independent and impartial Electoral Commission of South Australia (ECSA) and its officers

Council already plays a strong role in promoting elections locally to increase voter turnout, as evidenced by recent strong voter return rates.

It is recommended that local government election sign requirements be made to match the Federal and State election sign requirements (to eliminate inconsistencies between them).

Given the elected body becomes the employer of a Council CEO – it would be inappropriate for CEOs to have a role in council elections.

It is important for the LGA/ECSA to retain responsibility for election promotion to avoid local bias/conflicts of interest

Topic 3: How can we achieve a better voter turnout?

- History/Qualifications/Current Employment (the last one mainly to see if there is a conflict of interest)
- Agenda/Policy ideas & views
- Whether they live or work in the area (ideally having both as separate check boxes)
- Why they have decided to run.

1. Clear stances on important issues, such as healthcare, education, the economy, and social justice and financial stability.
2. Information about a candidate's past performance, voting record and accomplishments helps me decide on their competence and effectiveness.
3. Candidates and campaigns that effectively engage me through meaningful dialogue, community outreach, and compelling messaging.
4. I believe in our democratic process, so I will always vote as I believe it is my civic duty. Also, the fact we have free voting and we do not need to be scared to cast our vote like in other countries

1. Engaging young people is crucial for the future of democracy. Councils can collaborate with schools and colleges to educate students about civic responsibilities and the voting process. Encouraging mock elections in educational institutions can also foster a culture of participation from a young age.
2. Foster partnerships with local community organisations, nonprofits, and businesses to promote voter registration and turnout. Hosting community events, forums, or candidate debates can generate interest and encourage voter participation.
3. Make use of digital platforms and social media to expand the reach to a wider audience. Create easily accessible online tools for voter registration, locating polling stations, and obtaining election-related information.
4. Actively seek feedback from residents on their voting experiences and barriers they may face. Ensure that the voting process is inclusive and addresses the needs of diverse communities, including minority

groups and non-English speaking residents.

5. Work together with the education sector to integrate civic education and democratic values into school curricula. By equipping young individuals with the necessary knowledge and abilities regarding citizenship and governance, we can encourage a lifelong dedication to actively engaging in democratic processes.

A Facebook page for candidates would be helpful

A larger allowance for candidates to be able to explain their reasons and qualifications for nomination.

A photo and brief bio is not enough to establish if a candidate is qualified to be elected to council.

a police check is viable but not public disclosure of results - may be necessary to be a candidate but do not publish a negative result if the person is therefor ein-eligible to nominat and be listed as a candidate.

Actually allowing people to vote would be a good start.

Actually receiving a voting slip for my council area would be a start.

Advertise Council Elections on their sites / community centres and more.

Advertise the election

Advertising it. Making it a priority and raising the importance of the election with the community.

Advise council staff to inform constituents correctly. We live in Adelaide metro but own a house in a small rural town that we visit regularly and are active in that community, volunteering at working bees etc, supporting that economy etc. When I asked why I was not receiving information for the council elections in the rural town, council advised I am ineligible to vote as I do not live permanently in the area, but this survey suggests otherwise. If I have read the survey wrong and that is actually correct and I do need to reside in the council area to vote, then I strongly suggest this be changed and allow any ratepayer to have a vote. If I am paying rates to a council, I should be entitled to have input into that area

Agree - but only if the council is funded for this

Too often we see councils being required by State Government to do more and more without being recompensed for it

All candidates information should be posted out by Council to the relevant wards and should be in a standardised format.

All candidates should have a National police check, but that is not made public but is private and confidential. If they do not produce a satisfactory NPC, then they are knocked out.

Allow for a bit more text in the candidate profile handout.

Allowing digital voting could see a big increase but it would have to be linked to MySAGov or something similar to ensure there was adequate ID checks.

As evident by the figures for voter turnout in the regions compared to metropolitan areas, this is about engagement and connection.

Though the paper appears to query the community connection cited by regional councils, voter turnout clearly supports that our communities are significantly more invested in their local government. We appreciate that this connection is difficult to replicate where elected members' and community members' paths do not cross as frequently.

As well as a basic bio, I'd like to know what values and views candidates have. Someone can use up their bio talking about all their charitable works but not reveal that their a raging libertarian, for example. I'd like to know what policy position candidates hold on key public policy matters and why. Asking them to complete such information would be instructive in itself and would likely eliminate people who are not suitable for the role. What discourages me from voting at the moment is that i'd have to interview all the candidates to get the information. I'd like to see a simple table of some sort, under each bio that covers key policy matters, where they sit on a scale and a note alongside to explain their position.

At each public Council meeting after about 1 hour into the meeting the floor should be opened to anyone in the public gallery to say something, without any prior notice. To do this they would speak from the main rostrum where anyone doing a Deputation speaks. No one should be denied the right to speak unless there is a unanimous vote from the Councillors.

Attendance voting is the way to drive people to vote.

Ban social media posts for candidates election, this domain is open to those with money Vs those who don't to run big campaigns.

Be clear about the role, mandate and remit of LGAs compared to other tiers of government. For many people it is confusing about who runs what services, and who is accountable for what

Become relevant to the ratepayers! 99% of ratepayers HATE their local councils with good reason. Its time our local government addressed this problem.

Being a current member of a political party reporting just means many lapse their membership before nomination, and resume it after election. Make them answer a range of relevant questions which give us a better view of their views, platform, experience, understanding of the role, etc...

Being able to hear from candidates direct and should have the ability for forums and other ways where they are tested about their views and intentions.

Being employed or a member discourages me from voting

Brief candidate profiles should be sent to every elector as is done in NZ local elections

But do not make it a sideshow/circus as we see in US County elections for everything from local DA and Sherrif to Mayor!!

Candidate pitches should be factual and neutral, listing policy positions and ideas, and listed on ECSA and/or council websites. Information provided to the community should be equal (e.g. quality of printed material).

Candidate profiles are essential. I always make an effort to participate in forums, meet-the-candidates events etc run by local media or other organisations, too. I'm not sure hosting such events needs to be a council or ECSA responsibility, though.

Candidate profiles are useful, as the stakes would be higher due to the inclusion of compulsory voting the candidates would need to appeal to a wider cohort of voters than a loud crowd or football club.

Candidate profiles should also be checked for authenticity - a lot of false claims are made by some candidates.

Candidates can have someone write a nice spiel for them, but you don't get a real sense of the person from a handful of words. Having videos of the candidates would be very beneficial for helping me decide who to vote for. I understand that some nominees may want to opt out of a video, and that's fine, but for those willing to do so it would be highly beneficial.

Candidates need to be transparent about any affiliation they have with a political party.

Candidates political party membership should not be included on their profile, I believe that this is irrelevant and can affect the way the public votes, I want a councillor elected for their ability to speak for their residents and not because he is a member of a certain political party.

Candidates should also be required to undertake national security screening

Candidates should disclose the area (post code) they reside and disclose any current or previous links to a political party, who that party is, inclusive if there partner was previous member of a political party and or they work for a mp or senator.

Candidates should live in the area
Political party membership should not be relevant

Candidates should present their detailed political agenda: people should not be voting just on the basis of their nice faces and how many kids they have.

Candidates should submit a CV/resume that if found to be false is prosecutable.

Candidates statements are too short. Sure no one wants to read a book, BUT I'd suggest doubling the word count!

Candidates to declare any political affiliations eg Party membership

Candidates with a proven record of community involvement in an array of sporting and service and other organisations in the community seem best placed to be a success as councillors.

Can't think of anything.

Carpet bombing the whole state with the same LGA campaign, creates white noise. Also the diversity campaign which was great was kind of redundant to our community which are 89% white

Community awareness, profile, What's in it for me

Community interaction.

Compulsory for all is the only way. Why bother trying to get people to vote anyway - if they're not engaged, bad luck. They get what others voted for and should not complain if they don't vote.

Compulsory for all residents living in an area longer than 12mths

Compulsory voting is the only way to dramatically lift voter turnout.

Compulsory voting!

Consistency of election platforms and methods.

Continue to promote candidacy and voting at a local, regional and state wide level.

Corflutes must be banned

Costs to council's should not increase as there are already so many cost pressures on councils.

Could use suggested newsletter above for candidates to make a 500 word presentation to the voters

Council Administration should have a role in this.

Council already has a strong commitment and program of promoting Council elections. It was difficult at the last election given there was two different campaigns from LGA and ECSA. These need to be consistent to reduce confusion

Council employees can be biased if they know the candidates. It should be an independent body who a neutral in the promoting of elections.

Council need to maintain a high level of communication across the board.

Council should facilitate electoral forums to introduce candidates to the electorate.

Council should have no role in this as they are somehow conflicted. They may have an interest in promoting less so less competing candidates nominate, giving more chances of success to incumbent candidates.

Council should not have oversight on promoting elections as it would allow already elected members to impact how elections are advertised and hence impact the outcome of those elections.

Council staff already have a huge influence in which projects are approved or declined. Our CEO provides briefings for councillors prior to meetings and provides them with preferred ways of voting. Any move that increases the power of council staff and their ability to spend rates on pet projects that benefit particular businesses, such as lift installers, toilet facility installers bicycle businesses, elite rubbish bin manufacturers should be avoided. (My council spent \$12,000 (twelve thousand dollars) on the installation of 2 bins - a dog waste bin and a recycle bin and \$32,000 (thirty two thousand dollars) on a picnic table and a dog waste bin in the local Park. A huge waste of money!

Councillors should be property owners within the Council area they nominate for

Councils already do a lot of local promotion of the elections but it would be cost-ineffective for every council to develop their own marketing campaigns and materials

Councils and electoral commission do enough

Councils are at the coal face and need to be actively involved.

Councils could provide skills assessments, as well as targeted training sessions.

Councils currently rely on LGA/ECSA promotion, and accept low turnout as something they have no control over. But participation in elections as candidates and as voters is an important part of civic life, and can have benefits for individual and community wellbeing. Local government therefore most certainly has a role in promoting, supporting, and building such participation. What can councils do? As the 'training ground for politics', many candidates in local elections are independents, with no prior exposure to political campaigning. They also often don't have significant resources to fund their own campaigns. As such, councils could hold 'meet your candidates' events; they could film and post campaign videos on the council site (perhaps using code to jumble the order of the videos randomly each visit); they could place candidate posters around the council area (this is important given the prohibition of posters on public land). The goal is to build awareness and momentum around the election among voters, and to enable them to get very good knowledge of the candidates' policy positions.

As noted, there may be an opportunity to host an in-person voting option at the main council office on election day, coinciding with an event that draws attention to the election, emphasising its importance, celebrating all participants, and at the same time offering some family fun.

Councils know their community better than the LGA - councils are likely better placed to engage their communities.

Councils should be doing everything in their power to promote council elections.

Councils to collaborate with LGA and EC to facilitate information sessions.

Creating opportunities for all candidates to meet with the community at once would be great. I previously tried to run a candidate Q & A/forum for a council youth group to encourage voting participation where we would invite all nominees and give them equal and fair opportunity to talk and answer questions, however, the Council did not think it was appropriate and provided no alternative during the entire election period besides LGA resources. Although these are great resources they do not provide any local connection and are of no interest to those who are already avoidant of political activities.

Critical information such as political party membership, community connection (eg membership of community organisations), qualifications, leadership attributes, experience. The candidate profiles should include specific questions (eg qualifications/experience, community engagement, etc) and the number of characters should be increased to allow for more information to be included. Perhaps even a video message in which the candidates can introduce themselves.

Delivering current & future issues into the election process and ensuring nominees explain where they stand on these issues. Ensuring all Nominees for Council use facts, evidence & science in their "sell" to the community.

Disband Council

Disclosure of interests and associated conflicts, party affiliations.

Don't think the individual councils should be involved in promoting voter turnout, maybe the electoral commission.

Each council should promote the plans for the future and say help make it happen

ECSA needs to ensure close connection with councils during the electoral cycle. Councils can assist by providing venues and hosting sessions for prospective candidates.

Educational qualifications

Election before last there were no candidates who made any statements about transport walking, cycling, public transport, rail, roads... nothing. Several candidates expressed nothing but indolence and indifference in their manifestos. It was impossible to vote for any of them in good conscience. There needs to be longer and more detailed manifestos as a condition of candidacy.

Elections should be run by the Electoral Commission. If voting is compulsory, increasing voter turnout won't be a problem.

Electronic media should also be used to promote Council elections.

electronic voting, younger people prefer using electronic means. Links from councils social media pages directly to an app etc, a job for others to design

Encourage prospective councilors to engage with electorate

encouraged by candidate education, employment/occupation history, Service (governance, emergency,.....,boy scout)

Discourages by life stories fluff

encouraging councils to promote the election allows for people to more directly notice which council they are actually voting in, which seems silly but people are not above forgetfulness or not knowing this. it isn't their fault

Engagement is a difficult issue. A large proportion of the community only take an interest if they are unhappy with the Council's performance. Apathy is a major challenge and not one that has a real solution.

Ensure council cannot vet or block community participation on social media pages. Presently, dissenters are blocked and banned from Council pages when a politically opposing mob controls those pages.

Ensure the candidate is specific on who and what they represent and what they plan to achieve

Feedback of our Councillors and our community on their experience with the Electoral Commission SA website during the 2022 periodic general election, has highlighted the need for comprehensive review and improvement of the site. Users find it difficult to navigate and information hard to locate. In the interest of transparency and appeal to future elected members, it is critical that associated systems like the ECSA website are well promoted, accessible and user friendly. It is also important that assistance with the site is at hand and responsive when difficulties are experienced.

From my experience and from previous Councillors from the ward that I represented I think you'd be unwise to stand for local government. The current system is stacked against smaller wards and, even

though I tried to change this impasse while on Council there's little reason for good candidates standing to represent their constituents unless you were prepared to "bang your head against the wall!".

Full and accurate disclosure by candidates is needed - including past membership of political parties

Generally, the last periodic local government elections were widely and consistently marketed in South Australia. Unfortunately, the selected marketing material lacked relevance and connection with genuine South Australian communities, felt by regional and rural communities disproportionately.

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Give people a greater say in their community to inspire them to get involved. At the moment too many people believe it's pointless to say anything when the Councils don't care or want to hear what they have to say.

I recommend that at each public Council meeting after about 1 hour into the meeting the floor should be opened to anyone in the public gallery to say something, without any prior notice. To do this they would speak from the main rostrum where anyone doing a Deputation speaks. No one should be denied the right to speak unless there is a unanimous vote from the Councillors.

This period of free speech could be limited to 30 minutes as a trial. Any member of the public should have to observe normal standards of decorum during this period including other people in the public gallery.

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Give people a greater say in their community.

People believe it's pointless to say anything when the Councils obviously don't care because they don't listen to what people have to say.

When the majority of people say "NO" to certain projects then they should NOT go ahead.

Grater efforts for nominated members to reach out with the community should be at the discretion of the nominated person. Each nominee may have a different approach and they should not all be locked in to the same system.

Have a more detailed standard template of information that would be useful to electors e.g. community involvement, business skills etc

Holdfast already spend a huge amount of rate payers money advertising the next election. That's not where I expect my rates to be spent.

Honestly, you don't get to go and see your local state candidates chatting to people or making virtue signalling statements so why should prospective councillors do it?

Hosting democracy sausage sizzles

I agree with the police check, I do not agree that all results to be shared. Just a simple note that the nominee has passed the PC.

I am also very much against anyone with a previous criminal history to be able to run for a seat. Seriously, these people are dealing with huge decisions and large amounts of money at a cost to rate payers, we cannot afford to have the wrong people in the seat.

I am aware that some Councillors discourage Councils from promoting elections. There should be rules to compel Councils to promote.

I am discouraged by anyone who is a member of a political party. I hate party politics interfering with local government.

I am discouraged if a candidate has kept secret their affiliations - especially with extreme groups

I appreciate that we live in a very diverse multicultural community however the LGA and Electoral Commission banners show a totally unrealistic cross section of virtually all rural communities. They might reflect suburban Councils but definitely not rural ones.

I believe voters should be aware if a nominated person is aligned with a particular party (ie Labor, Liberal, Green) I believe many Councillors are politicians either working their way up through the tiers or have been unable to get endorsed for another tier. I am also of the belief that this is why Councils sometimes exceed their brief; that they are frustrated in not being able to do more to push a particular cause that is really outside of the scope of Council.

I do not think Candidates should indicate what political party they support because I believe they are trying to gain an unfair advantage from other Candidates by leading voters to assume they have some more formal backing from the big parties.

I will not vote for anyone who declares they belong to a political party regardless of which party it is.

I believe it is essential that Candidates get more than just 1000 characters for their profile. It should be at least 3000 characters and there should not be any restrictions on what they can say, even if it criticizes the Council but providing it does not defame any individual.

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I don't believe candidates should be allowed to be a member of a political party to start with. It automatically skews voters one way or another. For many, like me, who can't be bothered with 'politics', it's a huge turn off to finding out more. Candidates should also be compelled to disclose any business interests they have, how many terms they've already served and even what committees they are on/have been on.

I feel that candidates are able to easily fabricate their profile, and it is too time consuming for the average resident to do further research.

I feel that the formation of factions in Councils is disgraceful. Candidates should vote in line with their conscience, not in line with a faction. Candidates should reveal if they are part of a faction e.g. Adelaide City Council

I feel they already have quite a strong role.

I generally do not support any information requirement for candidates, beyond what would also be required of parliamentarians.

I have always liked the idea of a curriculum vitae that matches the candidates' skills and experience to the requirements of the elected member role. For that you would need a job description for an elected member. May be this should be created.

I haven't seen any previous platforms of candidates and that is why I made the suggestions above about meet & greet evenings.

I like the neutral stance of the Electoral Commission.

I strongly agree that all candidates should have a National Police Check, however, i strongly disagree with having the results published. The results of the police check should be assessed prior to the candidates nomination being accepted.

I think a centralised promotional campaign is fair, I think that if profiles of elected members were incorporated into a campaign it'd be useful to work collaboratively on this.

I think a working with children check would be good also. If I have their email address I might send some questions.

I think candidates should do that, not councils

I think councils already have the ability to promote elections.

I think if a Mayor or councillor runs unopposed, then they should not be re-elected. They can stay in caretaker mode, but other candidates must be sought. This is a safeguard against corruption and political parties interfering in council elections by parachuting their people into seats.

I think it is important to know if candidates belong to, or have ever belonged to a political party.

I think promotion is the role of the LGA and Electoral Commission. Councils need to be very careful about the role they play in this process.

I think the candidate statements are too short. That's probably good for that specific scenario, but maybe somewhere where we can see longer statements on the internet perhaps?

I think the current system is not ideal, but it is better than everything that has gone before it. If it is to be replaced, then it should be carefully considered.

I think the number of terms in Council should be specified

I try very hard to learn about my local candidates however having one or two opportunities to hear them present for 5 minutes isn't very accessible for me as I work and have young children. I find the information available on the EC website and voting pack is very limited and doesn't give me a good picture of the candidate. I'm then left trying to stroll through their social media accounts to try and find any useful information about them. I'd really like a full profile on each candidate available on the EC website and references from 2 or so representatives from the local community they work or volunteer with.

I understand some candidates can have very tenuous link to an area and still be eligible to run for Council, like very small part ownership of property. I think this should be tightened up as these people are not necessarily representing the local community.

I vote because it is important. Many friends in my council area do not vote, stating "what's the point?". They are toothless tigers, which I agree with the sentiment. Give Councillors the tools to deal with Council issues and help Ratepayers when asked, that will see some more engagement.

I vote for the candidate that 'doorknocks' and talks to me!

I want a candidate to be well educated with no biases in terms of affiliations with cultural or religious groups

I want to know that I am voting for a conservative.

I would be more inclined to vote for a candidate from my community.

I would like to know what political party a candidate votes for. Many candidates lie and say they have no political affiliations, but they would vote for someone. Voting preferences need to be published at voting time as this is critical info about a candidate's viewpoints that a voter has the right to know. To say that local council is not political is nonsense and this information must be transparent in order to have diverse views represented.

i would like to see those nominating for council develop one clear idea /policy/strategy/goal that they intend to pursue during their period in office - rather than just a biographical description of their qualifications for example

If council nominees need to provide a police check then so should the politicians

If councils are expected to further promote elections/voting, this would need to be clearly regulated so that councils remain impartial. Also need to consider who funds this - local councils already spend a lot on elections. If voting is made compulsory councils shouldn't need to do this.

If Local Councils had a stronger role, it would demonstrate the connection with the community and identify specific areas they wish to focus on.

There could still be a centrally funded and coordinated election campaign, complemented by local strategies and activities.

If not compulsory voting, then council could list and promote candidate profiles and pitches.

if they belong or previously belong to a political party

In areas of no public transport, transport services should be made available.

In our council we had nominees running who were real estate agents - which is fine but I think that is a vested interest when it comes to council and should be disclosed. So perhaps the occupations if they have one should be disclosed so can people can get an idea of why they might be interested.

In the past I didn't vote as I didn't know candidates well enough to choose one over another. I now have more knowledge of local candidates and a bigger interest but i think that first reason would be valid for many

Including registration cut offs, they should send the application forms to every resident, so every resident can vote. The application for voting can be done online as well. In our council most people have a holiday house in our community and they never know to register.

Increase accountability and reduce apathy

Increasing the size of the Bio.

Incumbent councillors who are re-nominating have a vested interest in minimising competition. I believe the ECSA should take a stronger lead in managing council elections.

Independently prepared profiles.

information about the candidate that shows that they are not completely crazy would be appreciated

Information at shopping centres is needed not core flutes in streets

Information sessions and advertising should be more tailored to local circumstances.

Information should be provided on how councillors have voted on particular council issues & perhaps what issues they have officially raised in their capacity as a councillor

Information that is useful is what organisations they are affiliated with, not just political parties.

Introducing compulsory voting will increase voter turnout! However this also means party political promotion too.

It is not necessary to have higher rates. Those engaged will vote and do it as an educated voter, which is the best type.

It is surprising publishing the results of a national police check are proposed here, does the same requirement exist for state and federal candidates?

It is up to candidates to determine what information they should provide, and it ought be up to the press to find out other information and interrogate candidates on behalf of the community. Consideration should be given to public funding of election coverage by media outlets to facilitate this role in an impoverished media sector.

It should be an independent body who promotes the elections. That way elected officials can't influence the election process.

It should up to a prospective candidate to do the work.

it would be good to give them a rating based on screened credentials so that people can see if the person is well suited or just another numpty

It's impossible to choose candidates from the paragraph on the papers ... they all say the same thing and they all sound like good candidates. Need to be able to provide a way to get the nuance of who they are and how they present themselves - a short, candid, unscripted video that we could watch would be a good start.

I've always voted, but often felt that there was not enough information about the candidates so I don't use the preference system. I just pick the 2 candidates I think are the best. (2 seats in my ward).

Just need more information than we currently get.

Knowing the history of how they have voted on important topics.

Knowing what they stand for and what they believe are important issues in the community

What their background is

What they plan to pursue over their term.

Let councils do it not the LGA

LGA and ECSA promotion is important, but every Council area has its unique points and tailored/targeted campaigns would be more relevant and create more impact with local communities.

Life skills, education, work life

Local Councils could do more

Local Councils generally know the best ways to reach their community and sometimes they aren't in the mainstream. Enabling local councils to help design their community promotions should go hand-in-hand with the more general, one-size-fits-all state-based promotions.

local elections should be on local issues. Local promotion can or should be about local issues

Local government should be abolished and if not, councils should be amalgamated eg Eyre Peninsula should be one council. Some rural councils have less than 3000 or so people but about 50 or more "staff", most of whom are on over \$80K.

Local media coverage of candidates is useful.

Make it compulsory

Make it compulsory to vote

Make it fun

Run it with community events

Make online voting a thing if you want to, or mailing your vote in. As above I don't receive Voting slips in the mail due to the fact my post box is in a different council area than where I live.

Make voting compulsory

Make voting in local government elections compulsory. Low turnout issue is solved.

Making it compulsory will increase it! People hate the threat of a fine.

Mandatory voting

Many candidates are local busy-bodies or in some cases insane conspiracy theorists who make a mockery of the system.

Considerable vetting criteria needs to be put in place before people can be put forward for election. People do not have time to do this for themselves.

meet and greet

BBQ

More community presentations

More detailed information on candidates is needed. At the moment it is usually written by the candidate and on some occasions is very minimal and gives very little information about the person's business, educational and community involvement which is insufficient to make a decision.

More factual media coverage

More in-depth information regarding their political stances.

More information the better.

More messaging earlier

Most candidate statements are fairly useless and generic but as the adage says, If you think you can do better you should throw your own hat in the ring.

My council is fraught with alleged favouritism to certain councillors. I wouldn't trust them to democratically and fairly promote an election, as they would probably find a way to serve the interest of the current sitting council and those members who have been on council for 10+ years (and want to stay for another 10+ years).

My Ward has not had an election in the last 8 years as there has only been one candidate.

National police check is a great idea but should be only available to council officials so they know that they can be at events and safe to do so

National Police Checks are a very personal detail. Would we expect CEO's of our companies to have this publicly declared?

National Policy Checks should play a role in qualification to stand and don't need to be made public

Need more info on candidate profile.

Maybe a list of responses to a standard set of questions.

Need to encourage voting by promoting on social media.

No corflutes!

Use the Council's modes of communication to circulate messages from the LGA and EC.

No appetite for additional headcount or costs to ratepayers for this.

Nominee/ Candidates need to be held accountable and scrutinised more before the elections. Methods and processes mentioned above should be used and compulsory for candidates to attend.

Not all info is truthful on brochure. But you only know that if you know your candidates well.

on a voluntary election a bland generic campaign is no encouragement for voters to cast a ballot. Each phase of the process has a different focus from enrolment, nomination and election so trying to put them all together doesn't motivate anyone to get involved, other than inform them it is on.

open mic - at each public council meeting - like genuine speaker's corner - all welcome.

Opportunities for candidates to share their background should be flexible. CoM set the date for only one session of meet the candidates per ward, and if a candidate was busy on that date, then they missed out and looked uncommitted to residents.

Personal attributes, supporting documentation from residents, community groups, sporting, their involvement with clubs and track record with them. As much information as possible.

place of residence, type of work, experience,

Please remove their preference of political party - that should not matter. Also it looks like you have to be in a political party to be a councillor.

Police checks should determine if your nomination is successful and it should not be public due to privacy reasons.

Political affiliation, employment with MPs or other political bodies. I would also like to see genuine information on what their platforms are, there has been a lot of misinformation creeping into the process.

Political bias .. this puts me off when candidates expouse thier national and international political views.

Political leanings or members.

Political party affiliation, definitely (that's already in, though).

Postal information to every resident. No street advertising banners, they make our country look politically messy and are a distraction to drivers.

Professional background particularly commercial experience. This is relevant due to the ever-increasing professional nature of the work partically development and understanding of budgets.

Promotion is the key to increasing council nominees. Increase the budget (take it from the hugely overpaid CEO's) and promote via post, press, radio, TV, socials

Q&A proforma for candidate completion and sharing with community online/in local person/Council website etc

Regional councils generally have better voter turn-out.

Regular reports of voter turnout if postal? But if it's in-person voting, then it's less impacted.

Removal of political affiliations

Retain requirement for members to include information on political party membership.

If a candidate is an employee of State , Federal or member of parliament, then that should be disclosed.

send out the two notifications suggested above. That way are not inundated with the many flyers which put you off the candidates

should have a National Police Check Yess, made public No

Currently AGE would be usefully, Health so they don't just drop out through their term

Showing Councillor profiles on the Council website.

Social media posts from our local council encouraging voters to complete their postal vote would increase participation.

Some candidate sessions are poorly run. They don't manage bad behaviour and some candidates feel intimidated and bullied. This is a disincentive to running for Council

Some candidates seem to let their political party membership lapse leading up to an election so that they can claim to not be members. The relevant question should be about political party membership within the last 4 years, rather than just current membership.

Some people don't watch the news or have social media etc.
More awareness of how to vote and when by may be useful

Some people like a lot of information and research to make an informed decision - others can find this overwhelming and that it makes it harder to decide or they don't have interest in reading additional material. The candidate profile information is a good base and a great equaliser as every candidate gets the same and it is right there at the time of voting. Many candidates will find their own ways to communicate with residents too outside this. There can be too much (spam) and also too little.

Some voters failed to receive voting papers, and after the Commission was alerted, they still did not receive them, so clearly there can be a major problem with the purely postal method and it needs to be changed.

Statements need to be factual and not promises that can't be kept! Some candidates lie about what they will do!

That they present actual policy proposals and talk on issues that are less nebulous than "family" and "getting rates down". concrete details of their ideas will make it easier to know what they are going for

The 2022 election saw corflute posters banned. I have no issues with this but do note the significant hypocrisy between Council elections compared with State and Federal where they are still allowed.

One of the side effects of this though, is just how few people were actually aware that a Council election was on in the first place. Councils clearly have roadside banners but not a lot of them.

My ward, had the highest turnout in metropolitan Adelaide in 2018 and the second highest in 2022. I strongly believe that this was due to the door knocking undertaken by the candidates. People will not vote if they do not know why they are voting for.

The AEC does its work better, more professionally, so keep it as it is.

The candidate information pack is basic at best. The word limit is restrictive and provides incredibly little opportunity to provide meaningful information to residents or invite further engagement from them. While ECSA does fact-check to some extent their content, people can write whatever they think will get them elected.

I would support increasing the size of the information provided. Particularly for those with limited financial means for self-promotion, this booklet is especially important.

the candidate profile is critical, sometimes its the only thing you have to go on.

The candidate profile is very limited and does not allow the candidate to provide sufficient information about themselves and their approach to council. This needs review so that voters can be better informed through this official channel.

The candidates have hidden their true agendas. Council needs to stick to local government business.

The Central campaign should be augmented with local campaigns that allow individuals councils to utilise their local knowledge to appeal to local people. The whole point of local government is that locals know

their own communities best. This should be funded separately and at arms length from elected members to prevent interference and perverse incentives.

The centralised approach is a good idea. However, councils do have a role in informing residents and ratepayers on what is happening in the council area (I have commented on this earlier) and this applies to council elections as much as it does to every other aspect of council business. This should occur as information provision as part of councils' regular and frequent communication. But in reality, the only way to increase voter turnout is by making voting compulsory.

The community tends to do this already in my experience.

The dodgy, small black and white candidate photos on the LGA candidate forms are not that interesting. Suggest colour photos. Make the voter packs more interesting, engaging and relevant.

I don't think it's fair to include police checks publicly in nomination information. Could be like a job application process where you submit your police check confidentially and are ruled out by the LGA confidentially if you don't meet certain criteria (e.g. outstanding serious police matters) before you can progress any further with your nomination. But this would probably not affect voter turnout.

The ECSA doesn't do enough to check the validity of what candidates declare.

The electoral commission or LGA should provide an online platform for all candidates to provide more details, photos, etc.

The Electoral

commission took on a bigger role in the last election and thus increased costs to Councils who could have done the same if not better. Have you received and reviewed the Electoral commissions role in creating the problems you are trying to fix via LG????

The Governance team at my council avoid doing anything that might be perceived by the AEC as incorrect, so in recent elections there has been a huge missed opportunity for council to promote the election in innovative ways. For example, if councils were allowed to video candidates (that choose to do so) and post their election pitch online via social media this would have much better reach. Our council has tens of thousands of followers on their corporate, libraries and youth social media accounts. Imagine the reach that is possible if councils were allowed to do more innovative and interesting promotion at election time!

The inclusion of party membership information will one day result in political parties taking part in these elections to protect their brand from random crazies who join their party and damage their brand in running for council.

The LGA campaigns have been spectacularly drab. Council should not be involved in encouraging people to vote - it is too easy for some to slip into encouraging a cohort to vote instead.

The LGA run much better campaigns than ECSA. The State Government should fund the LGA to run bigger campaigns.

The Local Government Association and Electoral Commissioner should continue to run a centralized promotional campaign. If a council wishes to do more promotion in its area then it should be able to.

The major responsibility should rest with ECSA and LGA but ECSA must have a more accessible website with Easy Read links on the front page. Also some updated educational resources.

The message needs to be area and demographics specific.

The more I know, the more I will be engaged in the process and have confidence in it.

The more info the better. A paragraph in the ballot pack is useful, but doesn't give you enough of a sense of the person.

The more promotion the better.

The most effective means to increase voter turnout is to engage with the community and communicate the importance of "having a say".

The party affiliation was a good initiative although it needs to be have you ever been a member of a political party. I know of a member who resigned for his 20 year membership of a party just over a year before the 2022 election because he knew of the requirement as thought it might put some voters off (although he is the epitome of that side of politics)

The political party should be removed. I understand the idea is probably so people know who they are 'with'. But all it will do long term is create a party political nature within Councils and our Councils have traditionally been non-aligned.

People's criminal history will come out of the woodworks if relevant. The reality is that this positions means greater spotlight and so these things would discourage people with an embarrassing criminal history anyway. We need to also understand people can rehabilitate and that is the point of a prison sentence etc. and this shouldn't hang over people's heads forever.

The profile information in the last election did not include open and true value statements that were inclusive. So a lot of work needs to be done on the quality and truth of those statements. If a person is anti-science, or does not believe in climate science, or believes men have power over women's bodies, then a simple statement of belief system is very important for upholding transparency in a democracy

The profile is not enough to make an informed decision. A suggestion is that a candidate provide two profiles. One for the ballot material and the other to be published on websites and printed if required. At least this provides an opportunity for people to obtain more information.

The profile is not enough to make an informed decision. A suggestion is that a candidate provide two profiles. One for the ballot material and the other to be published on websites (Council and ECSA) and printed if required. At least this provides an opportunity for people to obtain more information

The profiles can be a bit short at times so a link for further information would be good if the candidate wishes to offer more information.

Time spent in the council area, an idea of the regions issues and what a candidate plans to offer is what I mainly look for.

The profiles, in many instances, are of very little value as they are just a list of what the candidate has done or what organisations and committees they have been involved with.

Candidates should have to provide a summary of why they are standing and what they hope to achieve.

Then I as a voter can make a decision of whom to vote for based upon the ideas and policies of the candidate. I did this successfully for 6 elections.

Their education and experience profile is essential.

Their name, previous work history, previous electoral history if any, main policies / vision if elected, history of any major achievement for the community in question.

There may be a concern when an existing candidate would like to sing their qualities and achievements out loud - but are restricted by the caretaker provisions. new candidates don't have this restriction. Somehow there should be an allowance for release from caretaker provisions for continuing elected members who are seeking re election.

There needs to be a live streamed debate for each Council. It should include local hot topics and each candidate has a chance to introduce themselves, talk about their platform, and then they are asked to answer questions at random to see the varying views.

There needs to be a separation between council and elections.

There needs to be more flexibility in the candidate statement - it is too short, and some statements cannot be made. Since becoming an Elected Member, I now realise that some of my claims that I proposed to implement were just fluff! One person cannot make change, it is the majority of the Council. Many voters do not realise this. I have seen many people be elected on the basis that they will lower council rates. In my own district, a Mayor was elected on many promises, however the community did not even realise the Mayor does not even have a vote unless it is a tied vote. I am also aware of the view that running for Council is seen as a political stepping stone and this often isn't supported in the community.

There needs to be more rigour and some standardised questions for candidates manifestos. These need to include questions some candidates avoid. How long they have lived in the area, are they affiliated with a party, etc.

They can do more. They are reluctant however I believe they have a role

They should be required to provide evidence that they are a fit and proper person to hold office.

They should offer information sessions to potential candidates and advertise locally that elections are running but don't know what more they can do ?

They should run local campaigns. They already have channels to engage local community and this should be used in a campaign targeting locals.

Too few candidates bothered to attend public meetings or even campaign yet still got elected through faction group vote preferencing.

Transparency of political affiliations

Travel around, talk to the community, talk to council volunteers,

So potential people get a better idea if the skills transfer to councillor.

Try doing your job properly then we might want to vote for you.

U dont get 2 run in a ward if you live in another. OPEN TRANSPARENCY by ALL that want 2 represent us, more face to face, No criminals, no police records, No mates, no popularity contests & definate no AFFILTION with major Federal & State Political Groups. Local Govt should not be used as a stepping stone to increase your profile or political ambitions

Understanding individual motivations and agendas is important, so voters know if the candidate has a particular passion project or issue they want to pursue.

Unfair for small councils to fund. And who would make the decision to do so; the Elected Members who are planning to run again wont want it. The poor CEOs who choose to spend money on this will cop the wraith of the new Council, particularly if not much change occurs, as they will be accused of trying to influence the result.

Unfortunately candidates will say what they think will get them elected. Truth in advertising should be an important factor in any campaign.

Candidates should provide a platform of issues they would support or oppose.

Unley Council already does enough. More is just more cost with questionable outcomes.

Use existing council networks and activities to promote voting eg library activities, youth leadership activities, etc

Use the centralised material, but be allowed to taylor it to specific issues in a council area to hook in to what people are aware of and how it is directly related to local government decision making.

voter lottery with prizes for rates reduction, free use of council facilities eg pool, gym

Voters need to be encouraged to do their homework. ATM candidates provide contact information and candidate information. Too much emphasis in on line Q& A's may put new and inexperienced candidates at a disadvantage. Face to face campaigning is the most successful form of campaigning and whilst this approach takes time it goes to the value of wards and a limited resident base. People who are time poor will prefer the other 'get to know your candidate' methods however are time poor Candidates a precursor to time poor Councillors???

Voting history made transparent. History of abusive and threatening behaviours towards community members made public.

We do heaps as it is

We in Holdfast Bay do have such meetings however are generally poorly attended.

We would like to see more/improved promotion but believe this should be centrally coordinated by ECSA and the LGA

There is a risk that by taking on a promotional role for elections, Councils will be perceived as having a bias for the existing elected Council. This would be problematic and may erode trust in the elections. Smaller Councils do not have the resources for large scale promotion so a decentralised model will likely result in lower voter turnout.

What discourages me now is the small and ineffective and inefficient nature of my council - Holdfast Bay. Quite useless and only 37000 residents. So ineffective and wasteful. Merge them. Look at Qld with bigger and more effective councils.

When a candidate fails to provide information or photographs in the ballot it can highlight a lack of commitment to the role by the candidate. Word of mouth can be beneficial when a candidate is not known to myself and social media is a must in today's society.

When I first nominated in 2018, the Council was not very encouraging and seemed more concerned with being impartial and not seen to be influencing people to nominate. 2022 it was slightly better, but not much. Councils know their communities better than the LGA or the Electoral Commissioner, so should be able to run their own campaigns with their own budget. Again - if Councils and Councillors had a better name/reputation, I believe more people would be willing to step up. As a diligent Councillor from a well-run Council, it really upsets me to see how the media, commentators, etc refer to Elected Members. Yes, there are some dodgy ones out there (as there are in all levels of government) but not all of us are.

Which political party they belong to, if any. Where they stand on several issues.

Whilst councils could encourage its citizens to vote, it has to be careful not to be construed as issuing messages about the candidates or existing members. Ideally promoting an election should be done by ECSA or another peak body.

WHOSE PAYING! FOR IT!

With social media so strong these days Councils can advertise without having to spend huge amounts of money - get creative.

Work experience / background / skills / qualifications

Board experience

AICD qualification

You have to be interested to find out about this. Mostly people dislike the council and feel they are forced to pay rates for small services, the whole council model is flawed and needs significant overhaul.

Creating a less confusing system, where all representatives can vote in one election may increase voter turnout. It may also improve resourcing / cost of elections, and improve prospects of filling vacancies in regional councils. However, there is no guarantee. Councils with Wards should be able to make an informed policy decision to hold casual vacancies.

One thought could be to offer a \$50 reduction in council rates for the people who actually vote

Increasing voter turnout would benefit from:

1. Compulsory Voting
2. Advertising Voting
3. Potential Online Voting

Young people of voting age are less likely to participate in local government elections primarily as they are less likely to be enrolled to vote. Local governments are well placed to support young people's participation in elections through improved engagement in civics processes at a local government level. Recognising that while young people are less likely to vote, they are as politically engaged as previous

generations but prefer to engage through alternative formats and/or channels, is vital to improving engagement in voting^{xvii}. The barriers young people face to participating in elections and the greater political landscape are primarily the result of inequality.

Lack of participation in elections is often blamed on young people having a lack of interest or understanding of politics, however, it is more likely disengagement can be at least somewhat attributed to an increasing lack of trust in political systems and government decision-making among young people^{xix}. International evidence indicates that lower voter turnout among young people is not due to a lack of interest in voting and the majority of young people share a willingness to participate in voting. Evidence also demonstrates that young people are generally supportive of increasing the period of time available to submit votes and are supportive of developing various voting methods like electronic or online methods

Topic 3: Make voting for councils compulsory

(3.1)

- Difficult question but I think it should be considered.
- Yes.
- No, leads to donkey and 'ballot order' voting
- More people will take the election seriously and be better engaged in the process and give more thought to the outcomes.
- None, it will work like State/Federal elections.

1. Compulsory voting means a higher voter turnout rate compared to voluntary voting systems. This can lead to a more representative and inclusive democratic process as a broader cross-section of the population is engaged in the electoral process.
2. Compulsory voting may contribute to enhanced political legitimacy and mandate for elected representatives, as they are chosen by a more comprehensive representation of the electorate.
4. Compulsory voting can help mitigate voter apathy and disengagement by emphasizing the civic duty and responsibility of citizens to participate in the democratic process.
5. Compulsory voting can help balance the political influence of various demographic groups, as it encourages participation across different age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, and political affiliations.
6. Local Government is considered to be the government closest to the people, so all eligible voters should have a say. This would make people think about their local issue and what issues that matter to them.

1. the people you are voting for are largely unknown, so why get people who don't do any research to vote- it will only encourage donkey and informal votes
2. if you want people involved, why not let ratepayers vote on line for major decisions
3. I think making voting compulsory, i.e. a fine if you don't vote, might be poitcially unpalatable at the next state election. Especially when we can't get the State Govt (Labour or Liberal) to accept a toll road bypass for trucks to dramatically improve teh SE Freeway, even though I understand many/most would support that as we get a bypass and regular drives are still protected from being on a toll road

A much needed change, however postal voting is foreign to young generations who have used only technology to communicate.

Absolutely apposed to all forms of compulsory voting

Absolutely strongly disagree with compulsory voting. SA has voluntary voting, but in many Councils there is undue influence by State Political parties who bankroll their employees and affiliates to gain seats in Local Government.

Against

Align state and local government elections its just two extra pieces of paper and will avoid elected members standing down to contest state seats

All electors must vote.

All property owners should be compelled to vote in the Council election. Absentee property & business owners - commercial or residential - should be made to vote as the decision of the Council directly impacts them in the same way as residents. We recently had a situation where the building I work in was sold to an Adelaide-based commercial property developer. They immediately tried to double the rent. All 8 tenants, 3 of whom had been there for more than 10 years, signed a letter to the new owner telling them they would not renew their rental agreement if there wasn't at least a meeting about it. The new owner came to town and a deal was struck. The new owner claimed they had no idea there was a 30% vacancy rate in the town, didn't really know anything about the tenants businesses or the wider community. Being forced to vote in elections would at least give these owners a basic understanding of the community they are working in, rather than just taking profits from smaller communities and giving nothing back.

ALL property owners should get a vote

All ratepayers should be entitled to vote. Currently there is a House of Assembly Roll and a non-resident ratepayer roll. Ratepayers on the non-resident ratepayer roll are required to re-enroll at the commencement of each electoral cycle to get back on the roll. This is ridiculous. In my Council there are approx. 50% of the ratepayer base who are non resident ratepayers. These residents are disadvantaged and the current system of re-enrolling is cumbersome and bureaucratic. All ratepayers should be included on one roll and be entitled to vote.

All renters contribute to landlords peoperties they have the right 2 vote, but dont know that they do, more openness to renters rights, may also bring forth more applications for council.

All residents should have compulsory voting as this might encourage the community to engage with the Council more and understand what they do and why they do it

All residents/ business owners of a council area should be able to vote and I agree with compulsory voting

All spheres of Govt should be the same.

Although people will argue that a democratic right to vote includes not being forced to vote, I don't think that argument holds water nor does it represent what democracy actually means. Perhaps more education of the public as to their responsibilities as members of a democracy would be worth pursuing?

always compulsory voting is better

this way should reduce people criticising unfairly - ie. you get what you voted for, the end

Always good

Any residents who live in the area for more than 6 months, ratepayers for at least six months but not business occupiers who do not pay council rates and Australians citizens must be voted or \$50 fines to be imposed.

As councils are only legislated via the local government act and not part of the actual federated government (Federal and State) it should not be mandatory.

Australia has compulsory voting. That is a fact of life. Local Council elections should be no different. I can't accept there would be community push back about compulsory voting in local government elections.

Australians are an apathetic lot, and only do things when they have too. Compulsory voting should be mandatory.

Both council and state elections should be run at the same time. This would see cost efficiencies gain in the running of elections, bit also reduce election burn out. It would also reduce the ability of major political parties to run candidates who dont make it at the state level in the next council elections.

Businesses should not receive a vote.

Combine local government and State elections - four instead of two voting papers. It will bump up the voting percentage and reduce overall costs.

Community are very vocal about local government services, rates and assets. Rates are a significant investment from property owners. It makes sense to me that people need to be involved in decision making through voting or similar that affects them the most.

Community members have the opportunity to vote now and compulsory voting will not improve candidates.

Compelling people to vote is morally wrong.

Also, when people who otherwise don't care are forced to vote, they vote at random or for the first candidate on a list, thus dilute and make fun of democracy.

Compulsory voting will only attract the Donkey votes

Compulsory for 18+, optional for 17s.

Compulsory for all.

Compulsory unless in jail or in hospital

Compulsory voting brings the strongest yet ability to clear the board and encourage stronger community engagement

Compulsory voting does mean a degree of 'ownership' of elected Councillor and the decisions made by Councillors.

Compulsory voting does not ensure that quality candidates get elected. People who choose to vote in Council elections are interested in their community and want the right candidates to get elected to ensure proper governance on their behalf.

compulsory voting enables the majority of people get councillors that are more representative of the whole community not just sectional interests. It could also encourage a greater variety of people to stand, rather than candidates that represent often more extreme or well organised groups being successful.

Compulsory voting for council elections is guaranteed to result in a politicising of the whole process. This is the last thing we need ie moving from electing people with a genuine community interest to electing those with a vested political interest.

Compulsory voting for registered elector - Councils spend a lot of money on sending our election ballot papers and only 30% of people voting is not a good outcome - they more people vote the better candidate who have done the hard work to engage with people will be elected.

Compulsory voting has been shown to positively effect results in terms of more diversity of candidates and elected members.

To ensure people are more aware of the elections and to get a better cross section of the public we have to make these elections compulsory.

Compulsory voting in local elections is not supported.

Compulsory voting is an important part of our democratic system and should be carried over to Council elections.

Compulsory voting is anti-democratic and actually impossible to enforce due to a secret ballot; it is only possible to have compulsory attendance and name marked off the roll.

Compulsory voting is distinctly a Australian tradition (in the Anglophone world). Looking at other Anglophone countries, it's clear that compulsory voting adds a vitality and dynamism to our democracy and encourages candidates who have broad support across the community. Non-compulsory voting tends to encourage people who narrowly target a small group of highly motivated voters and vested interests. As such, introducing compulsory voting for residents would be a great boost to the health and vitality of democracy at the local government level.

Compulsory voting is essential. Most states and territories have it for councils and I believe that it would greatly enhance local democracy and engagement.

Compulsory voting is important to ensure engagement.

Compulsory voting is likely to produce a fairer outcome

Compulsory voting is not democracy. People don't vote because they see no value in Councils. Councils no longer serve the community, they have become big business that are now Incorporated and have ABN's, all illegal as far as the Australian Constitution is concerned, ratified at the 1988 Federal Referendum.

Compulsory voting is not needed in rural areas as it has an already high percentage

It's in our Adelaide Regions were its a poor percipient percentage

If we had a compulsory referendum on abolishing Local Government I'm quite confident the City vote would have an absolute majority in favour, were the country vote might give continued support.

Compulsory voting is not the answer

Compulsory voting is required at state and federal elections, not being mandatory at a local level creates a sense of non-importance compared to the other levels of governance.

Compulsory voting might reduce the number of unsuitable candidates

Compulsory voting prevents Councillors from carving out a small portion of their community which they use to win election after elections without being accountable to the entire electorate. The kind of stale elected members who I think the white paper suggests should move on through term limits would be better dealt with by the introduction of compulsory voting. I think term limits are the wrong idea and detract from democracy while compulsory voting reinforces the democratic principles and reiterates the importance of active citizenship as an Australian and democratic value.

Compulsory voting runs the risk of attracting political parties and hacks to local government in increased numbers. This overlay and the ideologies and party machines attached to it is highly undesirable and would work against increasing community engagement.

Compulsory voting should be completed in conjunction with state election..reduce time wasting e c ost

Compulsory voting should be introduced for people who own/mortgage property / businesses within the Council boundaries. Current renting provisions make the electoral proces short.

Compulsory voting the same as State and Federal elections.

Compulsory voting will lead to a better quality of councillor, as there will be more attention and scrutiny of the claims of candidates.

Compulsory voting will turn Council elections into party-controlled elections as independents will find it increasingly difficult to garner votes and promote themselves against the party-supported candidates.

Compulsory voting works wonders in the eastern states, no reason why it wouldn't work here

compulsory voting would be good - if you want to be able to winge then the least you can do is show some interest.

Compulsory voting would be hard to enforce without penalties, but penalties would be a bit harsh, wouldn't they?

Compulsory voting would fool councillors into thinking they have some sort of mandate, this should be avoided.

Compulsory voting would make local government more relevant and more responsive to the community. It would also make participation in local government more relevant to those who are interested in serving on a council. Compulsory voting is far better for democracy.

Compulsory voting would mean the Electoral Commission would have to advertise the upcoming elections and educate the community on Council elections. Community engagement would rise which would be good.

Compulsory voting would result in many people voting who don't know anything about any of the candidates or what local council does. Better to leave voting to those who are actually somewhat engaged and informed.

Could potentially increase politicisation of elections. Could be an individual choice of councils.

council provides services to the community that they live in - library's , community centers, parks and events as such generally at no cost to the community, also it's the only thing that gets asked to do is to vote, basically if you don't vote then don't go to these places or events not even to read a book, it's not hard to do 1 thing for the things that council provide

Council voting should be consistent with State and Federal voting and be compulsory particularly as South Australia is now one of only two states that have maintained voluntary voting in council elections, along with Western Australia.

Voting could be compulsory for electors on the residential roll, using the postal voting system with telephone voting to assist vision-impaired voters, and/or voters who are overseas or interstate and may not otherwise be able to return a vote in time.

However making it compulsory may run the risk of the larger political parties becoming more interested in ensuring representation in local government.

Council voting should be consistent with State and Federal voting and be compulsory particularly as South Australia Voting should be compulsory for electors on the residential roll, using the postal voting system with telephone voting to assist vision-impaired voters, and/or voters who are overseas or interstate and may not otherwise be able to return a vote in time.

Council voting was compulsory in Victoria in the 80's! Compulsory voting is the only way the community can truly have their say.

Currently non compulsory voting is providing the Minister with real life feedback that ratepayers don't have any interest in their councillors. The main reasons, or some of the main ones, is that once elected we never hear from them, they are seen to represent the interests of council and not the resident (witness the secrecy around Prospect council buying a caryard for \$9M against internal and independant advice). The real sign of success would be increasing the turnout without making it compulsory because that would show that there is more credibility in the role and a real performance improvement in councils.

Definitely compulsory

Definitely not compulsory voting for councils.

Definitely should not be compulsory as people will vote with no knowledge (as per federal and state elections)

Disband Council

Discriminating between residents and business is a dangerous proposition. Business and property owners contribute to the fabric of their city and have a right to vote in local elections.

Do the voting online!

Don't Vote It Just Encourages them.

Electronic voting. Not just stone age postage which is the only current option.

Everyone should vote as a resident.

Expedite voting through on line sites

Forcing people to vote is not going to make them inform themselves. Information is currently put in front of people, all they have to do is tick the boxes. Forcing people to tick boxes is not going to makes those currently unwilling all of a sudden willing to inform themselves. They will likely cast a donkey vote or simply go down the ballot, unfairly favouring those at the top of the ballot.

Having lived in Queensland for many years, I agree that compulsory voting Council elections encourages greater participation in elections.

Having moved to SA from interstate, where voting is compulsory for local government, I believe local government in SA suffers from the current approach. Whilst higher participation does have a lot of obvious benefits, I do also have some concerns that compulsory voting could lead to candidates representing higher-profile political parties having a better chance of being voted in, as apathetic voters may just vote for the candidate(s) representing the same party they typically vote for in state/federal elections. Conversely, optional voting increases the risk of voting blocs delivering candidacy for individuals who are unfit to govern. It also appears to skew funding commitments towards different stakeholders/asset classes - for example there is anecdotal evidence that non-compulsory voting in SA has led to many candidates being voted in by having a close relationship with a sporting club(s), who can then motivate their members to vote for a certain candidate and in return increasing the likelihood for council funding & attention to be given to these sporting clubs.

Highly support compulsory voting

I am in favour of making the Local Government elections compulsory and only postal

I am unconvinced that compulsory voting leads to better candidates and better decision making; it just means more votes, and likely more votes from people who dont know enough or care enough about the candidates, some who have never been in the public eye and are really unknown.

I believe in compulsory voting but not having three levels of elections in one year as we did last year. I believe that had an impact. We only had 32% for council.

i believe in freedom of choice and not forcing people to vote or lodge a donkey/invalid vote purely because of threat of fines

I believe that Council elections being non-compulsory sends the message that this level of government is not as important as the other two tiers. It seems to be complained about constantly for overstepping its brief or not meeting its core business requirements, yet people seem to feel it is not important to have a say.

I am a migrant from a country that does not have Compulsory voting and was against it when i came here 40+ years ago. I am now a strong advocate because I believe that if people have to vote, they are generally more engaged. Some aren't but many think that if they have to they should at least have an idea of what they are voting for.

Either way, all three levels of government should be the same: all compulsory or none compulsory.

I believe that many renters are not aware that they can vote. There is a perception that you need to be a ratepayer.

I believe the vote is a privilege as well as a right and that participation should be required by those eligible. We are lucky to have a democratic system and it should increase knowledge and awareness in the public about the role and functions of local government and to bring it in line with State and Federal elections.

I disagree with compulsory voting as that does not increase the amount of people nominating as candidates.

Compulsory voting only increases costs, it does not increase the level of trust in the system. People do not vote because they do not trust governments or believe that the system is fair.

I do not agree with compulsory voting.

People will get involved if they are offered the opportunity, feel naturally drawn to make a difference in the community. Punishment never brought good out of people! Only fear and compliance - with bitterness. We must evolve and heal this dysfunctional pattern. Human beings can do so much for the community if properly treated.

I do not support compulsory voting. The lack of interest in local councils, except when the footpath needs repair or the bins are not collected on time etc, suggests that people don't know or care much about the elections. People who do not want to vote should be able to choose not to.

I don't believe that compulsory voting would increase turnout.

I know people that would rather pay a fine than vote due to the belief that they are all as bad as each other.

I feel this is the only effective method if you wish to increase participation higher than current levels. ~30% is very consistent with voter turnout in all cases in aware of where voting is not compulsory regardless of the type of vote. E.g. my workplace recently voted on accepting our new EB with a similar participation rate.

I have no active interaction with my council. More community engagement could promote increased community involvement.

I see compulsory voting as beneficial. It would raise the quality of candidates, would ensure council are fully responsible to all electors, and ensure the community needs to be engaged. I see elections could be run on the same day as state elections.

I strongly believe that voting in council elections should be compulsory for residential voters, i.e., not for property owners or other voters.

South Australia and Western Australia are the only states that do not have compulsory local council elections. Tasmania recently introduced compulsory council elections and increased their voter turnout from 68% to 84.8%. Average voter turnout in South Australia's 2022 local council elections was well below this, at only 34.5%.

From the Discussion Paper: "Democratically elected councils are the foundation of local government. Yet citizens are not exercising their right to choose who will represent them, make the decisions about how to spend their rates, and determine what services their local area should receive."

The current Local Government Participation and Elections Review is an important opportunity to change this.

I strongly support compulsory voting by residents and property owners. Property owners might lament having to participate in multiple council elections but that's a small inconvenience compared to the importance of the task. At the moment, getting elected in many council areas is the world's smallest popularity contest, resulting in capture by small interest groups that wield disproportionate power and attract disproportionate investment. As an example, look at several sporting groups / facilities across metropolitan Adelaide who take up vast resources for the benefit of quantifiably very few residents. Also, if local government is as important a tier of government decision-making as state and federal, the same rules should apply to elections.

I strongly support lowering the voting age for local council elections to 16 years. However, if this occurred I think young voters aged 16-18 should not be penalised for failing to vote. Other residential voters should be given incentives to vote, and this could take the form of compulsory voting or other incentives such as rate reductions/transport discounts/access to facilities etc.

I think compulsory voting is the way to rejuvenate Councils.

I think its about time SA 'bit the bullet' about this issue.

I think there is a strong link between compulsory voting and a truly representative council. It is really difficult for young people to get elected under the current arrangement, and I've seen more established councillors only look after their voter base - a very small section of our wider and diverse community.

I think this is tricky. As a general principle, I do support compulsory voting. I do believe however, that there are better ways to increase voting in Council elections without going this far.

Compulsory voting interstate, has tended to see the expansion of political parties into local government. This does not benefit the local community in anyway in my opinion. The vast majority of local Councillors tend to be above party politics and this allows them to deliver much better community representation. Since the 2022 Council elections, much of the controversial news caused by Councils has come about because of particular elected members wanting to grandstand / make a name for themselves. In the vast

majority of situations, these councillors make it quite clear what political party they are a part of and have intentions to go further.

I think we shouldn't let businesses vote, power should come from the people not the businesses

I would like to see voting in council elections become mandatory. I would like residents who are not Australian citizens to maintain the ability to vote. I'm unsure about making it compulsory for businesses owners and property owners to vote as I don't understand the complexities of achieving this and what this would mean for being who had to vote in multiple areas.

I would like to see what the outcome is in Tasmania, given they changed recently. When will this report be out? Before making any decision and jumping off a cliff because other states have, the Tasmanian report should be considered, and the outcome of that report should be made available to residents in all councils to inform decision making. Suggestions here are merely opinions without understanding the risks. Changes like compulsory voting is an experiment that becomes too difficult to undo.

I would rather pay a fine that be forced to vote at Local Council elections

If compulsory voting was to be introduced, then council elections should be held on the same day as state government elections.

Give credit to the community that are quite capable of doing two different things at the same voting booth. Happens in YSA.

If compulsory voting were introduced, it is unclear if it may result in there being larger number of informal votes.

If on the State Roll, then it's compulsory. No other variations.

If people don't want to vote they shouldn't have to. Let people that have an interest and do their research into the candidate vote.

If voters are not interested/engaged this could sway the outcome if they submit ballots with votes as per the ballot list - eg 1-6.

If voting is made compulsory, consideration should be given to the removal of the franchise for businesses & non-residents. Requiring voting from a legal entity that can be created or destroyed for any purpose is reasonably absurd. Although the desire to preserve the business and landowner franchise should not, in and of itself, provide justification for not having compulsory voting.

I'm not convinced that landlords should be able to vote anyway but let's put that to one side. I think forcing businesses to vote seems questionable because it forces businesses to take political positions which is not necessarily desirable. As businesses are often landlords too, then I think exempting businesses and landlords from a compulsory voting requirement is good.

In lieu of making voting compulsory, it is suggested that electronic voting for Council elections be activity investigated and implemented as a means to encourage increased voter turnout

In our group the majority strongly support voting being voluntary

In our town we have 'compulsory non-voting'. We are being discriminated against compared to all other SA residents, who are allowed to vote in council elections.

In regional areas where lobby groups may have more 'airplay', compulsory voting ensures all constituents are heard.

In relation to voting, Council seeks consistency in voting across all three tiers of government such as compulsory voting. Voting procedures should provide for flexible methods of voting to ensure accessibility, inclusivity, and the integrity of the electoral process. This could include early voting, postal voting and on-line voting.

Increase length of time for people to vote and enable Council offices to be a polling place to enable people to lodge their votes. Therefore, have both the option for postal and polling booth type voting, similar to State and Federal Elections.

My only concern would be the number of informal votes.

Issue expiation notices to those who fail to vote and then re-invest the revenue from the fail-to-votes back into the running costs of each council's election

Issues Council has with regarding to compulsory voting is:

- the significant costs of both undertaking and enforcing compulsory voting; and
- the level of formal vs informal votes that determine the participation rate for those other councils in states that have already introduced compulsory voting.

It is a better representation of the community's wishes. It also stops crackpot candidates trying to take over a council

It is essential for credibility and respect.

It should be compulsory.

it should not be compulsory - its good to be free to choose to participate -

It should not be compulsory.

It works in other states so why not in SA!!

It would encourage an irresponsible/thoughtless vote, i.e. people voting just to avoid being fined. It is also likely to result in more candidates affiliated with political parties (and voters voting for candidates just because they usually vote at State and Federal level for that party), which would be undesirable at Council level.

It would force people to take an interest. It would encourage candidates to connect with their communities. If you make it compulsory, some kind of election materials support allowance should be provided to assist with campaigning (even \$500 would likely help!)

It would not provide election of 'quality' candidates. People see local councils as another 'government' rather than a Council for servicing and improvement of their local living area. Councils should adhere to core business.

It's actually compulsory attendance at a polling place.

Ensure postal votes and pre poll are available and ensure no how to vote cards, but a paper on what the member may stand for

It's just a stronger way to enact democracy to put all of us in the decision making seat, not only the ones who are filling in this survey.

It's quite obvious that a lot of people don't trust the councils to do the best for them. Councils over spend, increase rates and look after their mates.

Like state and Federal elections, I believe voting in council elections should be compulsory as it is in other states around Australia. However, there is a risk that people will just vote for anyone, which is why there needs to be some type of campaign funding available to help candidate advertise themselves ahead of election similar to state and federal elections. Current candidates and Mayor have to self-fund their own campaigns.

Local gov apathy is a big problem with rate payers they don't vote then winge about councils. Whilst compulsory may not be all that popular it may be the only answer

Local government is the level of government closest to the community - people should take an interest. The fact that State and Federal elections are compulsory yet local isn't - actually gives the perception that Local Government isn't an important level of government. There is such a stigma about Councils and Local Government, much of which is created by treating it so differently to the other levels of Government.

Local government make Important decisions that impact on local community

Its as important as a State or Federal election.

Compulsory election will ensure greater representation of the community

Local government should be abolished and if not, councils should be amalgamated eg Eyre Peninsula should be one council. Some rural councils have less than 3000 or so people but about 50 or more "staff", most of whom are on over \$80K.

Local Government should be no different to State or Federal Government when it comes to voting. After all, we are talking about postal voting for Council elections. Participating in a postal vote is hardly an onerous task!

Make compulsory voting and all or nothing proposition otherwise it becomes confusing and residents and one group may become overrepresented.

Make it compulsory like other tiers of government and ensure that only individuals can vote, not body corporate landholders

make it easy to vote, move to online voting. Do not prosecute people for not voting.

Make voting for councils compulsory is not supported

Making council voting compulsory will just frustrate people and result in invalid or careless throw away votes that do not represent anyones interests.

Making everyone vote in state and federal elections is the only reason we haven't already elected ozTrump. Making everyone vote means you need to appeal to everyone. Currently NIMBY's run the place and all they are doing is holding back progress and driving up house prices.

Making it compulsory will attract more quality candidates.

Making it compulsory won't fix anything. It's not going to guarantee people vote properly. With State and Federal elections people have to turn up to a polling place and once they are there most of them would choose to vote properly.

Making voting compulsory would bring consistency with other levels of government, which would raise the awareness and status of local government within the community

Making voting in local government elections mandatory, is one of the greatest opportunities that can be delivered for our local communities.

Indeed, it is time for the South Australian government to introduce compulsory voting. We acknowledge that this is a significant change from current practice but think that a well-functioning local government sector which represents its community may depend on it.

Many more people would vote if they considered it more worth while, the papers come to them early they get forgotten. In the case of absentee landholders they have to register each time there is a LG election, again people put it aside and it gets forgotten.

1/ The absentee landholders should be registered until they sell from the district.

2/ Making it compulsory to vote brings larger counted votes therefore possible better % margins

Many people may consider council matters relatively immaterial compared to state or commonwealth. Mandatory voting in this case seems heavy handed.

Better would be to combine council elections with state elections.

Maybe property owners and business owners could be optional voters, but voting for all residents should be compulsory.

Members are being elected with far too few votes. They only need to get involved in a couple of community groups, churches, etc. And they get elected.

More people voting gives a better representation of the community and counters special interest groups pushing a minority view

Most people who are happy with their Council and Councillors will be happy with the Status Quo and not bother to vote. The whinging few will always make sure they vote for those who offer 'the impossible' e.g. lowering Rates.

My general thoughts are that voting shouldn't be compulsory for local council.

My only concern is how 'elected out' this could make voters.

My reservations regarding compulsory voting replicate my reservations regarding larger constituency sizes (e.g., at-large elections): what effect will it have on campaign time, campaign costs, and untimely, who gets elected? Candidates will need to attract a much larger number of votes – will it cost more to do so? How will a candidate build a sufficient profile? What if you're not an extrovert, or wealthy? Even

being an active volunteer in the community will be insufficient in a larger council area – one will need a much larger profile than that. So what kinds of people will therefore be able to run successfully? More research is needed.

Most clearly, compulsory voting will favour political party affiliates – particularly in larger council areas. Not only will political parties have the capacity to reach a wider audience, but because the majority of those who vote under compulsory voting will be less interested in local affairs, they will be more likely to default to a familiar political brand.

NO circumstances warrant compulsory voting. Let's look at the debacle in Victoria where hundreds of thousands of people were fined for not voting and local Councillors were inundated with complaints - when the issue should be handled by the VEC. It is a great way to annoy people about Councils they don't already have.

I would like the following to be considered: so what if only 1/3rd or so of people vote in a local Council election? These are people who are engaged in the debate and will think about who to vote for. Bring in compulsory voting, and many will vote for the major parties I suspect, or donkey vote.

It is forcing people to do something that in SA is appreciated as a voluntary duty.

No compulsory voting at all, we are a democracy. We have too many dictators in government now. We are suppose to be a free country, but are over governed, fined because you don't want to participate is wrong.

No I agree with it.

No need to go over-the-top, when it comes to fines. Just making it mandatory will increase the voting percentage.

No penalty for not voting but this fact does not need to be communicated to the public. By this we would likely get higher than 50% voting returns

No to Compulsory Voting

How will this help anything?

How can forcing people to vote make it better?

The excuse used is that it will create greater participation from the community.

How can it be helpful to force people who would not normally vote to start voting under threat of being fined?

If these people do respond to these threats and vote will the quality of their input to Council affairs be good?

Slaves don't do productive work.

Compulsory voting means more people will begrudgingly vote and they will vote for the only thing they know and that's who they voted for in last State or Federal elections.

The big parties will get their preferred candidates, one way or another, as the money follows and the party machine mobilises.

Who will voters chose?

Will they vote for the big smiles they see on Candidate's photos or just vote for the Candidates who advertise their allegiances to the big parties or maybe they will just vote for the big parties with the big smiles.

No to compulsory voting.

No... I do not think it should be compulsory

Non compulsory voting allows for the swift removal of non performing councillors. ie swift uptick in voter engagement to achieve a locally important outcome.

Non compulsory voting for people 16 and over.

Non compulsory voting leads to well organised power blocks pushing "Program X" getting candidates up against the silent majority who believe that "Program X" has no chance to get up and don't bother to vote.

Examples are Brexit in England and Trump in USA in 2016. I believe neither of those results would have happened if there had been compulsory voting and (in the case of USA) voting was made much more accessible to all

Nope and people who do not vote, then fine them.

Object to compulsory voting being introduced as it is a lazy way to improve participation in voting. Better to encourage people to be able to vote in person at local shopping centres ie take the polling booth to where people are

Of course it should be compulsory for able bodied persons. For those in Residential aged care it shouldn't be compulsory.

Once again the cost of so many councils to the public is enormous and the reduction of councils to reduce substantially a number of variable costs EG: CEO,s , Repetition of Staffing and Services , Etc Etc.

Only if this can be managed to ensure the correct people are voting on their ballot papers. Too many instances of ballot papers being stolen and submitted on behalf of other people.

only those who are on the State Electoral Roll, same as for Govt

Opinions amongst Members were varied on the topic of compulsory voting in South Australian council elections. Advocates for compulsory voting emphasized the potential for greater representation of the community and a more democratic mandate. In contrast, opponents argued that it would lead to the loss of community minded candidates, make it harder for the average resident to be elected

Other levels of Govt have compulsory voting and so should LG. Some Elected Members get elected in regional areas on their family votes. This is not healthy.

Pensioners and disabled people could opt not to vote without penalty. Make voting electronic so the majority can vote on-line. Provide postal ballots to all residents.

People have become apathetic and don't bother to vote

People like to complain but don't make the effort to vote or contribute to consultations. Make them vote!

People should have to vote in the Council area that is their primary residence.

perhaps compulsory voting would have candidates engage more with the community and explain why they should be considered and what they actually stand for.

Please make this happen.

We are giving normal everyday people a seat that literally affects our community. This decision is taken way too lightly and needs the numbers behind to get the right bums in seats.

Postal voting no longer provides value for money and timeliness given the costs of Australia Post and the time taken for postal deliveries

the only way to increase voter turnout is to make it compulsory and ensure people do vote

property owners and business owners pay rates and should have vote and say in the elections for the council they pay rates. Take voting online will increase participation in elections

Reduce the voting age to 16

taking election information to the schools and encourage students to encourage their parent/s to vote in the council elections.

Property owners own property they have made the investment taken the risk they should 100% have their say on what happens in their area

property owners should have a vote as council decisions can affect their property

Providing a vote doesn't mean that the voter is well informed, they may vote for anyone to say that they have voted.

Ratepayers should be compulsory to vote

Rather than making it compulsory just have the council elections combined with State elections, people are already at the polls and can vote for their local councillor/s at the same time

replacing an elected member mid term probably doesn't need to be compulsory but yes to residents compulsory voting which could be online.

Residential and property owners should all be required to vote ie Supplementary Roll should be compulsory, but limited to one vote per individual person. Though, this would add additional complications for property owners from interstate.

residents/tenants should be able to vote but do not force a business owner with multiple sites plus their own home vote for every election

Respective Councils need to do more to promote and express the importance of voting without the necessity of it being compulsory.

Ridiculous idea about compulsory voting, considering there are not enough nominations to fill the vacant positions

Same for state elections

Should be compulsory for all landowners in an LGA, including residential, businesses.

Should be compulsory for residents on electoral roll

Should be in-person and mandatory.

Should only include property owners and retail and commercial tenants. Residential tenants come and go and this would increase costs of elections and possibly have unreasonable or stacked responses

Support for compulsory voting via postal or council office submission in person (voting booth).

The only way to have proper representation is to make it compulsory. Even if that includes a few "protest" votes, it is still a better outcome than low voter turnout. We live in a democracy and people should respect this by taking up their responsibility to vote.

The only way to increase the rate of people voting is to make it mandatory.

Offer as many ways of voting as possible and promote these. eg: postal, in person and telephone voting. Whilst not currently available, continue to explore options for on line voting.

The reason I have not voted is I do not know enough about, or trust the candidates. They are not appropriately vetted. Indeed, we have seen this play out with crazy conspiracy theorists. I do not trust the vetting process in order to vote. This needs to be fixed and more people will vote.

The second statement above is confusing. It probably should have read "... compulsory only for residents...".

Council elections should be moved to coincide with the state elections and voting in person should be re-introduced. The current 6 month separation is irritating because we still have to vote twice in the same years.

There has to be an element of free choice to vote. Most residents are unaware that it is happening anyway due to lack of promotion and people do not know the candidates as there is no information.

There is no question that compulsory voting for council elections would boost participation. SA is one of the last states that does not have compulsory voting and there is a strong culture in SA of compulsory voting at State and Federal levels. The only circumstances where compulsory voting might not be applicable are for non-resident property owners (I believe this should be abolished anyway).

There may be drawbacks for voting being compulsory for non-resident voters that I'm not aware of, hence I ticked unsure. However I'm strongly in favour of compulsory resident voting, as it is for State and Federal. As it is, too many elections turn on a few dozen voters motivated by niche concerns that don't necessarily represent the broader community.

There should always be a box for 'no suitable candidates' and a box for 'abstain'. Turnout should be the aim, not false mandates.

There should be compulsory voting.

There should be no Compulsory Voting

If there had been compulsory voting for this past election how would that have increased the number of people nominating as candidates?

And obviously there could still only have been the prescribed number of Councillors elected, so what's

the benefit?

If you want more people to get involved why do Councils restrict seating in the public galleries at meetings?

If they are afraid of these people why do they pretend to want more of them involved?

The Electoral Commission has already complained about the high cost of elections and excessive time for counting but compulsory voting could triple the number of votes and cost.

How will this help anything?

How can forcing people to vote make it better?

The excuse used is that it will create greater participation from the community.

How can it be helpful to force people who would not normally vote to start voting under threat of being fined?

If these people do respond to these threats and vote will the quality of their input to Council affairs be good?

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The big parties will get their preferred candidates, one way or another, as the money follows and the party machine mobilises.

This ageing voter wants less government interference in his life and finds compulsory voting in any aspect of our wonderful democracy, a contradiction.

This is a democracy not a dictatorship.
Maybe if candidates were worth voting for more people would vote.

This is the single most positive reform and should be adopted as a priority. It would go a long way to resolving many of the issues we see in local government and community participation. Its a small annoyance for community but a significant step into attracting talent and diverse representation.

This measure will not increase participation either via voting or by nominations. The cost of policing this will be significant.

This question is forcing people who don't or don't want to vote, so who are they going to vote for? I ask how many people in state and federal elections vote for the candidate vs how many for the political party and/or the premier/prime minister. I firmly believe that compulsory voting will bring party political politics into local government. This I believe is undesirable. I ask what is achieved by doing this. Be careful what you wish for.

This should be considered hand in hand with other changes - compulsory voting may encourage higher voter turnout but not necessarily educated decision making when voting.

The voting process should be easy, accessible and support voters to make an educated choice.

Timing - separate year to State and Federal.
Focus on quality of candidates and full disclosure of values.
Opportunities to question candidates.
Police checks of local candidates.

To be set to coincide with state elections.

Use of IT to vote would increase voting numbers

Voluntary voting allows minority groups with extreme views to mobilize and through attracting like-minded supporters permits them to manipulate the outcome of an election as the elector participation can be less than 25% in some Council areas. Such a low voter participation can allow some ward vacancies approximately only 700 first preference votes to be elected. Such a small number of elector votes cannot be considered a true representation of the community.

Votes must be done the same way as it is for the other 2 levels of Govt

Voting for councils should not be compulsory in South Australian council elections

Voting in council elections should be compulsory. There should be multiple ways that voters can cast their vote.

Voting in Local Government elections should be made compulsory

Voting is a civic duty.

Voting must be compulsory which even though that is not perfect it will contribute to a far greater demand for accountability of an elected Councillor.

Voting MUST be made compulsory for all residents to avoid the loony candidates being elected. Just make the rules the same as for state and federal elections to avoid any confusion.

Voting should be compulsory for all residential voters who are on the electoral roll. Business or other eligible voters could register to vote and it should not be compulsory for them.

Voting should be compulsory for councils as it is interstate.

voting should be compulsory for residents

Voting should be compulsory, but make it a postal vote to make it easier to access and lower cost.

Voting should be compulsory, this will ensure that all nominators get a fair go.

Voting should be limited to those living in the area and should exclude corporations, large businesses and registered lobbyists.

Voting should not be compulsory

Voting should not be compulsory

Voting should not be compulsory at this stage. Further research and evidence are needed to inform a move to compulsory voting and to understand the potential impacts. Voter fatigue should be considered. If voting were compulsory, it would be necessary to ensure Federal, State and Local Elections are staggered across different years.

Voting to be on line, if it can't be have the roll on line. Out with paper please ..

We are a democratic society and voting should not be compulsory as like me (even though I do vote), would not have a clue who the nominated candidates and they don't seem to mix in with the community.

Suggest a meet & greet of nominated Councillors for ratepayers and residents of City of Onkaparinga Council to ask questions.

We are used to voting in person for state and federal elections so why not council elections also

We do not need compulsory voting at council level. More information about all candidates should be provided

We have to vote in the others why not this one too.

We live in a democracy. This means we have the right to choose if we vote or not.

The people who do vote are interested, engaged and informed.

I don't want people voting who don't care and only doing it because they are being forced.

This will risk good candidates missing out on being elected because people didn't care about their vote.

We live in a democratic society and therefore we should be giving people the choice on whether they vote or not. The reason people don't vote is because they are not interested or don't want to and that should be their right.

Electronic voting should be brought in to encourage participation

We need to catch up with the rest of Australia! Compulsory third tier voting is essential for the local government area to continue on. Compulsory voting may also assist in getting the right candidates to nominate.

WE shouldn't be forced to vote as its not democratic its something you are forced to do by the Govt That's not democracy. we should have the freedom to vote or not to vote

We suggest that government and LGA commit to an intensive effort to lift the turnout to above 50% at the next election. If this is not achieved, then government consider committing to introducing compulsory voting at Council elections

We support Compulsory voting

Well, arguably the role of local councillors is less important than that of elected state or federal government members of parliament. This perceived lack of value of local councillors is reflected on many levels, not least of which includes the level of pay (allowances) that councillors receive compared to MPs, the amount of meetings/work that councillors are required to undertake to fulfill the minimum requirements of their roles (far less than MPs), the lack of staffing support for local councillors as opposed to MPs who get resourcing for staff support, etc. This would suggest that less voters actually care who their local councillors are and so are therefore less likely to vote. If forced to vote they may be more likely to cast an unhelpful vote (e.g. numbering candidates in the order they are on the ballot paper) rather than a genuine vote, which may end up with worse outcomes than the current arrangement (if people choose to vote this suggests that they are casting a meaningful vote). I think if we are going to make voting compulsory in local government then this level of importance needs to be reflected in the resourcing and supports which are then allocated to the role once elected.

There is also a risk of elections becoming far more competitive, politicised and polarised along party lines, rather than focused on local issues. Councils could become more caught up in politics rather than efficiently and effectively dealing with local issues by councillors who are in it for the 'right reasons' and genuinely care about their community.

Whilst I think it's probably inevitable that voting will become compulsory in local government elections and overall this is probably the right thing to do in weighing up the pros and cons, this saddens me because we will lose diverse local representation and instead be governed by politicians tied to party lines. Candidates will have to have a lot of money to run competitively as independents. It will make it a lot harder for things to get done.

Where they are incapacitated to vote.

While Council supports the desire for greater voter turn-out, compulsory voting is not supported. It is clear from experiences interstate that compulsory voting leads to domination of elections by political parties. This would be a highly undesirable outcome as council decision-making should be guided by community needs, not party policy platforms

Why do we have councils as suggested in previous comments

With the average of around 40% of people that vote, they are voting because they want to and care in one way or another about their region and who gets in to make decisions on their region.

Compulsory voting will see 60% of people who really don't care and don't even read the candidates bio's

just number boxes because they have to. People will get elected on the 'Donkey' vote because of what number they were pulled out of a hat, not for what they stand for.

Works just fine in most of the other states. It achieves a better result by including the entire community.

Yes voting should also include those renting. I am 2 minds about making it compulsory only because the same people are getting in and we know nothing about them. If there was a time limit on how long they could stay in office and we knew that new people were standing I would probably be more interested in making it compulsory.

Yes voting should be compulsory

Yes, a lga smartphone app to vote on.

Local government needs a lot of reform, but forcing apathetic people to vote is not one I support. If you want to reform local government elections I strongly advocate for 1 vote per dollar of rates paid. Just like any public company does with shareholders. Those with more skin in the game ought to get more say in where their rates are spent. If someone else is footing the bill then they get more say. Abolishing wards may well give some minority voices more say, but it would also mean some minority voices do not get a say, for example in rural council's where there are few primary producers paying a disproportionate amount of rates per vote.

The most important reform that needs to happen to local government is with the rating revenue model. It is out of whack with what's being asked of councils these days. Land taxes might have been appropriate when land was the main asset people owned and roads were the main expenses councils incurred, but as a land tax masquerading as a wealth tax and given where council's spend their money it doesn't line up any more.

The principles of taxation espoused by local government are so at odds with what happens in practice that is probably why so many people don't want anything to do with local government either as candidates or voters.

Councils have been captured by a range of political interests and as a result our rates are spent on a whole plethora of things that should not be paid for out of our Council Rates, particularly as our roads are generally in a worse state of repair than I have ever experienced.

Make voting compulsory if you wish, I will not vote until Councils do what we pay them to do and keep out of politics, unless you can show me where my opinion is at odds with that of the majority of Ratepayers.

Council supports that as a tier of government, consideration should be given to making voting in Council elections compulsory.

If the State (or LGA) is fixated on voter turnout – then just make voting compulsory – otherwise just be somewhat accepting that the relatively static 32% voter turnout represents those voters than have a greater interest in the democratic election of their local candidates.

As can be seen by regional voter turnout – there appears to be a greater sense of community interest in regional areas (no shock there).

Perhaps a greater assessment needs to be done on why regional voters are more diligent and interested in voting in local government elections.

I have acted as a scrutineer for many State and Federal MP's and it is evident to me that having compulsory voting will not change the outcome, many people who are made to vote compulsory feel that their democratic right to vote or not to vote is not respected, if they normally do not turn out to vote, a compulsory vote election will only aggravate them and they will come in and write some obscenity on the ballot paper to make it worthless. Some citizens are not exercising their right to choose who will represent them, while speaking to non-voters their reply to me was "I believe in democracy I am exercising my freedom of choice I choose not to vote".

Voting for (or against) a candidate at any level of government is a basic right of an Australian. It is a privilege that residents of non-democratic countries envy and in many cases still fight for.

In SA, voting at Council elections is currently not compulsory and many residents simply will not participate without being forced to do so.

Those that do vote are clearly committed to achieving a result

Current voter eligibility standards (eg 'the property franchise', 1 month residents etc) for Council elections may adversely distort the voter turnout numbers, by increasing the number of potential voters, thus accentuating a poor turnout percentages.

Depending on whether it was an "in person" vote or remained postal voting (no additional costs or resources)

Making voting compulsory would provide council with a better mandate (i.e. candidates would be elected by a majority of the community, not a minority as is the present situation.

Council believes there is merit in compulsory voting – subject to method and timing.

However, Council would like clarity on the process for pursuing those who do not vote.

It is the view of Council that in other states where local government voting that compulsory voting does introduces the potential risk of informal voting or a voting approach that could adversely affect the voting outcome. Voters could complete the ballot paper without proper consideration or knowledge of candidates' and their election platform merely to avoid prosecution. While it is acknowledged that this risk also exists at State and Federal elections, campaign budgets at this level also provide candidates with more extensive marketing that enable them to develop higher profiles and educate the community about their political party platform across a broader section of the community.

It also needs to be recognised that all costs and expenses incurred in local government elections are incurred by councils. Any introduction of compulsory voting would also introduce a requirement for enforcement of this provision, which would place significant additional costs onto councils and the communities they represent

Whilst Council has no opinion on this matter, it should be noted that costs would potentially increase (ie more ballots returned = increased postage costs and potentially higher costs associated with election counts).

If this is implemented, the system should be set up so that fines are issued by ECSA without Council involvement.

If compulsory voting in local government elections was mandated, it may give rise to uninformed and unhelpful voting e.g. numbering candidates in the order they appear on the ballot paper. It could also inadvertently politicize local government elections and may lead to political party dominance of local government resulting in a loss of independent community minded candidates.

Council resolved to support compulsory voting. Compulsory voting in local government elections should align and be consistent with state and federal elections. Each sector of government in Australia is just as important as the other. Each sector, whether that be state, federal or local government all serve a unique purpose and voting requirements should be consistent and reflect the level of importance.

The issue of compulsory voting for Local Government Elections has been raised on numerous occasions over the last few years. Since 2007, this Council has provided feedback as part of a number of reviews in respect to the issue of introducing compulsory voting for Local Government Elections.

The Council's position is that the Council does not support the introduction of compulsory voting for Local Government Elections.

This position is based on the view that compulsory voting (whether in Federal, State or Local Governments) can really be defined as "compulsory attendance" rather than compulsory voting.

In addition, the costs associated with compulsory voting would potentially be more (ie more ballot papers returned = more postage costs, increased costs associated with the counting of ballot papers, etc).

We understand that making voting compulsory would bring it in line with state and federal government elections but oppose such a move.

While compulsory voting may increase voter turnout, it does not necessarily lead to voters casting an informed vote. In the case of regional council, our community actively engages in determining its future direction by coming out to vote in significant numbers.

Our 62% have cast their vote, not because they were 'forced' to do so, but because they felt it to be important, and therefore are much more likely to have taken the time to consider the candidates before them. As elected members, we greatly appreciate the endorsement and trust that has been expressed in this conscious decision made by so many of our peers.

Voting should remain voluntary

An unintended consequence of compulsory voting could be extensive political party involvement in Councils (as in the eastern states which have compulsory voting) and we do not want to see that in SA

Significantly we are requesting consideration of compulsory voting for local government in South Australia. This would ensure that the majority of community voices would be represented through a democratically elected local government. While this is a significant change from current practice, we believe that a well-functioning local government sector may depend on it.

The Local Government (Elections) Act and the City of Adelaide Act should be amended to introduce compulsory voting for Council elections. This is required for both South Australian and Commonwealth elections and for local government elections in all States except South Australia and Western Australia. The Tasmanian government website states "Compulsory voting ensures councils reflect the communities they serve."

Councils constitute a tier of government in our State constitutional system, it may be argued reasonably that the same voting methods should apply for Council elections as for Commonwealth and State elections. However, in Our group's opinion, postal voting is preferable. It is more convenient and less expensive for many people, particularly for those who would have to travel long distances in our large State to a polling booth. Possibly postal voting would be less expensive for Councils. Our group assumes that information about the relative cost of voting by personal attendance (with postal voting only for those who are eligible), compared to all postal voting, could be obtained from the South Australian Electoral Commissioner.

There is a majority of our Council that supports voting for councils to be compulsory in South Australian council elections.

Yes, voting for councils should be compulsory in South Australian council elections

It is unclear whether higher voter turnout would translate into higher genuine engagement, or better quality candidates. There is an argument to be made that rates of 'donkey' voting, or simply voting without making an effort to be informed about candidates, is a potential outcome. It also increases the likelihood of candidates using local government elections / council as a platform for state political aspirations / alignment (which is already more prevalent in the metropolitan areas). This would potentially mean that less focus is given to the communities.

If the aim is simply to increase voter turnout, and increase awareness of the role of local government, then strategy seems valid. However, if the intention is to increase meaningful engagement and improve representation for communities, mandatory voting may not be the most effective tool.

The opportunity is increased voter turnout for elections, and therefore awareness of local government and its role.

The risks are that local government becomes a political platform for candidates, rather than candidates who are genuinely interested in representing their community, and that disengaged voters may simply vote without consideration, increasing likelihood of candidates listed close to the top of ballot papers being elected, regardless of the quality of the candidate

What is the objective in regard to this question? Compulsory voting in local government elections is fundamentally a government policy question.

However compulsory voting is essential to underscore the significance of local government and ensure active participation in the election of representatives at the most accessible tier of governance.

Without mandatory voting, decisions shaping local councils and communities are left to the preferences of those who choose to vote, potentially limiting the diversity of perspectives represented.

Encouraging full community participation by making voting compulsory may also enhance the willingness of candidates to stand for election, knowing they are elected by the entire community rather than a fraction that engages in the current system

It may result in uninformed voting patterns, for example where people may just vote for the person on top of the ballot paper. Non-compulsory voting is a key democratic principle and ECSA should be properly resourced to be able to promote voting participation stronger.

The State and Commonwealth governments enjoy high levels of public legitimacy, which we feel can be largely attributed to the high level of voter turnout. South Australians understand these systems of voting, and compulsory voting enjoys strong public support at these levels of government. If we want to improve the legitimacy and increase the accountability of elected councillors what better way than to have all members of the community provide that scrutiny. Aligning the Local government election system with the State & Federal systems represents the simplest model for achieving this outcome

Results potentially skewed if the community were forced to vote, as they may not know who to vote for, so could see them number the ballot paper from one down through the paper, which by default would see the candidate listed in the number one position receive the majority of votes.

Change the method of voting and offer an optional preferential option; if the community member want to vote for one candidate they could then be able to do that.

LGA review the electoral role every year; reduces the number of people with known residents down. The need to contact Council to have to fill in a form disenfranchises some people e.g. shack owners. If people receive a rate notice, then they also receive a voting form

Should engage with the Office of Local Government to explore whether there is a model of mandatory voting that would be supported by the local government sector

Council supports this idea to increase participation in elections and considers that it would also improve awareness of the role of Councils, increase interest in local decision making and lead to additional scrutiny and accountability

Yes, Council supports the idea of mandatory voting for council elections to reinforce the significance of local government and align it with mandated state and federal election voting.

Council elections should not be held so close to State elections to reduce voter fatigue.

The length of time between campaigning and voting should be shortened, it is too long and voters can lose interest particularly when held so close to State elections.

No I do not feel voting should be compulsory.

Also I feel you should do what Queensland has done. 1 large council only.

There are far too many in South Australia also the expense of so many Mayors and CEOs

Very disappointed with my council.

Compulsory voting in local government elections has merit and mandatory voting would bring the council election system in line with the compulsory voting requirements of state and federal government elections. There is a possibility that compulsory voting could open up local government in South Australia to party politics.

Continuing with the postal voting system would not result in any additional costs. As further information including the costs associated with the implementation of a compulsory voting system becomes available, Council will give further to consideration to the matter.

The Property Council acknowledges the possibility that making voting compulsory in local government elections could have a positive impact on community engagement.

This could be a catalyst for two very different outcomes.

We would see increased engagement, inevitably. However, council elections fall the same year as State government elections, and occasionally federal elections. Making voting compulsory could lead to major voter fatigue and increased feelings of discontent towards councils. However, it could also lead to mobilising various sections of the community, leading to better quality outcomes.

The Property Council cautions against any immediate action from the Office on compulsory voting

If it is compulsory to vote at Federal and State level, then it should also be compulsory to vote at Local Council level where, as your website indicated, a lot of the hard work of maintaining our local communities occurs

Compulsory voting would lead to the presence of party politics in local council. Local councils work when there is no party interference which causes disunity

I believe if voting was compulsory Council would not be beholden to members elected with very few votes

No. People who don't want to vote may become more antagonistic towards council if it is compulsory for them to do so. There would also be enforcement mechanisms required to penalise non-voters, which would require additional expenditure

There may be merit for making voting compulsory in lower response electorates. There would be more people voting, which would likely increase the number of informed voters but would also increase the number of 'donkey' voters.

There would be a much higher cost involved to implement mandatory voting. Legislative requirements and enforcement / administration would be required.

One of the great things about Local Government in South Australia is that it is largely not the plaything of the major political parties, and so not dominated by them, as is the case in Eastern states.

Local government is clearly not the same as State and Federal government. It is misleading to compare them. Council elected members work part-time in their elected capacity and receive a small monetary allowance for this work. By contrast elected State and Federal politicians receive a full-time employees' salary and are expected to work full-time in their elected capacity as politicians.

Local government is not dominated by party politics as State and Federal governments are. This is greatly valued by local communities. While there is some political party infiltration of local government, this sphere of government still allows independent candidates to run for election and to receive a fair chance of being elected. Once voting is made compulsory the major parties will seek to have their pre-selected candidates elected. Political parties will throw resources at getting their candidates elected, pushing out the small independents who wish to run but cannot compete with the finances and workforce of the parties. Local government will be used as a training ground for future State and Federal politicians on a much larger scale than is currently the case if compulsory voting is imposed.

The Brisbane City Council has full-time elected members who receive salaries. Voting for elected members is compulsory. It is dominated by the major political parties. This is a fate we wish to avoid in SA.

In SA we can avoid the curse of politicizing local government and driving small independents out by maintaining voluntary voting. So no, we do not support compulsory voting which we consider to be a retrograde step.

The push for compulsory voting is coming from the major political players who seek to benefit from this change. Also, at the forefront of pushing for this change is the development lobby, which seeks to politicize local government to its advantage.

In line with the harmonization of all public elections, voting for the City of Adelaide should be compulsory, and postal votes should be managed by the Electoral Office, thus avoiding allegations of vote rigging by candidates

We firmly believe the principle of compulsory voting, as adopted for all elections across Australia except for local elections in Western Australia and our own, will build democratic legitimacy for the level of government closest to the people of South Australia

Whilst I understand the intent of compulsory voting and want to see citizens engaging in the democratic process, I would be concerned that major political parties will start to use council elections as a means to increase their membership base and influence. This is evident in the eastern states of Australia and there are sometimes suggestion of this within South Australia. This is at odds with the intent of local members in touch with local needs. It also presents many potential or perceived conflicts of interest when councils are making considerations of which state and federal governments may be one of the

interested parties. If implemented, there is need to consider what a fine structure would look like – it should not further disadvantage marginalised communities. Compulsory voting doesn't address the issue of people being apathetic to democratic processes. We need to be investing in the idea of people as citizens, not as customers. Only then can we really start to understand this trend and what can be done to improve voter turn out.

In general compulsory voting is supported but is viewed as more of a metropolitan issue than a regional one given the relatively high voter turnout experience in these areas.

A risk associated with the compulsory process is that voters will vote merely because they are required to as opposed to voting with the interest of the community at the forefront. In State and Federal Government Elections there is the opportunity for voters to vote on party lines without knowing the candidates. This is not possible in Local Government Elections and may increase the risk of votes based on ballot placement or the visual availability of candidates bringing in to question the integrity of the process.

On the whole, Council's members do not agree that voting in local government elections should be made compulsory

Yes, I support making voting for councils compulsory in South Australian council elections.

We can see merit in introducing compulsory voting, to be consistent with State and Federal elections. It would be likely that this would significantly, positively affect engagement. However, compulsory voting might encourage those with wider political allegiance or access to resources and funding to stand for local Govt and thereby create the same political agenda problems we face with state and federal Govt.

I do not support introducing compulsory voting for local government elections as I believe it will lead to more informal votes and more "politicised" local government elections. I would support voluntary voting by attendance IF there's evidence it increases voter participation - but such voting should still be voluntary.

Yes, voting for councils should be compulsory in South Australian council elections.

Compulsory voting ensures that all eligible citizens participate in the democratic process, promoting a more representative and engaged electorate. However, individuals should have the option to register a vote to indicate that they are choosing not to vote, thus maintaining the principle of freedom of choice. Compulsory voting should only be implemented if the Electoral Commission of South Australia (ECSA) can manage the process efficiently without imposing a significant financial burden on ratepayers. It should be a simple and user-friendly process to encourage compliance and minimise administrative costs

Topic 3: Removing wards (3.6)

1) state shouldn't mandate this as it's none of their business, and 2) I like wards. Perhaps a third option is a mix of ward and council wide?

1. Without wards, councillors might be more inclined to consider the needs and concerns of the entire local authority area rather than focusing primarily on their ward's interests.

2. Wards can sometimes foster a sense of parochialism, where councillors prioritize their ward's interests over broader community or regional needs. Removing wards might mitigate this tendency.

A decision for local communities.

A voter should be able to support a candidate they feel will represent what they believe in council, no matter where they are geographically in the council region. I do not know if elected members can have the objectivity to make such a decision in their region, as the current system could appear beneficial to them.

Again, if they live on the opposite side of the council area to me I would not be likely to vote for them anyway - some councils have such diverse areas that the issues in one are not the issues in another.

Agree with the statement but again it should be up to the individual councils if they have wards or not. I believe elected members should represent the entire council though.

Agree with this, I should be able to elect the best people for the role not be restricted by ward.

All candidates are on our forms. Should they be ????????

Already discussed. Wards are used in geographically large LGAs. No need to tinker.

Any Councillor should be a representative of all of the residents, regardless of location.

any efforts to remove political parties influence would be supported.

As a voter I would like to be able to choose from all candidates running for council not just the candidates in my ward and running for Mayor. As a local government worker working at one of the largest metropolitan councils in SA, I think wards are very important for our council area, to ensure residents from across our region have a local representative.

As someone who has worked for a few councils, I think this would be hugely beneficial

Bigger wards, and multiple representatives per a ward. But keep wards otherwise some areas of council will become unrepresented

Candidates from smaller communities often struggle getting the number of votes to be able to compete with those in bigger towns/cities. Wards may help address this. Ultimately, each council should be able to choose to have wards or not based on their community.

Council areas are already subsets within the state, wards shrink the areas to too small a reach. I would like the best candidates irrespective of their location within the council area.

Council does not support removing Wards.

Wards in larger Councils better support representation and recognise there are differences within communities across a Council area. May lead to an imbalance of representation. Smaller councils should be able to retain the right to decide whether to have wards or not, depending on their circumstances.

council meetings cover a broad range of issues that may not pertain to a ward but the elected member must vote on all issues

Council Members will be bombarded with more queries, as residents with an issue may choose to email all Council Members as they won't have a local representative (or 2) who are the logical point of first contact.

On the other hand, in wards with Council Members who have a very specific focus (e.g. elderly people and services for them), those from a younger demographic may feel that they can't contact their local Council Member, and may prefer no wards.

Councillors should represent the entire area

Current information submitted by candidates for their nomination is sufficient

different councils have different needs and should be free to make this decision themselves

Disband Council

do not remove wards - there is no mandate from the wider community, this will only water down the representation

Do not remove wards. By removing wards, reduces local input from ratepayers that want to speak to their elected member on ward related issues

Don't remove wards or the community will be LESS represented.

From experience as an area Council, natural outcome of elections sees members from different geographical areas represented.

How many of us could afford to run a campaign across 60,000 households? Very few. Dumb idea, would wipe out poorer candidates and lose local influence.

I agree with removal of wards

I am strongly against removing wards as smaller groups lose their representation. As amalgamations have happened and regional centres get larger, it is critical for the smaller towns to have representation through wards or else they would just be swallowed up by the big towns who don't reflect their community needs and requirements.

I can now see the advantage to removing wards, but how does this ensure fairness in all parts of the Council?

I have already provided information about removing wards. I believe that wards should be maintained, especially when a Council area covers such a large zone and has varying needs ie coastal, rural, farming, city, etc.

I have commented on this in a previous section.

I prefer to split mega Councils into multiple smaller Councils rather than to have wards.

I prefer to split mega Councils into multiple smaller Councils rather than to have wards.

I think electioneering would become impossible and it would discourage candidates.

Wards identify for residents who is their representative and that representative has to work on behalf of their residents. The quality of the Ward councillor is much more likely to be on view and accountable. There is less likely hood of ineffective, lazy Councillors 'hiding' amongst the other hard working ones and the hard working Councillors burning out.

I think its important in larger Councils to have wards to ensure there are representatives from eac area of the Council. If all the elected members are from one area, there may be perceived bias in the community for certain decisions being made and having wards eliminates this.

I think people are much more motivated to vote if they know the candidates and the issues which is much more likely if the candidates are representing the ward in which the voter lives

I think reducing the number of Council Members through legislation for the size of a Council is key. You can then pay more for each Council Member and have more competition for seats. Removing wards stops candidates from simply being acclaimed without competition when you have only 2 running for one ward but 7 running for another.

I think there are greater benefits to community if EM a local well known community member

I think there are pros and cons. But I believe without wards we might get more and better representation.

I think wards are necessary to avoid skewed representation.

I would like a councillor familiar with my area to represent me

I would like to be able to elect someone from my ward and someone from across the council.

I'd like to choose my candidates & not be restricted to just my ward.

I'd like to have Councillors that represent my Ward and Councillors that represent the Council area as a whole. That would help to promote diversity in candidates while maintaining a reasonably fair apportionment of representatives from each community within the Council area.

If my ward isn't big enough to attract good candidates, my council is too small.

If no one from a local area stands resident's views and interests may be overlooked.

If there are no wards, Elected Members would be there to help all residents, not just their area.

If wards are removed, I worry that 'nominee-blocks' will emerge from the more engaged areas which may be to the detriment of other parts of the community. Again, this isn't really relevant to metro based councils but in regional areas where there may be one major town and several satellite towns, having all representation from the major town would not be a good idea. It's leads to suspicions and silly ideas about why Councils make decisions in the ways they do if representation isn't broad.

If you have more people in one ward compared to another could that effect this. ie a representative of one ward who those people wanted in could get less votes

If you remove wards candidates won't run because it will be too expensive to target such a large area when candidates have to fund their own campaigns. You will end up with property developers and rich people as representatives and a corrupt council that has conflicts of interest.

If you removed wards, we may not have any candidates from a particular area of a council and then certain areas of the council area get pork barrelled while others fall by the wayside into disrepair. May only end up with candidates from the well-off side of town who are successful (due to having more money and therefore more effective election campaigns) - then the more disadvantaged areas don't get a representative. I think wards are very important. Compromise would be creating some 'general' council positions and some 'ward' based positions.

In regional areas many only know their Ward Councillors

In rural areas, wards are gerimandered and should be abolished. In rural areas, financial discounts are applied by gerimandered wards and should be made illegal as a conflict of interest

It is likely that people will vote for local residents who have nominated - people they know or know of - regardless of whether there are wards or not.

It's unnecessary.

I've already addressed this earlier. Wards should be a Council decision from time to time in accordance with current legislation

Lack of representation for smaller towns / rural sector in the community

Local Government is about local neighbourhoods so the risk is that residents feel more removed from the process, resulting in less interest in local matters.

Local government should be abolished and if not, councils should be amalgamated eg Eyre Peninsula should be one council. Some rural councils have less than 3000 or so people but about 50 or more "staff", most of whom are on over \$80K.

Lower costs with less employees and more services with maintained council property and land, I'd hope.

Makes it more proportional. Identification with wards is 99% not a thing. It makes the process easier and opens people who may be popular generally, but not in their own ward, to becoming elected.

Making it so restrictive is stupid all the councillors should work together. Perhaps if they are elected then give them a ward to look after.

My council is too large for councillors to be across all the issues in the council. Wards elect one or two people to represent the priority issues for that ward to council and provide a focal point for contact.

my family member had to jump through hoops and is not representing their preferred ward based on wanting to be on council and restrictions / numbers game of candidates

No impact in removing wards. Note: Preferential voting should be abolished.

No issue with Wards.

No wards would mean we could elect a candidate to better represent our views, ideals and concerns. The current wards system doesn't help residents at all. E.g my local ward counsellor does not share the same views as me and will not represent my concerns. He has been in the role for so many terms he now just uses his position to represent his own views.

Not all EGGS ARE GOOD in the pack

Number of elected members can be reduced. Members less likely to be elected from fringe supporters.

Our council does not have wards

Our Council does not have Wards, but as stated previously, there are both benefits and disbenefits from removing Wards. Our Elected Members represent all areas of our Council.

our council doesn't restrict voting to wards. only nominations

People within my ward would have a better understanding of the community within the ward than someone from outside it

Please see previous comment in relation to wards. In short, I support at-large elections in small municipalities, and ward elections in large municipalities.

Potential impact of removing wards is that you may no longer have a Councilor living in your immediate area, thus they may not truly appreciate local issues.

Previous comment on this affair.

Refer above. Wards provide value to the residents without detracting from sound governance of the Council as a whole.

Removal of Council Wards as a strategy to increase candidates and voter turnout. Decisions relating to Wards and voter thresholds can be adequately considered and addressed in consultation with the community through a periodic or special Representation Review

Removing the wards does not necessarily provide voters with greater choice, and produce fairer results

Removing ward structures will reduce turf wars.

Removing wards allows the current electoral system of proportional representation to be more effective in allowing more voters to see their votes actually electing the candidates of their choice

Removing wards can disrupt the electorate being able to get the best representation if only first votes are counted.

Proportional Representation would be a much better system, than the current results from only "1" votes. Very easy to do with current technology, with postal votes or online if move with the times.

Removing wards can end up as a popularity contest which may assist the political parties getting more seats in council to control broader political narratives

Removing wards could lead to no representation in some areas

Removing wards could negatively impact councils and communities as it has the potential to leave some areas without a representative

Removing wards creates/increases the ability for factions to develop.

Removing wards forces the Member to focus on whole of council matters, as is intended in the legislation. With wards, members have a biased focus on their wards only.

Removing wards is likely to lead to the election of single issue fanatics or people representing sports clubs with little interest in the wider business of council.

Removing wards is not supported and it is not considered that it would promote a better voter turnout

Removing wards may allow for a more diverse range of candidates.

Removing wards may increase the number of candidates but may not increase the diversity of candidates.

Removing wards may provide voters with greater choice, however not necessarily fairer results.

Removing wards means low socio economic areas are probably going to be underrepresented as often the nature of Councillor work is that it attracts retirees and business owners.

Removing wards might allow people to consider candidates holistically, however it should not just be their #1 vote that counts in this case.

Removing wards potentially increases the risk of self interest groups to gain control of a council.

Removing wards will foster single issue candidates to stand. Better knowledge of issues can be brought to Council discussions by Ward Councillors, particularly in large geographic Council areas.

Removing Wards will remove Ward Shopping. All candidates will need to be fully appraised of all issues across the whole Council. Thus producing better, more informed, effective Councillors

Removing wards would be a step closer to removing councils all together.

Removing wards would not necessarily provide voters with greater choice and produce fairer results

Removing Wards would not provide any better selection of Candidates. Would removing wards require voters to select 10 of their preferred candidates?, in order of preference?, or just one candidate for the entire Council? This could result in a Candidate for the Council being elected on a handful of votes.

Removing wards would not provide voters with greater choice, and produce fairer results

Removing wards would not provide votes with greater choice

Removing wards would not work for all councils but may even be beneficial for others

removing wards would simplify the election process and reduce costs to councils in undertaking elections

represent the entire community rather than specific interest groups

Should be able to vote for all ward candidates. I don't like some of the people o other wards who effect decisions in my ward

Some good candidates miss out because there were many options in one ward. Another ward may not have enough Nominees.

I think there should be some flexibility in the system if insufficient candidates nominate in a Ward

Sometimes there are many good candidates in a single ward who don't get elected while some wards have uncontested elections that lead to undesirable candidates being elected.

Split mega Councils into multiple smaller Councils rather than to have wards.

support for wards/areas for planning and service delivery but not representation

Support removal of Wards to bring a focus to council-wide issues and operations and not matters confined to a set political and social geography.

Terrible idea. Just because it is a problem in some council does not mean a one size fits all approach should be implemented. It's throwing out the baby with the bath water.

The local council area that I live in has a very diverse population and a variety of industries. I would say that my LGA is one of the most diverse in South Australia from an agricultural and tourist position. Wards are vital as when I was on our Council I had no idea about coastlines, fisheries and recreational boating so I felt that I had no right to put my uninformed position to the vote on matters pertaining to that particular township.

The Office should contemplate a trial to evaluate the elimination of ward boundaries within the City of Adelaide

The risk to removing wards could see small communities having less representation

The statement that removing wards would be good, is completely wrong.

The ward system is important in our district and should not change

There are no positives for this idea unless the council is small.

There are too many council members. Cut back on the number of elected members.

There could be a best of both worlds approach. Have the councils remain separated into wards but allow voters to elect anyone they choose regardless of their ward. If I believe in a candidate enough that I am happy to accept that there isn't someone from my exact area that is a choice I will have to make.

There could be too many votes for too few candidates.

If there are 12 member in council, the residents should be able to make up to 12 votes all of equal weight.

There is no benefit in removing council wards as all wards are required to have equivalent elector and member ratios to ensure the 'one vote, one value' principle. Having a council wide no ward system does not guarantee opportunities for a much wider, more diverse group of candidates, by giving them much more flexible options to find their own community of potential voters. One group of disaffected voters could potentially come from a local group or a local street so the whole council would be not represented across the whole Council area and that would be undemocratic

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Wards are very important in Council areas where there are diverse populations who need to feel represented. A large part of a Council may feel unrepresented if the majority of electors live in one small area .

There is no sound reason to do so , unless the ratepayers for that council ask for it , this can be done via a referendum in the next election , a box to be ticked on the voting paper yes or no

There isn't a benefit. Areas have different issues

There will be more choice and more democracy.

There would be no benefit by removing wards. The opposite is true, this will only allow further interference from State and Federal political parties

they're already too big. If going to get bigger again just get rid of councils altogether as they are redundant and not representative

This could result in a concentration of elected councillors being from one geographic part of the council area - with the obvious potential issue of that area getting preferential allocation of resources etc

This has been covered in previous questions.

This is terrible for larger councils, and contradictory to prior goals.

This results in higher turnout areas dominating lower turnout areas.

This will vary with LGA but removing wards will limit candidates ability to canvas in person and with limited means, so removing wards is a bad idea.

Unless checks and balances are in place to prevent special interest groups from stacking, I believe that wards are still important to ensure a democratic outcome.

Usually a person who lives in a ward runs for council. This is better as they are more aware of issues in their ward. Especially rural areas. Ie; A big issue in our ward is the lack of mobile phone reception in a rural living district.. It doesn't affect other wards so they don't see it as a priority.

Varying Views:

- No, Councils can decide if they wish to remove them or not.
- Less representation, people less willing to want to try out amalgamation.

Voters can vote for any candidates they want to see elected and not be restricted by not being in the right ward. Prospective entrants can feel better knowing they are level playing field with everyone rather than in a ward with 2 popular incumbents, more votes will go towards electing members, people are

more excited to vote for people they want representing them rather than stuck in a ward where they don't want to vote for anyone

Wards are crucial as the concerns of one part of a council area are much different to that of another side entirely

Ward boundaries are detrimental to council business, because elected members are torn between representing the whole community and their own ward. I have seen nominations from candidates in wards where they do not live, just because there is a better chance of being elected in that ward. This is crazy, and the candidates with the most votes overall should be elected, with no ward boundaries to complicate things and confuse voters.

Wards are a great way to ensure the entire district is represented. It is not perfect, but it works. It stops interest groups dominating.

Wards are important as the communities are quite different and have different issues. We have wards with shack owners versus wards for towns and permanent residency

Wards are important for areas with varying issues. They also provide a specific representative for a rate payer to contact. Non wards allows more populous areas unfair representation

Wards are important to ensure that some areas do not dominate others just because they have a "more engaged" (older) demographic. It should be up to Councils in their representation reviews as to whether they have wards or not, depending on their local circumstances.

Wards are not needed. It's one council area, and the best candidates should represent it, and be acting for the whole region and not just their ward.

Wards are very important in larger councils in particular. Accessibility and representation.

Wards do have a place in regional areas to ensure fair representation of individual communities/townships within single Council areas.

In metro areas, removal of Wards would enable better 'big picture' thinking, with Members only working for "their" Ward, rather than the entire community.

Council demographics and priority areas widely vary, so it is important that the decision whether to have Wards, or not, should remain with the individual Council and its community.

Wards encourage candidates to come from the area they are representing which is important. Wards also help to direct and manage queries to the ward EM representative which gives a fair distribution of 'work' across Elected Members.

Wards ensure that people from all over the council area are elected and represent their local constituents.

Wards have different demographics and infrastructure needs removing wards will not fairly represent different residents.

wards help certain areas address key problems within their community.

removing wards will cause some areas to not have key problems or concerns addressed directly.

Wards may be appropriate in some large councils however Holdfast is a tiny council and further breaking that into wards is ridiculous.

Wards only encourage smaller-scale parochialism, and discourage collective wisdom from being effectively deployed. This can result in unsuitable candidates being elected to Council, which has happened in several councils recently. Wards are a relic of past thinking that just encourage hyper-localisation in elected members.

wards or small sectors are good - more grass roots

Wards produce candidates who care particularly about their local area, as well as the Council area in general.

Wards should only be removed from smaller councils where they are not needed.

Large Councils need wards so that the local councillor can interact and understand the local residents concerns.

Wards were brought in to avoid one area having all the members.

Plus, if we are really worried about not having enough candidates why are we now considering increasing the cost and resourcing of their election campaign?

Wards work well for larger Councils with rural and urban areas.

We do not have Wards in our Council area which I feel is detrimental. We have 11 elected members but most of these people live in rural parts of the District and I feel their emphasis is looking out for their own lot, thus ignoring the importance which the townships play.

We have area councillors in our city and have candidate stacking to ensure a voting faction rather than proper representation of our who community. Wards would break up elected member factions in rural areas.

You need to amalgamate councils NOT reduce wards.

Wards are monopolised too often by the few who live there. Wards are ridiculous in small populations like those in SA. It would be different if a ward had 500,000 people in it - that would work. But they're lucky to have 500 in them. Get rid of wards.

Wards are vital to rural councils with small population bases but larger geographical boundaries. It is important that each community within a council is able to have their voices heard and represented and this is best done under the current ward system.

Only a no wards situation really leads to true proportional representation and minimises the number of voters who do not elect a councillor.

I am more interested in those nominees who are in my Ward. I do the same when voting for Main Elections

The removal of Council wards would be catastrophic in my opinion and would actually decrease the number of candidates plus the engagement of the local area. Aside from the reasons previously highlighted, Mitcham's geographics would essentially see the overwhelming amount of campaigning

done in the flatter areas with higher population densities. This means that the hills areas, with steeper roads and much greater distances between houses, could end up being totally ignored.

People will chase the votes they require to get a position, not the votes required to convince the broader community that they should be elected.

One Council had 27 candidates at the last election for the Councillor positions. If you removed wards, people would have to make a choice between 27 different people. More choice does not equal more participation, it would just result in more confusion and makes it unlikely they would bother to vote at all. It is impossible to imagine that the average resident would bother to research 27 people to work out who to vote for. This could then result in people being elected who actually don't care about the role or who only target incredibly niche issues within the community.

While suggesting there is no great advantage to a ward system (in S2.7) – there is no automatic or guaranteed outcome from retention or removal of wards in providing voters with greater choice, nor fairer results.

I support the retention of Wards, I am a firm believer that as a ward councillor you build a repo of respect and trust overtime with your constituents and also really get to know and understand the needs of your Patch so to speak, in regards to no wards, the constituents will find it hard to build that connection of trust knowing that there is no specific councillor that they can rely on when the need arises because councillors will not have a specific area but across all council.

Council does not believe removing wards would provide voters with greater choice or produce fairer results. Refer earlier answers.

Council believes that ward structures should be maintained and be determined by each individual council. The current process of representation reviews should continue which allows Council to consult with their communities and determine their own tailored structure.

Wards

My council (like all other councils) covers a large area across multiple suburbs with varied infrastructure, demography, history, needs and interests. I want to elect councillors with an intimate understanding of and commitment to my area and the local issues affecting our quality of life and our personal and financial investment. These issues may be very different to other locations within the same council. The same considerations, of course, underlie our retention of lower house seats despite having, arguably fairer, state-wide upper house proportionally elected members in state and federal politics. The importance of local representation is recognised in the Tasmanian Hare-Clark system.

So yes, please keep the Ward system.

The Council does not support the removal of Wards as the mandated structure of a Councils. The value of Wards is that they provide for “personal” recognition of and representation by the local Elected Member. The capacity of an Elected Member to represent the community should be based on the knowledge, skills and commitment to the role and local knowledge of and the ability to relate to the local community is a highly regarded and important quality in an Elected Member.

Not necessarily – whilst wards may no longer be particularly relevant due to the more transient nature of communities, and the fact that ward nominations are not restricted to those who reside there / have a

connection to the ward – removing them does not create any fairer a system. Although doing so would eliminate ‘ward hopping’.

In certain situations, yes.

If you find yourself in a ward with candidates you deem unsatisfactory, casting votes across the entire region enables you to support more qualified candidates from another ward/locale.

Additionally, if one ward has an excess of commendable candidates exceeding available positions, deserving individuals might lose out, while less deserving candidates from other areas may be elected simply because they are the only options in that ward.

The fairness of this approach hinges on the intricacies of the campaigning and voting procedures. While it can be adjusted to ensure fairness, it would necessitate significant deviations from current norms and the introduction of innovative practices.

The current Council has no experience of wards to be able to make a comment.

I strongly oppose this. The stated purpose of this review is to encourage local involvement in Local Government, and encourage voter participation. Doing away with wards works directly against this objective.

The regular representation review procedures already contained in the Local Government Act provide an effective, and appropriate mechanism for regular reviews of representation, including consultation about removal of wards. There has always been very strong feedback supporting both the retention of wards, and for candidates residing in the ward they seek to represent

Having wards is essential to smaller rate base but large in geographical area rural councils to adequately listen to and represent different communities within council boundaries. It is acknowledged that once on council decisions are based on what is best for the Council as a whole but ward representation allows discussion with someone who is local and approachable

No. Wards should not be removed as they provide the mechanism for fairer community representation

We do not agree that removing wards would provide voters with greater choices. We submit that removing wards would be a regressive move and would actually reduce voters’ choices. A candidate who has to door-knock and deliver election material to an entire council area is facing a more onerous, time-consuming and expensive task than is a candidate seeking election to represent a smaller ward. Candidates who may have the backing of political parties will be unfairly advantaged by the removal of wards as they have access to greater financial and workforce resources to assist their election campaign. Again, it is the smaller independent candidates who will struggle to be elected in a council area with no wards, as they will face a much more onerous and expensive task to campaign across an entire council area compared to the work involved in campaigning across a ward area.

If a candidate in one ward is not elected on x votes and another candidate in another ward is elected on x votes, the first candidate needs to accept this. Not all is fair in politics There are swings and roundabouts. The unfortunate candidate needs to be philosophical and grown-up about it.

Council believes that in theory, removing wards would provide voters with greater choice and produce fairer results. However, this is balanced against situations where a vacancy occurs, and the entire Council goes to a supplementary election (rather than one ward) therefore increasing costs to the council.

City of Onkaparinga is in amalgamated Council and the largest populated Council in the state. The communities across the city are diverse, and the ward structure represents the diversity of our communities within those wards

We are of the view it should be a requirement for the candidate to live in the ward they are nominating for .

The ward boundaries capture the difference in community profiles and ensures elected members are accessible by distance to the specific interests that exist within the community within the ward the community is located.

We support the continuation of wards within the city of Onkaparinga

My focus is on regional councils/greater Adelaide and not metropolitan Adelaide. I believe the decision around wards should be made by the local community, and will depend on their size and composition. For voters in Area Councils (one ward for the whole Council), as outlined above, it may be more difficult for some voters to select from a long list of candidates.

For candidates in Area Councils (in the regions), it is also harder and costlier to effectively campaign across a large area compared to a smaller ward.

Councils should not continue to have wards. Wards often lead to division and prioritize the agendas of specific townships over the strategic needs of the entire council area. Decision-making should be focused on what is best for the entire community rather than being influenced by the interests of a particular ward.

Removing wards can promote a more cohesive and unified approach to governance, where decisions are made based on the broader needs and priorities of the entire council area. It encourages councillors to consider the welfare of all residents, regardless of their geographical location within the council boundaries.

The absence of wards does not preclude strong consultation processes within each area. By implementing robust community engagement strategies, councils can ensure that all residents have a voice in decision-making processes. This approach fosters inclusivity and allows for a more comprehensive understanding of community needs and preferences

Topic 4: Election improvements

- End Postal voting
- Bring in voting only by attendance not postal voting
- All voting to be done in the council offices or designated voting booths
- Counting of votes by hand only with the use of computers and computer algorithms terminated
- All counting to be done by an independent body of Rate Payers– not the Electoral Commission.
- Increase the size of the profiles that Candidates can submit from the current 1000 character up to 3000 to allow you to be heard by everyone voting.
- Remove the ability of a Candidate to declare their political allegiances.
- Allow the Candidate profile to include negative comments about the Council but not anything that might be personally defamatory to individuals.

I think online elections would be the best option

If this was linked with online voting on any key issues Council is addressing locals may feel more involved (providng Ste Govt doesn't ignore/over rule)

- Compulsory voting
 - No “plebiscites” / late uninformed knee jerk politically motivated reactions that unnecessarily raise community concern and complicate election count.
 - Make returns to the council for which you have nominated.
 - Ban all donations, there really is no need for them. It opens people up to being owned by donors.
 - The plebiscite vote delayed vote count pack-up from approx. 6:30pm Saturday to 1:30am Sunday morning (i.e. by 7 hours).
 - Voting papers not present (scanned/mailed through)
 - Mixed advice on inclusion/exclusion of mayoral/councillor/plebiscite voting papers depending how returned inside/outside respective envelopes
 - ‘incorrect question’ on returned plebiscite voting papers! • No late/last minute unnecessary changes to voting processes
 - End Postal voting
 - Bring in voting only by attendance not postal voting
 - All voting to be done in the council offices or designated voting booths
 - Counting of votes by hand only with the use of computers and computer algorithms terminated
 - All counting to be done by an independent body of Rate Payers– not the Electoral Commission.
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 - Remove the ability of a Candidate to declare their political allegiances.
 - Allow the Candidate profile to include negative comments about the Council but not anything that might be personally defamatory to individuals.
1. Community Engagement Events;
 2. Youth Engagement;
 3. Convenient Voting Options;
 4. Voter Education and Outreach: Develop educational initiatives to inform voters about the electoral process, candidates, and key issues, targeting underrepresented or marginalized communities.

A better process than last election.

A code of conduct for candidates which dissuades them from intimidation and other under-handed tactics.

A respondent reported Three Councillors were affected – two were stood down. Miraculously they lodged their returns the day after they were stood down

Add the simple question of limiting rate rises in correlation to inflation

Advance notice- I often only hear about upcoming meetings on social media the day of the meeting

All candidate information should be neutral, factual and equal. 'Politics' should be avoided. Candidates should be provided/mandated with equal resources towards 'campaign' spending (e.g. promotional material).

All issues could have been resolved / alleviated by ECSA being properly prepared for council elections and working more effectively with the LGA and councils.

All run independently by Electoral Commission, on-line

All scrutineers should be made to sit and not interact with anyone who comes through the door to liaise and discuss anything with the Electoral Officer!! This ended up with a scrutineer assaulting an elected Member on election day. Scrutineers should not be able to interact with other council members once in their role as scrutineers. This happened at Burnside Council on election day where a scrutineer assaulted a Council member for asking the Electoral Commission delegate Member a question!!

Alter timing of elections to provide greater gaps between Local/State/Federal elections - minimise voter fatigue, create capacity within ECSA.

An increase in resources for the electoral commission to police unauthorised, defamatory and misleading electoral material as well as thorough investigations into these types of breaches

As mentioned before... a nomination HAS to be accepted. This would entail each prospective candidate providing 'bona fides' that they've within the last 10 years been an active member of a community organisation . volunteer, or are or have been in the paid workforce in a job that has 'professional standards'.

Attendance voting (not postal) could be more cost effective. Completing another, separate form for council election while voting for state elections could be more cost effective with potentially higher returns for council elections.

Being available to give advice on local issues.

Better engagement / working relationship between ECSA, LGA and councils, commencing well prior to elections.

can not run for more than 2 terms

Candidates must disclose interests in the community and all previous political parties they have joined.

Candidates should have been resident for at least one year. This provides them time to observe how council is currently performing and give them the opportunity to present fresh ideas.

Councillors should be properly trained and subscribe to a code of ethics. Failure to abide by the ethics should be grounds for dismissal.

Combine them with State elections

Complete election in conjunction with state elections

Compulsory elections

Compulsory run with state elections

Compulsory voting in person.

Compulsory voting might eliminate the risk of letterbox theft, since all voters will have to vote and may raise concern if not receiving the ballot papers.

Compulsory voting will reduce the potential for candidates to be elected through voting blocs and the like.

Compulsory voting, training for candidates as a condition of nominating, and scrutiny of candidates.

Compulsory voting.

Compulsory voting. It good being run through ECSA and not council officers.

Compulsory, attendance voting

Consider on-line voting as an option.

Cost was an issue that council encountered with the Electoral Commission SA and delivery of the 2022 council elections that warrants action

Council CEO's should know that they have enough candidates to fill vacancies prior to nominations closing. I agree that the names of those who have been nominated should remain secret until after nominations close, to encourage a wider diversity of people to nominate. The old method of putting peoples picture up at council discouraged people from nominating.

Council elections are already run efficiently by the Electoral Commission.

Councils themselves are no longer fit for purpose and should be abolished which will likely save the Government millions of dollars of tax payer money.

Councils should be subject to biennial independent reviews to ensure they are up to scratch.

Counting procedures for Wards and Mayors to be advised in advance of the counting of votes.

Customised marketing which is relative to the circumstances of individual or grouped communities may improve engagement with a diverse demographic

Digital and online voting.

Disband Council

Do NOT allow candidates anywhere near the places where votes are counted until AFTER votes are finalised and posted.

Do not allow more than one member of a household or family to run for council. E.g. no husband and wife or husband and son to be elected at the same time.

Councils need to be more transparent about the role, the salary and benefits of the job.

Councils need to ensure that candidates are capable of the job before being elected and check competency and compliance throughout the term.

Ensure diversity amongst councillors when possible to represent community diversity and views.

Make councillors accountable for their work and ensure they are positively working with the community. I know so many councillors that do absolutely nothing to assist or represent the community.

Don't have council staff involved, it looks like Councillors do nothing when they are elected and at meetings. they are moving object Background.

Don't know how they're run atm, so, no.

Early preparation and promotion.

ECSA could provide a breakdown of returns by postcode/localities within a council area, to help create a better understanding of participation rates to help direct future promotion.

This would be easy if voting occurred in person at booths with the state election.

ECSA have a strong reputation and enjoy outstanding public confidence, but at recent elections we have seen credible allegations of vote/election tampering due to the vulnerabilities of the postal voting system. Postal voting did not achieve its own stated aims and is undermining public confidence. Bringing council elections into line with state and federal systems would enable them to 'piggyback' off of the unquestioning confidence the public enjoy on those fronts and save ECSA money by reducing the set of rules and policies they need to maintain - not to mention avoid litigation in the court of disputed returns (which seems to be rising).

ECSA needs to be more timely with its services to Councils and candidates

ECSA needs to publish its report into the November 2022 council elections as soon as possible to identify other matters that may warrant action as part of the Participation Review

ECSA needs to retain primary responsibility for running and coordinating LGA elections. If the Councils have too much influence on the process, they can distort it in favour of sitting members, or in favour of candidates with a particular viewpoint.

ECSA should be solely responsible for the conduct of elections so that they are independent of Councils.

Council Members should not be involved in the decision making around the number of members on each council or the placement of ward boundaries as these decisions are made always to keep the status quo as they do not want to make it harder for them to be re-elected

ECSA to improve their administration of elections, ensure well informed/educated officers answering questions with accuracy and consistency.

Either assume 'Nil' return if not completed (with penalties for this not being correct), or establish more processes to enable follow up.

Elected member to provide information about where they stand on issues. To provide more than a badly worded paragraph about family and wanting to serve.

Elections should be run on the same rules as State elections with the preference system.

Electoral Commission to run them all, consistently.

Electronic voting - so much more efficient and easier from the voters perspective

Electronically. The postal voting system no longer serves the process - accurately or efficiently. My scrutineer saw an entire box of votes 'discovered' very late into the count. It is also frustrating for candidates to wait for results. However, the count updates on the internet seemed to be better in 2022 than they had been previously.

Ensure applicants are vetted, including police checks and national security vetting

Ensure majority of voting is in person and only citizens are eligible to vote.

Ensure Police Checks, all candidates should have ALL checks/clearances done to nominate.

Ensure political allegiance is upfront

Ensure respect is present, respect for the process and each other.

Ensure staff employed on the day are sufficiently trained, have a competent Returning Officer for each LGA, encourage scrutineers and the workplace is well ventilated, has modern equipment and available amenities.

e-voting

Far more visibility from the people putting themselves up for election including the Mayor

Faster count

Feedback of our Councillors and our community on their experience with the Electoral Commission SA website during the 2022 periodic general election, has highlighted the need for comprehensive review and improvement of the site. Users find it difficult to navigate and information hard to locate. In the interest of transparency and appeal to future elected members, it is critical that associated systems like the ECSA website are well promoted, accessible and user friendly. It is also important that assistance with the site is at hand and responsive when difficulties are experienced.

The confidential, or “blind”, nomination process which occurred in the 2022 general election had a disastrous effect on the number of nominations received across the state. It is important that all nominations be publically listed as they are received, at the respective Council office and online. This will ensure greater transparency of the nomination process and may also encourage individuals to nominate for Council where nominations are few. Hard copy nominations, in addition to electronic nominations, will also ensure a more accessible and inclusive nomination process.

Generally, the last periodic local government elections were widely and consistently marketed in South Australia. Unfortunately, the selected marketing material lacked relevance and connection with genuine South Australian communities, felt by regional and rural communities disproportionately. Customised marketing which is relative to the circumstances of individual or grouped communities may improve engagement with a diverse demographic.

With all South Australian Mayors to be elected at large at the next election, a nomination for Mayor should not preclude the nominee from a nomination of Councillor. This is particularly important in regional and rural communities where experienced Councillors may be few and can be inadvertently lost by Council should their nomination for Mayor prove to be unsuccessful.

Fixed terms, perhaps time limited terms

Further information resulting from the current consultation process is required prior to making feedback on the efficiency of the election process, with any suggested changes being considered. The reference to electronic voting is considered to improve the efficiency with the added benefit of reducing costs through the removal of costs and delays associated with posting completed voting material.

Generally things run well and our system is the envy of many in the world, but the insider view is that the Electoral Commissioner does not make tough decisions when needed.

Greater timely responses by ECSA staff to breaches by candidates during the election campaign

Hold compulsory attendance elections

Hold elections online for those who wish to participate on that platform. Using passwords etc to make sure there is security.

Hold them the same time as state elections

I agree with postal voting as in person voting is cost prohibitive. The penalty needs to be appropriate if people don't vote, and not like the referendum with a 20 dollar fine. That's ridiculous.

I am very confident that council elections are already run with the utmost integrity. I commend the AEC and councils on their approach. Its the Trump-like candidates and their followers that put doubt in the process, which is really unfortunate and unfair. Maybe the AEC could do more positive media to demonstrate their processes, and help people understand that the elections process in Australia is beyond reproach.

I believe candidates who run for mayor, should be able to be elected as a council member if they are unsuccessful, they can be in both elections.

I believe that we need to ensure our youth are better educated at schools about the three tiers of governance, their roles and the importance of voting and being a well-informed voter. I believe an Adult is more engaged in the process if they have learnt to understand it better in their youth

I need time to consider this

I need to research more

I not sure how, but know who and what support each candidate has, whether it be the backing of community groups, political parties, groups of volunteers, if they are receiving donations

I think increasing turnout (or making voting compulsory) is probably the most important thing to do. However I feel like I've made some other points throughout this survey that will also help.

I think that the current system works very well. One area I do believe needs to be improved, is the scrutineering process currently in place for Council elections.

Scrutineers are volunteers and while votes are counted over the weekend, there is no way of knowing exactly when ECSA is going to count your votes. This means that the scrutineer has to be available for the entire weekend to watch the count happening. This is an unrealistic expectation quite frankly. ECSA should be able to phone potential scrutineers before the count starts or provide a time estimation for when it will occur.

I think that the State Electoral Commission does a good job - albeit it is a significant expense for a Council. Perhaps there are functions that the Commission performs that could be done by a Council in an effort to offset the costs that the Commission charge.

I think the postal voting undermines integrity somewhat. Would be good for it to be in person, with optional postal voting.

I think the present system has the necessary checks and balances. the opportunity to use Online elections should be explored

I was concerned that at the information session prior to the last council elections sitting some sitting members exaggerated the time they spent on council business presumably to deter competition from prospective applicants

I was a scrutineer at the last council elections and the last council election and have no criticism of the process in the day.

I wonder why interstate councillors are elected based on the political affiliations, yet in SA we have the notion that this should not be the case. I strongly believe that candidates should declare which party they belong to or aligned with. Lets be honest participating in council is where many aspiring politicians cut their teeth.

If ECSA find it difficult to run State and Local elections in the same year, increase their staff numbers and let them do it properly. Watch that legislation doesn't expect more from the commissioner than he can cope with - give the management / back end stuff back to Councils.

Improve optional preferential voting.

Introduce Robson rotation so that candidates are treated fairly

In person voting would allow for increased integrity

In terms of the count – when the margin of votes is very small, for example, 62 votes in 10.5k difference, an automatic recount should take place to ensure accuracy. My scrutineer cited machine breakdown and other issues but the Ombudsman did not agree to a recount. Other Elected Members in other Councils took these issues to court at their own expense. This is not viable for candidates without significant financial resources

Inform and allow Council administration to follow up when someone hasn't lodged form.

Only have 1 form (not the current 2)

Information on how the votes are counted need to be much clearer.

Suggesting that you can vote 1,2,3,4,etc for the full number of positions and then only counting the 1 votes is extremely misleading!!

Unless all voters get multiple votes to achieve a more balanced representation of the electorates wishes. The current system involves a high level of lucky dip with non-ward councils as many high caliber and popular candidates miss out due to be high in 2nd and 3rd preferences as they are listed down the ballot or later in the bio's.

Education on how the votes are counted, will assist in more voters engagement.

In-person and mandatory

Investigations into online voting needs to be undertaken - make it as easy as possible for the voters to participate. Investigate the vote counting methodology - first past the post V preferential etc.

It is acknowledged that recent issues relating to campaign donation return requirements were vigorously defended by the LGA in the broad interests of the sector. Notwithstanding the unexpectedly high number of candidates who fell foul of return provisions and the LGA's view that the consequences were disproportionate to the seriousness of the breach, the fact remains that the overwhelming majority of candidates complied and met requirements. Even a large number of non-compliances should not be taken to be an inherent fault in the system, particularly if the principles hold true that local government should seek to attract the highest calibre of candidates, and that roles (and the compliance requirements associated with them) are serious and important. Council does not consider the current compliance requirements for candidates to be onerous, and as long as the technologies by which they are collected are functional, legislative changes to reduce the penalties for non-compliance are not required

It would help if candidates' nominations were published as they are received.

Keep SAEC managing voting. Local councils should not be involved in handling any votes.

Last election, the promotional materials were provided too late and I believe this was due to the state election having just been held. Local Council's need promotional material months in advance to plan and implement an effective comms and engagement plan.

Less candidates review Council boundaries

Less culture wars more actually doing shit.

Less positions on Council with better resources for elected members and increase allowances - less positions will create much stronger competition.

LGAs not involved in the vote counting process.

Local government should be abolished and if not, councils should be amalgamated eg Eyre Peninsula should be one council. Some rural councils have less than 3000 or so people but about 50 or more "staff", most of whom are on over \$80K.

Maintain democratic processes

Maintain strong role and therefore probably increase resources to the electoral commission

Make all candidates transparent. Who funds their campaigns, who passes votes to them, which influential people they collaborate to trick vulnerable voters. Stop biases Q&A designed to sway voters?. Etc.

Make candidates declare all business interests. Fund campaigns according to means

Make people aware if they want changes then the only way for this to happen is to nominate or vote or attend meetings.

Make them more democratic and encourage them as an event. If people knew what the council does for them then maybe they will actually think about voting in their elections instead of just blaming them for things that may or may not be an issue they can do something about

Make them more widely known

Make them really really easy to participate in.

Online or via an app.

Make voting compulsory

Make voting in them compulsory.

Making voting compulsory, eliminate wards, consolidate small councils, leave the election process to the Electoral Commission, require candidates to undertake training prior to nomination (which could be done at any-time, doesn't have to be just in the immediate lead-up to an election).

Mandatory voting using the house of assembly roll, no extra voting through council rolls

Many candidates don't understand the legal requirements or level of public disclosure required as an elected member. Ensuring this is part of the competency training to be a candidate would assist with this.

members undertake mandatory training into obligations pre-election, are competency assessed and are required to demonstrate yearly competency and are randomly audited on performance.

More information from the candidates is needed.

Political affiliations - current and past membership. Information about their employment history, bankruptcy, criminal checks, working with children checks. Who is funding their campaign, donations etc.

More online focus of delivering fact checked information provide by candidates.

more 'Town Hall' debates or 'soap box' presentations and video'd pitches by candidates that are posted to an election portal linked to each Council's website and Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram.

Voting online will provide quick, accurate results, and will increase voter participation.

Move away from representative democracy towards deliberative democracy.

no, I think they are run with integrity

No preferential voting system should be allowed and make the voting more complicated

not allow political interference by Mayor in bye election. Sanctions should apply such as fines

Not really. I feel the current process works very well.

Offer online voting.

Make the Electoral Commission sign up and declaration process easier.

Have a mandatory information session for candidates.

Display candidate profiles as soon as they register.

Online voting

Online voting system.

Only those already discussed, including especially: Compulsory voting, more information about candidates and perhaps advertising or a media campaign about the importance of voting.

Having come from a country that did not have compulsory voting, whenever someone complained about

about any government, the first question asked was "did you vote" and if the answer was no, the response was "then you have no right to complain"

Penalties and security on polling day

Increased legislative penalties and immediate removal of offenders should be applied to scrutineers when inappropriate behaviour is directed at council staff and/or electoral officers undertaking the scrutiny and count on polling day.

During the November 2022 election, staff and ECSA officials at the Council were subjected to inappropriate behaviour from certain scrutineers which included filming of staff, aggressive and highly inappropriate comments and unsuitable personal proximity.

A zero tolerance policy to inappropriate and antisocial behaviour should be applied with a strict and uncompromising application of the law.

Penalties for candidates who publish untrue statements in relation to themselves or other candidates.

PLEASE let it be known who is nominating WHEN THEY SUBMIT, not after the closing date. Many people in my ward did not even realise who had nominated till they got their voting papers. They should have much more time to get to know the prospective nominees.

Please see my last regarding caretaker provisions. let people know the councillors income.

Postal voting is the best in my opinion because it is simple and easy.

I am against electronic voting as it can be hacked.

Promote how your voice counts stand and be counted to make a difference in your community

Provide an accessible platform for highlighting voting history of re-nominating candidates, and a vetted background for all candidates. There is no longer an active local press covering local government adequately, and the metro press and TV takes little interest. As a result, candidates' records are not aired.

Provide electronic & manual voting methods

Provide for online voting but only if there is an existing secure system we can use.

Public disclosure of conflicts of interest. Encouragement of how candidates contribute to diversity

Reduce the paper load and electoral commission full delivery.

Utilise online with MySAGov portal and application for voter validation and security management

remove political party involvement

Remove postal voting and have voting on a certain Election Day and via the early voting centres as well.

Remove requirements to provide the printer information in authorisations. It achieves nothing in council elections and results in a random message about Officeworks on every letter for no reason.

Remove the ability of councillors from being able to pass their excess votes across to another candidate because the only candidates that should be on council should be voted in by the residents/ratepayers only and not by another candidate who has control over them.

Voting should be carried out by physical attendance only at either local council offices or polling booth's.

All counting should be carried out by an independent body of Rate Payers.

Remove the ability of a Candidate to declare their political allegiances.

Restrict multiple people from single household/family from running in election including term limits for families.

Retain the current process of the Electoral Commissioner running council elections. Consider updating the legislation to increase governance on social media publication by candidates. Introduce more stringent criteria to be eligible for election in relation to criminal history.

run them electronically

Run them exactly the same as a State election.

Run under the same election rules as nominated by the electoral commission for state and federal elections

Shorten the time frame for elections in local government. Currently the election process can take anything up to three months which is totally unacceptable.

Should the existing voting eligibility for Head Lease holders be changed?

- Currently a holder of a headlease who is not in occupation of the land (i.e. a head lessee who has wholly sub-let property to another) is considered an 'owner' under the Local Government Act 1999.
- When this situation occurs, under the Act neither party is eligible to be enrolled to vote in their own right. Instead, they must be enrolled as a group of owners.
- An unintended consequence is that each unique owner and head lessee combination would constitute a unique voter's group.
- In relation to the above, there are significant practical issues in that Council is expected to somehow know of and record the details of all owners, including people who hold leases but do not occupy the land.
- While the Council learns of changes to ownership through the LTO, there is no practical way to learn of changes to commercial leasing arrangements.
- The Council's system can record the property owner and the occupier but is not able to accurately record and capture head lessees and reflect the correct voting entitlement.
- Further, it is unlikely that property owners and headlease holders would be aware they are only entitled to a group voting entitlement

Show ratepayer where the council's money is spent on the election.

someone from State government to oversee. more importantly have a State government do the announcement in person! at a ceremony in a public place/hall. all to see.
not the council office public limited/controlled meeting room

Staff need to know information and give correct answers.

There were alternative and varying answers about use of corflutes in the last election. I was told they were not allowed and then suddenly we were told they were allowed. Not good that staff did not know.

Steps need to be taken to ensure that the rise in Artificial Intelligence (AI) software does not lead to the manipulation of recorded meetings and this should be addressed through legislative change to enable prosecution for such actions

Stop people providing misleading statements

stop person who are not on electoral roll and international students from voting - stop woke focussed LGA and EC advertising campaigns - ban any assistance from MPs offices to candidates

That ECSA staff have the Authority to pull a Candidate's material if it is misleading. All Electoral Candidate's fliers etc have the same sign off criteria as their Candidate statement

That ECSA work with Councils and the State Electoral roll to combine to one voting roll -taking away the need for rate payers to know about the discretionary roll

The aec should over see the election process

The candidates must fully-disclose their political leanings.

The Council does not support the use of Election Signage for elections.

The Council feels strongly that the legislation should be amended to require an election to continue, with remaining Candidates, if any, despite the legitimate withdrawal of one or more candidates after the close of nominations.

The count and certification of results took an inordinate amount of time compared to previous elections, not helped by the fact that vote counts were begun here but completed in Adelaide.

The counting of votes needs to be improved and this should occur by ECSA sharing its vote counting software with 'counting centres' so that votes can be counted in the regions and not have to be sent back to Adelaide.

the current ability for potential candidates to be able to assist enrolments having potential access to the personal details of electors may give the opportunity for harvesting or manipulating voting particularly with a process that doesn't require a physical check.

The elections should be conducted by the State electoral commission. They are independent in my experience very fair.

The Electoral Commission should have complete control. Council staff should have no role in counting votes and have no involvement i.e. banned from applying with the AEC.

The issue encountered with ECSA in 2022 was the lack of communication until it was too late to help or resolve.

The LGA needs to do quite a bit of PR work to effectively communicate what Councils do, and what they can't/don't do. Having a more informed/educated population will help encourage folks to get involved at all levels. Sneering at Councils is a bit of a national sport yet the decisions made affect us all. Getting politics out of Council will make a big difference too - leave that to the people in State & Fed govt who

want to make a career out of it. Councils need to get back to their community roots, stop silly in-fighting, and work to improve their communities in the best ways they can.

The LGA needs to ensure that AI is used ethically through campaigns, evidence is emerging of AI campaign agents, and Gen AI for marketing

The online process for the submission of returns was difficult to complete at the best of times but most of us, though very computer literate, encountered numerous issues, from dates not being recorded, to forms submitted early not being received, or being unable to be uploaded.

Some of us were forced to submit by email or in hardcopy, with email communication in response often confusing and unclear.

The Commission's follow up with elected members who had apparently failed to submit a return was inadequate, as evident in the unprecedented number of failed returns compared to previous elections, when the only changes were the electronic system used and who was handling the follow up, a Council CEO or the Commission.

Yet the most frustrating part of the campaign donation returns saga was none of the above, but the incredible delay between noting the failure to submit a return (December 2022) and notification of elected members and the respective administration (February 2023).

We note that for a member of a council failing to submit a return under Section 68(2) of the Local Government Act 1999, the Act prescribes that the Chief Executive Officer must notify the member of that fact 'as soon as practicable', despite the failure initially leading to the lesser consequence of suspension, rather than loss of position. We would suggest that the Office of Local Government would hardly hold a two months' delay in notification to be 'asap'. Why then would such a delay be acceptable for the Electoral Commission?

We appreciate the Commissioner's efforts to speak to Council Chief Executive Officers prior to sending formal notification, but sending an email to inform and foreshadow a personal call would have been significantly timelier and more efficient. As it was, the communication, or lack thereof, left community, elected body and administration wondering for days whether we were affected, and creating space for incorrect information to spread

The State Government should pay for these.

The submission needs to address this issue of changing the legislation and providing the AEC the power to determine the number of elected officials based on demographics. It should not just be broad brush legislation

The time between nominations and elections is way too long.

The vote counting process is too rushed. There is no need for the votes to be counted and the new term of the council to start immediately. It could be delayed for a couple of months to take the pressure off ECSA but also to let new members get training and understand the council business before attending their first meeting.

There are too many silly mistakes during council elections made during counting that have caused great anxiety to candidates. In both of the elections that I have run in, the electoral commission has made mistakes - the second election the mistake was such that it changed the result of the election. These could have been mitigated by better processes and automation by the electoral commission. One method could be the greater allowance and encouragement of scrutineers that could provide an independent check against problems in the process. In our 7 member ward, the vote counting process took so long

that by the time all votes had been entered into the computer and the run of the program to determine the result, all scrutineers had long since gone home. Scrutineers would have easily picked up the large discrepancy in vote numbers before the result was made public.

While I understand the hesitancy towards electronic voting, I think that this has been coloured too much by the experience in NSW and there are other sectors e.g. corporate and union elections where electronic voting has been widely accepted and practised. Electronic voting should be trialled immediately, at least as an alternative for interstate and overseas voters. It is something that is conducted successfully overseas in many jurisdictions and the techniques and lessons learnt from successful models should be followed. There is a tendency in these things to minimise the consequences of human error and inflate the issues with software/machine error and problems with hacking in an appropriately designed system.

There needs to be more plain English explaining the campaign donation returns and the dates. It is confusing

There should be more prescriptive processes put in place in terms of electoral material to ensure unauthorised, defamatory and misleading electoral material is minimised.

This doesn't seem to be correct for this Section.

Those who are conducting the counting should be empowered to report to the election manager any suspicious activity with the voting papers without the threats of scrutineers.

Time to adopt electronic voting. Make it bulletproof and easy and available and it will get action.

to coincide with and utilise the same voting venues as state elections

TRANSPARENCY & CONDUCT, & NOT DRIPS of information in technical speak, again stand up in front of us & explain why you spent millions on a street party that doesn't bring revenue in to all areas of the Council area. Complacency breeds contempt & apathy of no accountability it also breeds favouritism that can be utilized to & for mates but not others in the community even while supposedly following so called regulatory rules, the Shades of black & white have grey areas that have been used to penalise some and benefit others. THE RULES APPLY 2 ALL not just a few chosen. Street trees that should be replaced in all streets, beautifications & road safety issues solved in high traffic areas & not pass the buck & not just some who are lucky enough 2 get dead end streets, so many issues like that creates the great divide and open 2 corruption.

Transparency of all proceedings and candidates.

Unfortunately, councils are a level of governing that is no longer required.

Use a method so that the results are known that night. It is ridiculous to have to wait days or even a week for results - such a small election!! Get it done faster - either put more people on or just make it online or electronic somehow - get people to turn up to local government places (ie. libraries, LGCs, depots, council offices etc) and do it on a computer so it's DONE and dusted and counted immediately with the computer doing the sorting out.

Vet who is employed to work in booths

Visibility of Nominations was an issue that council encountered with the operation of the legislation during the 2022 council elections that warrants action

Vote for policies, not for faces.

Vote in person or apply for postal vote.

voting by attendance only

voting by attendance

candidates should have fullest freedom of expression and opportunities to communicate freely, engage and share -

Voting should be at the voters choice better scrutiny of votes but not by political parties or people connected to Councils

Voting to be online or at least the roll to be electronic. Out with paper please ..

We need to find out why people do not take the time to vote in Council elections.

Ask them what would support them to vote and assess and implement appropriate strategies.

We would like to see more/improved promotion but believe this should be centrally coordinated by ECSA and the LGA

There is a risk that by taking on a promotional role for elections, Councils will be perceived as having a bias for the existing elected Council. This would be problematic and may erode trust in the elections. Smaller Councils do not have the resources for large scale promotion so a decentralised model will likely result in lower voter turnout.

There should be consistency and clarity across State, Federal and Local Government concerning the display of Election signs.

Council prefers no signage for any elections be allowed on public property.

The current legislation is too blunt and should not result in instant removal from office if donations returns are not lodged. If the casual vacancies resulting from the 2022 Elections campaign donations issue was not addressed, the democratic process would have been severely undermined.

Failure to lodge donations returns should be managed similar to ordinary returns where an Elected Member is suspended until they lodge the return and a further time period to lodge is set before being removed from office.

The communication from ECSA to impacted councils was very poor and severely impacted Council's ability to support their Elected body and manage the impact of the casual vacancies.

There was no communication from ECSA to the CEOs indicating there was a risk that donations returns would not be lodged. CEOs would have taken proactive steps if they were aware of this issue and proactively reminded Elected Members of their responsibilities regarding campaign donations returns. The lodgement portal was not easy to use and communication from ECSA was not clear to Members who experienced difficulties in lodging returns.

There was very limited support and communication from ECSA and the LGA for the impacted Councils when Members were vacated from office.

Given the significant impact of the casual vacancies post the 2022 elections it would have been useful to

conduct a post incident review not long after the event. To be seeking feedback on this issue 12 months later is disappointing.

When ECSA refers material to the Ombudsman during the campaign period this should be dealt with far more quickly so constituents can be informed.

ECSA needs to publish its report into the November 2022 council elections as soon as possible to identify other matters that may warrant action as part of the Participation Review.

When ECSA refers material to the Ombudsman during the campaign period this should be dealt with quickly so constituents can be informed

When newly elected councillors fail to comply with submitting their returns, don't overturn the legislation. It sends a message that compliance is not really important

when the ICAC and Ombudsman make adverse findings about senior management and Councillors they should be held accountable and have some actual consequences.

With all South Australian Mayors to be elected at large at the next election, a nomination for Mayor should not preclude the nominee from a nomination of Councillor. This is particularly important in regional and rural communities where experienced Councillors may be few and can be inadvertently lost by Council should their nomination for Mayor prove to be unsuccessful

Yes ban corflutes plastic or cardboard as they in most cases do not show an accurate picture, the corflutes are also for the ones who can afford it, do not allow candidates to run go fund me pages for campaigns or other election activities. Make candidates state if any political party has assisted in election campaign, declare all election material as official material for letter boxes

Yes, they need to be held for ALL councils in the country. Democracy should not be denied to those who live outside big cities.

I think, on the whole, they are exemplary.

I think the ECSA staff are awake to potential vote rigging scenarios, and I trust them. Integrity in the system is paramount - without it, we are lost.

I ran for the Unley elections and whilst the process was straight forward I do have some feedback:

The declaration of donations form was overly complex and difficult.

It should be prefilled with the dates for the donation periods, you should be able to tick a box for 'no donations' and return the form via email. The form didn't have any dates and no reference to the periods and had several sections to fill in, for what seemed like a waste of time, as every candidate I looked up declared 'no donations'. It took my several goes, printing, completing, uploading to the portal, as i made a few date errors and they emailed my temporary email account for the election, which post the election i stopped checking as I wasn't successful. there should be two email contact options. I didn't want to put my private email on the voting information sheet, so i made a temporary one for people to email questions about the campaign.

The campaign period was fine. The people that won in my ward had the corflutes, the leaflet drops and did the work talking to people. I was one of 7 candidates and from memory was on the last page, I'm not sure why all 7 of us were on the open out section in the middle and all the mayoral candidates (4) on the front page. Instead they had the 4 mayoral candidates on 2 pages and then my ward had the candidates over 2 pages (4 and 3). I just found this a bit odd having people on different pages in an election where

there is such low voter turn out.

I was running to try and fix a few local issues around Goodwood Road clearways, street lighting and to try and prevent a canopy tax from coming in.

My general thoughts are that voting shouldn't be compulsory for local council.

There are too many councils, really there should be only a handful of metro council and some of the smaller councils merged.

Anyway, thanks for listening. Happy to discuss further if needed.

The campaign period was fine. The people that won in my ward had the corflutes, the leaflet drops and did the work talking to people. I was one of 7 candidates and from memory was on the last page, I'm not sure why all 7 of us were on the open out section in the middle and all the mayoral candidates (4) on the front page. Instead they had the 4 mayoral candidates on 2 pages and then my ward had the candidates over 2 pages (4 and 3). I just found this a bit odd having people on different pages in an election where there is such low voter turn out.

The non-publishing of candidate nominations caused a reasonable level of confusion within the community, and should be addressed. If we want the community to be more supportive and active in voting at elections, candidate information is key. The non-publishing lacks transparency.

Election improvements, Processes and paperwork streamlined within the legislative requirements to be time effective for candidates during busy elections campaign.

There is no doubt that the 2022 Council Elections descended into a farce, with insufficient candidate numbers received in numerous Councils, Mayors being elected and then removed from office for administrative breaches, and a general scramble to fill the gaps and restore the Mayors. Those issues and the handling of them may have a long-term deterrence effect on potentially good future candidates who don't want to be seen to be associating with a 'broken system'.

Whatever changes happen, there should be consideration given to equitable funding for councils from State Government to implement changes so that smaller councils with less resources (money, staff etc) are not disadvantaged and/or the Electoral Commission funded to ensure this.
e.g., The intent of the change to a Charter is to enable councils to take a more fit-for-purpose approach to public consultation, taking into account the significance of the matter under consideration, the needs of their local community, and the advantages of new technology. While new technology is rolled out the aged and vulnerable constituents without access or technological skills need to be considered.

There could be no worse mistake by the Electoral Commission of SA than this.

In an era of discontent and distrust from a small but fanatical section of the community this is disastrous... not just in South Australia but it will become "evidence" that the "big steal" is possible because it happened and was only discovered by the ineptitude of the Australian authorities.

This will be used by foreign actors that use bots in social media to spread disinformation.

The response to this cannot simply be "sorry we made a mistake" or "it won't happen again".

You have several areas now to address:

1. Providing a new and transparent process
2. Communicating the review and process (not a post on your website or brochure) using the same methods employed by the misinformation campaign.
3. Monitor fringe groups use of the error - address the misuse to counter it
4. Proactively promote the security and safety of democratic voting systems in elections

Nothing short of a "here is a root and branch review of the process and a transparent explanation of how

a foolproof and failsafe voting and counting system will work” and accompanying this a thorough, and likely expensive, communications plan that is ready to tackle the extremists misinformation campaign which will be persistent and unfettered by facts (though the Electoral Commission of SA has now given them a fact to grasp).

Each election will have to now include “how you can be sure your vote is correctly cast and counted” communications in more than a brochure or website.

It will be another terrible miscalculation to underestimate what needs to be done - but I suspect that in true South Australian fashion we will downplay it and say we can’t afford to fix it.

The Australian Local Government Women’s Association South Australia Inc (ALGWA SA) runs a series of free information sessions statewide for diverse women candidates in conjunction with the LGA. ALGWA SA does this with its own funding. Could be more assistance with this including promotion given by ECSA to this. The ALGWA SA members who do this should be reimbursed by ECSA for their costs.

Campaign donation returns

ECSA should retain the responsibility to receive campaign donation returns from candidates. It is noted that the penalty for a failed return has been more appropriately aligned.

Coming into the November 2022 election the Council had a number of confidential Ombudsman’s investigations of member conduct not finalised. A more swift resolution of these matters, preferably prior to nominations opening, would have provided the community with a more transparent overview of any intending candidate, or may have legally prevented a nomination.

Withdrawal of Candidate after the Close of Nominations

Election Material

Election Signage

Campaign Donation Returns

The recent legislative provisions are supported, however an Elected Member who does not complete the Campaign Donation Return by the prescribed date should be suspended until the form is completed rather than lose office.

With the recent resignation of a Councillor triggering a supplementary election, we would finally like to suggest that the period in section 6(2)(c)(ii)(A) of the Local Government (Elections) Act 1999 during which a subsequent vacancy may be filled by the next successful candidate be extended to two years. We believe that extending the time that a casual vacancy may be filled by the next candidate to within two years of the conclusion of a periodic election strikes a more effective balance between the significant costs of a supplementary election, Council and Electoral Commission resources, the ability of residents to participate in the democratic process, and possible changes in circumstances for the candidate and local government area

All councils having a single council-wide electorate. It is the most democratic method that can possibly be used, as:

- all entitled to vote have the same choice of candidates,
- all have the opportunity to vote for these candidates,
- there can be no manipulation of ward boundaries,

- this is the fairest method in ensuring that nearly all will find their votes electing someone and vote wastage is kept to a minimum, and
- more people will be encouraged to vote.

If it is decided that councils should be allowed to continue with the ward system then changes should be made to the legislation to ensure improvements to elector representation by requiring councils to have an equal number of councillors in each wards with a minimum number of four councillors per ward to ensure that any potentially disadvantaged group in the community remains below 20%.

The Society would also encourage the introduction of optional preferential voting, count-back for filling casual vacancies that occur before half a term has expired and Robson rotation on the ballot papers

The current ECSA online and hard copy information pack, rules of content and supervisory role serve the purpose well and provide for candidates to link their own social media, web site or other promotional sites to that ECSA controlled source. Don't fix something that isn't broken

The legislated requirements and offences for breach in the Local Government (Elections) Act and the City of Adelaide Act are intended to ensure that Council elections and business are run efficiently, but penalties for breaches have not been up-dated to reflect changes in monetary value, thus diminishing the level of seriousness attached to these offences. For instance, the maximum penalties for offences against section 29 of the City of Adelaide Act have not been increased from \$10,000 since 1998 when the Act was first enacted. These offences relate to knowingly providing information that is false or misleading in a material particular and, in the opinion of our organisation, these are serious offences in the context of Council integrity. The maximum penalty under section 33 of the City of Adelaide Act for not keeping in possession for 4 years all records relevant to returns relating to campaign donations and expenditure is \$5,000. The passage of 26 years has eroded the severity and so the deterrent effect of these penalties. We submits that the maximum penalties for offences against the Local Government (Elections) Act and the City of Adelaide Act should be increased in line with the change in value of money during the last 26 years. (The penalties are maxima and so a court would impose a lesser penalty if there were extenuating circumstances on a particular case.)

We note that the Victorian Local Government Act contains offences intended to deter and punish conduct that affect the integrity of Council elections with maximum penalties for the most serious offences of 5 years imprisonment or a fine described as "600 penalty units", the monetary value of which is indexed annually. You might wish to seek advice from Parliamentary Counsel about whether replicating offence provisions in this Victorian Act that are not in our Local Government Act or City of Adelaide Act would result in unnecessary overlap with existing offence provisions in our criminal law statutes. If it would not, then consideration might be given to whether any additional offence provisions should be included in our Local Government Act and City of Adelaide Act.

Technical difficulties with websites

Very confusing for non tech savvy people

Council Admin informed and able to follow up with Elected Members

Feedback of our Councillors and our community on their experience with the Electoral Commission SA website during the 2022 periodic general election, has highlighted the need for comprehensive review and improvement of the site. Users find it difficult to navigate and information hard to locate. In the interest of transparency and appeal to future elected members, it is critical that associated systems like the ECSA website are well promoted, accessible and user friendly. It is also important that assistance with the site is at hand and responsive when difficulties are experienced.

The legislation does not necessarily need to be changed, it simply needed to be more appropriately applied by ECSA given the gravity of the associated outcome / risk.

There should be a system where candidates receive a warning from ECSA at a much earlier stage, which is also provided to council CEOs for their information, to ensure appropriate remedial steps can be taken within the necessary timeframe (which should be wider).

The online repository should be reviewed for functionality and accuracy

Our council experienced issues with the lack of and inconsistent communication / engagement from ECSA / LGA to provide guidance and resources in a timely manner, leaving staff to largely operate without support (resources arriving months after when they needed to be used etc).

The changing situation with election signs caused confusion and frustration in the community, which was left to council staff to manage.

Candidate profiles not being published until after close of nominations also caused angst and lack of trust in system.

Costs passed along to council as a result of recounts, caused by ECSAs failure to ensure that all ballots were provided to council to properly conduct the count

- Verification process on candidates who want to nominate prior to their nomination being approved
- If a particular number of votes not received then nominees don't get their bond back
- Requirement for minimum number of votes for the eight candidates – proportional to the number of positions vacant

In 2013, the Weatherill Labor Government modernised South Australian electoral law through the Electoral (Funding, Expenditure and Disclosure) Amendment Act 2013 (SA). This significant reform introduced a regulatory disclosure scheme requiring reporting of certain financial information, as well as prescribed limits on political expenditure. In terms of the House of Assembly, campaign expenditure is capped at \$100,000 (indexed) for unendorsed candidates and \$75,000 (indexed) for endorsed candidates of a political party.

Such limits are not currently imposed on candidates contesting local government elections. It is time to align council elections to the same standard of state elections.

Introducing expenditure caps will lower the barrier to entry for potential nominees and level the playing field ensuring that the candidates with the most community support succeed, not just the riches.

- Compulsory voting
- ECSA to ensure consistency of information to candidates and council administration

Mention is made of the need for legislation to overcome the failure by 45 councillors to lodge the appropriate campaign donation returns, despite reminders from the ECSA.

In future, I submit that this should not occur. Rather than conducting a costly by election, the runners up should be offered the opportunity of accepting the vacant role.

More trained count staff to be employed by ECSA for the counts that are undertaken at councils so manual counts can be completed in a quicker timeframe. Training must be held prior to the dates of the count, as training staff the morning of the count is problematic as it delays results

Sometimes councils holding a meet and greet for candidates running for an election to allow them to tell residents what they want to achieve.

These can work really well and could be included as a requirement for all councils when elections are held. This can allow residents to ask questions of all candidates, get to know them better and hear what

they have to say and understand what they will stand for. For residents who are time poor this is very helpful and saves time. It also allows residents who are not well informed about council business to be better informed by hearing the questions asked by other residents and the answers

Should all residential enrolments to be managed by AEC?

- Currently individual councils manage Form 1 enrolment applications for residential individuals who do not currently qualify for entry on to the House of Assembly roll.
- An improvement would be for all residential enrolments regardless of the individual's status (citizen or not) be managed by the ECSA and included on the House of Assembly roll.

There should be a secondary check by Council representatives to ensure that there are no issues with compliance before being sent to ECSA. Only one candidate return should be required.

There should be an extension allowed in the case of technical difficulties.

One of our councillors was stood down due failing to submit the required return. There were issues with the portal and the councillor had lodged the return on time.

At a time when receiving valid Councillor nominations in most Councils has been shown to be difficult, it seems counter-productive to have the Mayor elected at large where 2 or more well qualified candidates may wish to run for the role, but only one can succeed, resulting in at least 1 or more potentially good candidates not entering Council at all.

Alternatively if only 1 person nominates for the Mayoral position they must be elected regardless of their experience as a Councillor or any fully informed knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the position. Numerous examples of both situations exist across the whole State as a result of the 2022 elections.

Due to its inherent City/State roles, the ACC is the notable exception to this practice. The role of Lord Mayor requires someone to be appointed by the voters.

In all other Councils, the Mayor / Chair should be elected from within the successful candidates at the first meeting of the Council.

This ensures that potentially good Councillors aren't lost in the 'Mayor Elected at Large' process and that the elected body will support and guide the Mayor particularly on potentially controversial issues facing the Council as the elected body sees the Mayor as 'one of their own', rather than a figurehead dumped on them.

Have independent appointed positions on Council based on specific skill sets and experience and reduce number of community appointed councillors (determined by Tribunal?). This should provide a more strategic and business like outcomes.

The legislated requirements and offences for breach in the Local Government (Elections) Act and the City of Adelaide Act ensure that Council elections and business operate efficiently. However, penalties for breaches have not been updated since 1998, requiring urgent review of the maximum penalties for violations of s29 of the City of Adelaide Act.

Deterrence theory suggests that individuals weigh the costs and benefits of a crime. The Victorian Local Government Act contains offences intended to deter and punish conduct that affects the integrity of Council elections and imposes criminal penalties, which could be considered for similar transgressions evident in South Australia

Council's experience was that the process to submit campaign donations at the last elections was not a smooth or easy one and possible consideration for the CEO follow up prior to the closing date should be incorporated. An Elected Member was temporarily stood down and this may have been circumvented if the CEO was informed and if the opportunity existed to lodge returns in hard copy to the Council Office as previously has occurred.

Council was required to hold a supplementary election and believes that if the nominations were publicly released prior to closure this issue would have been eliminated.

The dates in the campaign donation returns are confusing and should form part of a prefilled easy to use form. There should be a simpler option to submit nil returns. Better accessibility for sight impaired when nominating and lodging campaign donation returns with the option of physically presenting at a Council as an alternate to electronic lodgement.

In addition to having candidate profiles displayed at all Council offices, Council would also like to ensure that ballot boxes are made available at every Council office.

The lack of ballot boxes available in 2022 did cause issues for a Council of our geographical size, and ability for residents to submit their ballots (given uncertain delivery timeframes for postal ballots). Matters were further frustrated by conflicting advice provided by the Electoral Commission on what was, and was not, allowed in terms of ballot boxes – some other councils were advised by ECSA that they could have multiple ballot boxes.

In relation to current council member allowances, providing a fact sheet to candidates that includes advice from the Australian Taxation Office on how to treat their allowance would be useful.

Further, Council members strongly believe that the full scrutiny and count should occur on-site at the council, rather than any portion of it occurring in Adelaide. It was noted that scrutineers were in Adelaide until 12am (midnight) for this Council's count in the 2022 elections – this is unrealistic for scrutineers, given we are a rural council.

Council also believes that only one campaign donation return should be required to be submitted, post the election result. The requirement for two returns in 2022 being lodged directly with the Electoral Commission caused issues for a number of council members and mayors with a trigger of automatic loss of office for failure to do so.

We draw attention to the fact local government is the only tier of government without an organised opposition that holds the council to account with its decision-making

Over the last 10yr council watch groups have been responsible for exposing maladministration , misuse of public money and the need for reform and inquiry into council expenditure and finances.

Corporate purchase card fiasco , golf memberships , Apple Watch are to name but a few that triggered ombudsman and Commissioner statewide inquiry that found the Onkaparinga experience was not isolated but rather a systemic issue across the local government sector.

More significantly though Onkaparinga council watch group has been raising concerns with public expenditure , indebtedness , employee costs , lack of service reviews and inadequate asset renewals to the council itself through statutory process for at least 10 yrs .

Over this period there has been no meaningful change with business practices and management and council debt has increased to in excess of \$135 million with a significant decline in asset renewal.

The recent ESCOSA Onkaparinga Finance assessment, validates community concerns when the Commissioner states the councils finances are unsustainable for the 10 yr period assessed of which are the very issues council watch have raised.

While the findings of ESCOSA report are welcomed, we are however significantly concerned

- there are no enforceable requirements
- No accountability with implementation of the commissioners' recommendations for reform of council

practices.

- some of the employees involved have moved to other councils where that council is now experiencing the same or similar financial problems

It is deeply concerning that the practices of the organisation have been able to continue without meaningful intervention for over 10yrs particularly when such issues and concerns have been brought to the councils attention and that of state politicians.

Despite ICAC and the Ombudsman multiple findings of maladministration, breaches of employee code of conduct and multiple breaches of legislation by councils senior administration it is evident that there is a lack of political will with state politicians to address the systemic issues that exist within local government, and in turn leave residence and ratepayers to fend for themselves.

Our experiences demonstrate that without members of the public vigilantly investing ridiculous amounts of time to investigate what's happening within our councils the public and state government would not be aware of what's actually truly happening within our councils.

We welcome an open community engagement process undertaken by the state that seeks to hear public concerns within local government as opposed to seeking feedback on only the issues it wishes to consider.

We call on the government to look deeply into the real issues and financial implications within local government when councils continue businesses as usual due to the lack of accountability and oversight with what's happening in local government.

We would request that the review includes a recommendation for an automatic recount, when is a very small margin between votes tallied. For instance, if the difference between two candidates is 5 votes or 5% of votes (whichever is the greater), an automatic recount should be triggered

Council Members had poor experiences and felt let down by the campaign donation return process in 2022. Key issues:

- The online portal was not intuitive, led to confusion and delays and was technically difficult to navigate.
- There was not always feedback to indicate the information had been received.
- The 'nil' returns (most of the candidates had these) seemed arduous – is there a simpler way to say 'nil' rather than the form?

Council suggests a working party of Council Members who had such experiences be convened to work through these issues directly with the LGA and ECSA (sooner rather than later) so that issues can be ironed out prior to the next election.

Overall, Council would like to see stronger processes, communications and mechanisms for following up candidates.

The most important election improvement we can make, particularly in Area Councils, is to better communicate to voters that they have the option of optional preferential voting (OPV). Section 45(4) of the Act states that a ballot paper is not informal by reason of non-compliance with this section if the voter's intention is clear.

As an example, if a voter has a ballot paper with 20 candidate's names on it, and there are 9 vacancies, and if they simply put a number one next to one of the names and there are no other markings that invalidate that ballot paper, then their ballot is not informal and it will be accepted and counted as a formal vote.

Clear, easily understood, promotion of OPV would assist voter participation.

Conduct of first preference counts and computer count at different location (i.e Mount Gambier – Adelaide), and scheduling computer count mid-late week has delayed Mount Gambier provisional result to Thursday/Friday after the close of votes. Resourcing should be allocated for a faster provisional result.

More proactive processes followed by ECSA to support legislative compliance by candidates (eg. campaign donations returns).

Inconsistency / quality of staff appointed for the vote count. The Deputy Returning Officer (DRO) appointed to councils are the ones that appear to choose who will and won't participate in the count (as opposed to being recruited directly by ECSA). In the experience of CTTG, this resulted in the people counting votes appearing to be family members or friends of the DRO. Some comments on count day provided the impression of counters not being concerned about efficiency or effectiveness, given they were paid to count by the hour.

Vote counters should be recruited and appointed by ECSA, not returning officers. At a minimum there should be conflict of interest forms completed (cannot use family or friends).

Elections are already a significant cost to councils, and any proposed changes to legislation should take into account the additional costs that would have to be borne by councils. It is the view of Council that ECSA should investigate options/efficiencies in the election process in the first instance. If costs can't be reduced, consideration could be given to the Australian Electoral Commission running the elections.

Corflute signage: Prohibiting corflute signage has not effectively curtailed the use of signage with many candidates introducing signs of alternative materials. This has caused confusion among candidates and introduced disparities between those who opt for alternative materials signage and others.

Campaign Donation Return Requirements: The recent legislative changes need to be given time to facilitate compliance. Existing rules should be retained; any review should be focussed on supporting candidates to improve compliance. A review of penalties associated with this process (eg suspension instead of casual vacancy) may have merit, aligning the penalty to other processes when deadlines are missed (eg Register of Interests).

Council has traditionally chosen its Principal Member internally and strongly recommend for this to be allowed to continue. However, upcoming reforms mandate that rural councils elect or appoint a representative known as a Mayor from the entire area.

The primary duty of the rural mayor is to oversee council meetings, requiring specific skills. Direct mayoral elections will prioritise popularity over skills.

Enabling rural councils to choose their Mayor internally allows for selecting candidates with appropriate abilities. Additionally, it ensures unsuccessful mayoral candidates can still serve as Councillors, maintaining a pool of qualified individuals.