Local Government Participation and Elections Review

Seeking community feedback on ideas and suggestions for changing the way councils operate in South Australia

Background

Local councils are often described as the sphere of government that is 'closest to the people'. The services they provide are often those that touch our day-to-day lives most closely. Yet this involvement with local services isn't always reflected in how people engage with councils.

While local members are elected to represent their local communities, historically only around one-third of voters choose to vote in their local council elections.

Councils can also struggle to have a good number of diverse candidates willing to stand for election, to ensure that a local elected body has the best chance of representing and making the best decisions for its local community.

Over the past 20 years, councils have been making increasingly large investments in promoting elections, both to encourage nominations, and to increase voter turnout. Despite these investments, engagement with councils at election times has remained at consistently low rates.

The 2023 Local Government Participation and Elections Review will focus on participation and elections, including improving people's engagement with councils, increasing the number and diversity of council members, and increasing voter turnout.

The Office of Local Government, on behalf of the Minister for Local Government, the Hon Geoff Brock MP, is conducting a state-wide consultation to give the community an opportunity to provide feedback on ideas and suggestions on how communities can better engage with their councils through a council term and, particularly, at election time.

Please see overleaf the four key topics covered in this consultation.

Your feedback will play a key role in informing reform proposals and the development of the bill to amend local government legislation.

Have your say on ideas and suggestions for changing the way councils operate in South Australia

yoursay.sa.gov.au/council-participation-elections

Feedback can be provided via the following channels:

YourSAy survey

To complete the online survey and view project background information, please scan the QR code.

Hard copies can be requested via DIT.LocalGovernmentReform@sa.gov.au

Written surveys and feedback can be posted to:

Office of Local Government
GPO Box 1533
Adelaide, SA 5001

YourSAy community forum

YourSAy community forum ('Guestbook') is your opportunity to share your ideas on the topic and ask questions.

Please scan the QR code above to access the forum.

Enquiry hotline

To provide your feedback via phone, please call (08) 7133 3277.

Enquiry email address

You can also email your feedback to DIT.LocalGovernmentReform@sa.gov.au

Consultation will close at 5pm on Friday, 1 March 2024

Government of South Australia
Department for Infrastructure and Transport

We are keen to hear your thoughts on the following key topics:



Ways to better engage and participate with councils

This topic covers ideas and suggestions for:

- A new Community Engagement Charter
- More accessible council meetings

Ways to encourage more people from diverse backgrounds to run for council



This topic covers ideas and suggestions for changing:

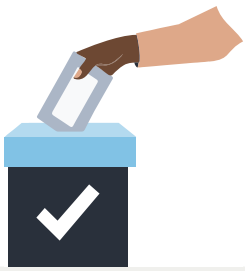
- Council members' allowances
- Flexibility of council meetings
- Extent of local promotion for council nominations
- Term limits for council members
- Training requirements for candidates
- Timing for publishing of nominations
- Ward structure
- Council boundaries

Ways to increase voter turnout



This topic covers ideas and suggestions for changing:

- The nature of voting for councils (compulsory vs voluntary)
- Eligibility to vote in council elections
- Methods of voting
- Timing of council elections
- Election promotion methods
- Amount of candidate information provided to voters



Ways to ensure that council elections are run efficiently with the highest level of integrity

This topic provides an opportunity to share ideas to improve local government elections

We are also open to any other feedback and ideas that could help improve people's engagement with councils

For more information

Call (08) 7133 3277

Email DIT.LocalGovernmentReform@sa.gov.au

Visit dit.sa.gov.au/local-government-reform-2023 or yoursay.sa.gov.au/council-participation-elections

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