

## 8 GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

### 8.1 2020 GENERAL ELECTION

**Author:** Lidia Harding - Manager Governance & Corporate Accountability

**File No:** CL/10/006

**Attachments:** Nil

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#### SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the election services offered to Mitchell Shire Council in conducting the 2020 general election of Councillors.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**THAT** Council resolve:

1. The 2020 General Election for Mitchell Shire Council be conducted by postal ballot.
2. To establish the Electoral Office for Mitchell Shire Council in the Councillors Room, Broadford Hall.
3. That Officers continue to work with the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to finalise an electoral service agreement.

#### BACKGROUND

In accordance with Section 31 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, a general election of Councillors for all Councils in Victoria will be held on Saturday, 24 October 2020.

The 2020 general election will mark the conclusion of the four-year term of the Council elected in October 2016.

#### ISSUES AND DISCUSSION

The VEC has been appointed as the statutory provider for local government election services. To ensure transparency with the provision of election services and costing arrangements, the VEC will establish an electoral service agreement with Council. As a base calculation, the parameters in the 2016 electoral service agreement will be used to inform and calculate the 2020 agreement. Council has already been provided with a cost estimate for both the conduct of the election and compulsory voting enforcement.

In 2016, the general election was conducted by postal ballot and the Election Office accommodation was provided in-kind by Council. The Election Office was established in the Councillors Room with public access provided via the Broadford Hall entry on Murchison Street. As this site is a central location and has worked well in past council elections, it is recommended that Council continue with this arrangement.

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If Council elects to change the method of voting or proposed accommodation arrangements, this will potentially increase the costing arrangements of the electoral service agreement.

Following the general election held in 2016, the *Local Government Bill 2019* has been prepared and is due to be enacted in February 2020. This may mean some changes to the electoral provisions which will be put in place by the Victorian Electoral Commission as required.

**CONSULTATION**

Governance and Corporate Accountability are working with the Victorian Electoral Commission to plan for the upcoming election.

**FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

In preparing the draft budget 2020-2021, Council has allocated a budget to conduct the 2020 general election of Council of \$209,936.84 (including GST). The compulsory voting enforcement component, \$46,697.35 (including GST) will be budgeted for in the 2021-2022 budget.

**POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

The Local Government Election program in Victoria is governed by the *Local Government Act 1989*.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL)**

There are no significant environment and sustainability implications arising from the report.

**CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

The rights protected in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* were considered in preparing this report and it's determined that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.

**OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No Officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in this matter.

**CONCLUSION**

The Local Government Election program in Victoria is governed by the *Local Government Act 1989* and to ensure that Council meets critical dates in preparing the electoral service agreement with the Victorian Electoral Commission, it is recommended that Council endorse a postal ballot system for conducting the 2020 general election and make available the Councillors Room for the Mitchell Shire Electoral Office.