

So you want to be a councillor?



Queensland's 77 local councils need mayors and councillors that reflect the diversity of our communities. Local government elections are held every four years, with by-elections sometimes held if an elected position becomes vacant.

By becoming a councillor, or even just running for election, you can make a positive difference to your local community.

This fact sheet provides information as a guide for anyone interested in becoming a mayor or councillor, including:

- ▶ eligibility to be a councillor
- ▶ skills councillors require and what the job involves
- ▶ nomination requirements if you are eligible and decide to nominate.

Are you eligible?

To be qualified to become a councillor you must meet the criteria as set out in the *Local Government Act 2009*:

- ▶ Australian citizen (Note: an Australian citizen who holds dual citizenship with another country is eligible to nominate for local government elections)
- ▶ 18 years old or older
- ▶ live in the local government area e.g. Redland City Council
- ▶ enrolled on the Queensland electoral roll.

You may be excluded from being a councillor if you:

- ▶ have been convicted of an electoral or integrity offence
- ▶ are an undischarged bankrupt
- ▶ hold a high-office government position e.g. Member of Parliament or judge.

If you are in any doubt on your eligibility to be a councillor or require additional information you should seek independent legal advice.

So you want to be a councillor?

Do you have what it takes to be a mayor or councillor?

Mayors and councillors demonstrate enthusiasm for their local community every day. They draw on many skills, attributes and diverse knowledge.

Useful qualities for councillors to have include:

- ▶ strategic thinking skills
- ▶ effective communication and negotiation skills
- ▶ ability to analyse and problem solve
- ▶ ability to work as part of a team
- ▶ understanding of financial and budget processes
- ▶ time management and organisation skills
- ▶ personal resilience and integrity
- ▶ understanding of local government legislation.

What activities are mayors and councillors involved with?

The role of mayor or councillor is a highly diverse one. Time commitments depend on the size of the local government, its geography and any additional responsibilities you might undertake.

Duties include:

- ▶ attending local government meetings and reading all the reports and material provided prior to each meeting
- ▶ committee responsibilities or portfolios that require attendance at additional meetings as well as further research and investigation

- ▶ attending or representing council at public functions and community events
- ▶ direct engagement with members of the community or groups on council policy matters and decisions.

Nomination requirements

If you are eligible to become a councillor (see page 1) and decide to nominate, you must complete a number of requirements in order to comply with Queensland electoral laws. These include completing *So you want to be a councillor?* candidate training and setting up a dedicated bank account for your campaign.

To find out more about what is required to run at the 2020 local government elections, read the *Ready for council elections in 2020?* fact sheet and candidate checklist available at www.dlgrma.qld.gov.au/lgresources.

In the lead-up to the 2020 local government elections, the Electoral Commission of Queensland will also publish a range of factsheets and handbooks to help candidates navigate the election process, and provide information about the obligations of candidates in the periods before, during and after polling day.

More information

Visit dlgrma.qld.gov.au/candidates or search online 'So you want to be a councillor?'

Visit www.ecq.qld.gov.au