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HISTORY TRUST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Local Government Association of South Australia

Elections and candidates

Council candidates put their names forward to run for election. The successful candidates are decided by the community through council elections. These elections are typically held every 4 years. Sometimes, between these elections a councillor might need to leave the role, which means a supplementary election occurs to fill the gap. This kind of election happens any time a place becomes available on the board.

Unlike state and federal elections, voting is not compulsory in council elections. This means community members do not currently have to vote in them. However, voting in local council elections is an important way that community members can positively impact their neighbourhood.

Once you turn 16, you can enrol to vote although you will not be able to formally vote until you turn 18. To enrol, you can visit the website of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). The AEC provides a step-by-step guided process which, once complete, enables you to vote in any election. The AEC runs federal elections, and when you have enrolled to vote your voting details are also shared with your local electoral commission. For us in South Australia, that is the Electoral Commission of South Australia (ECSA). ECSA run both our state and local government elections.

In council elections, voting is open to most people living and working in the council area and who are old enough to vote.

Local council websites show key information about current and past council elections. During the lead-up to an election they provide information on each candidate, their activities, and their interests. This information can help you can decide who you want to win a place in the council.

References:
'Council candidates', Electoral Commission South Australia, Jan 2024, https://www.ecsa.sa.gov.au/parties-and-candidates/council-candidates

'Check my enrolment', Australian Electoral Commission, Jan 2024, https://check.aec.gov.au/

'Voting in Council Elections', Local Government Association of SA, Jan 2024, https://www.councilelections.sa.gov.au/vote/voting-in-council-elections