

# Local government election costs – submissions on Draft Report

1 August 2019

## WHAT

We received 47 submissions in response to our Draft Report on our *Review of local government election costs*, which we published on 25 June 2019. All non-confidential submissions are now available on our website.

For our Final Report we are actively considering ways to increase choice for councils without increasing costs to councils.

Almost all of the submissions raised concerns about the impact of our draft recommendations on councils' budgets. Our draft recommendations would, on average, increase council bills for elections in 2020 by around 62% compared to elections held in 2016 and 2017.

Concerns about bill impacts for councils were also raised by councils that attended our Public Forum on 2 July 2019.

Overwhelmingly, councils are concerned that the move to cost-reflective prices for the NSW Electoral Commission's (NSWEC's) services would not be affordable, at least in the short term.

Those councils supportive of our recommended market reforms to provide councils with more choice in how elections are delivered (which may ultimately reduce costs), think they should be introduced prior to our proposed changes to the way costs are allocated.

## WHY

Our Draft Report proposed cost-reflective pricing, so that councils would pay for the efficient cost of the election services they receive from the NSWEC.

We explained that this would help to:

- ▼ Ensure the NSWEC's costs are transparent and subject to appropriate scrutiny.
- ▼ Promote efficient decisions over time by the councils in relation to the provision of election services.
- ▼ Ensure that the NSWEC is not unduly advantaged or disadvantaged in competing with other potential electoral service providers (and thus help to facilitate competition in the provision of election services, and the efficiency gains associated with such competition).

## WHO

The majority of the 47 submissions we received are from individual councils or organisations representing councils.

We also received submissions from the NSWEC, other electoral service providers and an individual.

## WHAT NEXT

We will provide our Final Report to the Minister for Local Government on 30 August 2019.