

IPART is reviewing of the cost of local government election services

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) is reviewing the cost of conducting local government elections for the first time.

Councils have the option to run their own elections, engage the services of a private provider or use the NSW Electoral Commission (NSWEC). IPART has been asked to recommend a costing methodology to determine the amount the NSWEC should charge councils that use its election services.

IPART Chair, Dr Paul Paterson said that the review is focused on ensuring local government elections are administered efficiently, the prices charged to councils are cost reflective and opportunities for competition in the provision of election services are facilitated, as a means of encouraging innovation and efficiency.

Under the NSWEC's existing methodology, the costs incurred in administering local government elections are recovered from councils on a full cost recovery basis. Costs are either directly allocated to individual councils or apportioned between councils on a per elector basis.

"We will consider the different election services offered by the NSWEC, the efficient costs of providing these services, and how those costs should be shared between the NSW Government and councils, and across councils" Dr Paterson said.

"We will also look at the market for election services, and consider whether there are any barriers faced by private providers looking to enter the market and where the opportunities for effective competition may be."

IPART released an Issues Paper today to outline the review process and the key issues that need to be considered. This is available from IPART's website, www.ipart.nsw.gov.au. Interested stakeholders are invited to make a submission by 10 May 2019.

IPART will release a Final Report to the Minister for Local Government by 30 August 2019.