



Circular Details	20-29 / 4 August 2020 / A713425
Previous Circular	20-25 <i>The date of the next ordinary local government elections is 4 September 2021</i> 20-28 <i>Rules on attendance at council and committee meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic as of 1 July 2020</i>
Who should read this	Councillors / General Managers / Governance staff
Contact	Council Governance Team/ 02 4428 4100/ olg@olg.nsw.gov.au
Action required	Council to Implement

September 2020 mayoral elections

What's new or changing

- Councils that elected mayors in September 2018 must have mayoral elections in September 2020 when the 2-year term of the current mayor expires. The mayor elected in September 2020 will hold their office until ordinary elections are held on 4 September 2021.
- Councils must also hold an election for deputy mayor if the deputy mayor's term has expired and county councils must elect a chairperson.

What this will mean for your council

- Schedule 7 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* prescribes three methods of election of mayors:
 - open ballot (eg a show of hands)
 - ordinary ballot, or
 - preferential ballot.
- Open ballots can be undertaken remotely where a council is conducting its meetings by audio visual link.
- Ordinary and preferential ballots are secret ballots and councillors will need to attend the meeting in person if the election is to be by way of an ordinary or preferential ballot.

Key points

- In deciding which method to use for the mayoral election, councils should consider the personal circumstances of their councillors to ensure that all councillors can participate in the mayoral election.
- Councillors may attend council meetings in person under the *Public Health (COVID-19 Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) Order (No 4) 2020* for the purposes of participating in a mayoral election and staff may attend for the purposes of conducting the election.
- Councils should observe appropriate social distancing when conducting mayoral elections and take any other steps necessary to minimise the risk of infection by the COVID-19 virus and to ensure the health and safety of all attendees.

Office of Local Government
5 O'Keefe Avenue NOWRA NSW 2541
Locked Bag 3015 NOWRA NSW 2541
T 02 4428 4100 F 02 4428 4199 TTY 02 4428 4209
E olg@olg.nsw.gov.au W www.olg.nsw.gov.au ABN 20 770 707 468

Where to go for further information

- The Office of Local Government has issued a fact sheet on conducting mayoral elections which is available at <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/councils/councillors/mayoral-elections/>.
- For further information please contact the Council Governance Team on 02 4428 4100 or by email at olg@olg.nsw.gov.au.



Tim Hurst
Deputy Secretary
Local Government, Planning and Policy

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