



GOV26	Elections – Staff policy
Approval Date:	30 January 2019
Council Decision Reference:	013/2021
Policy Type:	Governance
Policy Custodian:	CEO
Review Date:	30 January 2022
Version (Revision Number):	2.0

Purpose

In all Northern Territory elections including those held for local government, the NT Electoral Commissioner is the Returning Officer. The conduct of the election will be as laid down in the NT *Electoral Act* and *Local Government (Electoral) regulations* and in accordance with this policy which will determine the actions and responsibilities of employees of West Daly Regional Council.

During an official election within the West Daly region, employees of Council are often asked to assist. This policy defines the level of involvement of staff. The overriding policy regarding elections is that at no time can the Council or its staff be seen to be favouring one candidate over another or taking a leadership role in the election.

Scope

A Council employee is disqualified under the *Local Government Act (Act)* section 37 to be an Elected Member of the same Council with which they are employed.


If a Council employee wishes to contest a local government election (or an election for the Legislative Assembly or the Commonwealth House of Representatives or the Senate) they must resign their position with Council not more than 28 days prior to the close of nominations, clearly indicating the reason why and indicating that, in the event they are unsuccessful in their candidature, they intend to apply within seven (7) days of the poll declaration to have their Council employment position restored to them.

If unsuccessful in their election bid, their absence will then be treated as unpaid leave between the dates of resignation and reinstatement and they may resume their previous employment with Council.

Authority for this action is contained with the Act.

Policy Statement

1. In all dealings with political candidates, their supporters, campaign staff and others, Council staff are to adopt a politically neutral attitude. Under no circumstances is any candidate or political party to be given, or be seen to be given, any assistance or preference over others apart from normal courtesies not related to the election.
2. No election poster is to be displayed on any Council building, vehicle or in the grounds of any Council property. The exception to this will be any candidate’s election banners or material on the actual polling day displayed more than ten (10) meters from the entrance to the



polling booth, and any material that the NT Electoral Commission or Australian Electoral Commission request be displayed.

3. Election material authorised by the NT Electoral Commission or the Australian Electoral Commission for the purpose of conducting an official elections may be displayed in a manner or action as requested by election officials.
4. No candidate for political office is to be permitted to canvass votes or otherwise influence potential voters within the office or grounds of any Council office and no Council member or employee, while on duty, is to engage in activities that could be viewed as promoting any particular candidate. This latter policy does not apply to staff members who, if assisting or working with a candidate, are not on duty at the time.
5. Candidate's election material is not to be stored or held in any West Daly Regional Council building, premises or office. Should material be sent to a community by mail or other means and is received in the Council office, it should be passed on as soon as possible to the designated receiver.
6. During any election, officials of the NT Electoral Commission or the Australian Electoral Commission may request assistance in the form of people power, furniture or equipment and/or the use of a Council room, office or part of a building. This may be provided and for the term and purposes of the election, the electoral officials will have full control and authority over the activities surrounding the election.
7. Should the NT Electoral Commission or the Australian Election Commission seek the ongoing use of a Council room, office or part of a building for the purposes of an election, this should be referred to the Community Service Manager (CSM) or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to negotiate an appropriate hire rate with the Commission.
8. In addition to the above, Council vehicles and drivers may be used to transport elderly and sick people to and from the polling booth **on the day of polling only**. Council vehicles are not to be used for any purpose connected with the election except as in direct co-operations with, and at the request of polling booth officials.
9. Any query in respect to this policy should be referred to the CEO.
10. If a Council employee wishes to contest a local government election (or an election for the Legislative Assembly or the Commonwealth House of Representatives or the Senate) they must resign their

References

Local Government Act 2019 (NT)