

Policy Name	Elections – Staff Policy
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SUMMARY

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 the West Daly Regional Council.

Commonwealth Government elections are conducted by the Australian Electoral Commission under the terms of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act*.

During any official election within the region, employees of the West Daly Regional 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.

A Council employee is disqualified under the *Local Government 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 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. Their absence will then be treated as unpaid leave between the dates of resignation and reinstatement. Authority for this action is contained in the *Local Government Act*.

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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) metres from the entrance to the polling booth, and any material that the Northern Territory Electoral Commission or the Australian Electoral Commission request be displayed.
3. Election material authorised by the Northern Territory Electoral Commission or the Australian Electoral Commission for the purpose of conducting an official election may be displayed in a manner or location 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 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 as soon as possible to the designated receiver.
6. During any election, officials of the Northern Territory Electoral Commission or the Australian Electoral Commission may request assistance in the form of manpower, 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 Northern Territory Electoral Commission or the Australian Electoral 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 either the Council

Service Manager or the Chief Executive Officer 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-operation with, and at the request of, polling booth officials.
9. Any query in respect to this policy should be referred to the Chief Executive Officer.
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 position with Council not more than 28 days prior to 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 be treated as unpaid leave between the dates of resignation and reinstatement and they may resume their previous employment with Council.

TERMINOLOGY AND REFERENCES

REFERENCES

Local Government Act Commonwealth Electoral Act

NT Electoral Act

Local Government (Electoral) Regulations

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Chief Executive Officer

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