

Richmond  
Valley  
Council



# AGENDA

## Extraordinary Council Meeting

I hereby give notice that an Extraordinary Meeting of Council will be held on:

**Date:** Wednesday, 9 October 2024

**Time:** 6pm

**Location:** Council Chambers  
10 Graham Place, Casino

**Vaughan Macdonald**  
General Manager

## Statement of Ethical Obligations

In accordance with Clause 3.23 of the Model Code of Meeting Practice, Councillors are reminded of their Oath or Affirmation of Office made under section 233A of the *Local Government Act 1993* and their obligations under Council's Code of Conduct to disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.

### Oath or affirmation of office

The Oath or Affirmation is taken by each Councillor whereby they swear or declare to:

*Undertake the duties of the office of Councillor in the best interests of the people of the Richmond Valley and Richmond Valley Council, and that they will faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in them under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act to the best of their ability and judgment.*

### Conflicts of interest

All Councillors must declare and manage any conflicts of interest they may have in matters being considered at Council meetings in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct.

All declarations of conflicts of interest and how the conflict of interest was managed will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the declaration was made.

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

<b>1</b>	<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>PRAYER.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>APOLOGIES .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>GENERAL MANAGER.....</b>	<b>6</b>
5.1	Oath or Affirmation of Office by Councillors.....	6
5.2	Election of Deputy Mayor .....	8
5.3	Mayoral Delegation .....	11
5.4	Council Committees and Delegates .....	13
5.5	Council Meetings - Ordinary Meeting Day and Time .....	16
5.6	Countback Process .....	18



**1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

The Mayor will provide an Acknowledgement of Country by reading the following statement on behalf of Council:

*"Richmond Valley Council recognises the people of the Bundjalung Nations as Custodians and Traditional Owners of this land and we value and appreciate the continuing cultural connection to lands, their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region in the past, present and future."*

**2 PRAYER****3 APOLOGIES****4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

## **5 GENERAL MANAGER**

### **5.1 OATH OR AFFIRMATION OF OFFICE BY COUNCILLORS**

**Author:** Vaughan Macdonald

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

One of the first duties for newly elected Councillors is to take the Oath or Affirmation of Office, required under the *Local Government Act 1993*. The Oath or Affirmation is a public statement by each Councillor, affirming their commitment to undertake their duties in the best interests of the people of the Richmond Valley and to faithfully and impartially carry out their functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested under NSW legislation to the best of their ability and judgement. The General Manager must ensure that each Councillor (including the Mayor) makes an oath or affirmation at, or before, the first meeting of the council following the local government election.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That, in accordance with section 233A of the *Local Government Act 1993*, a record is made in the minutes of the taking of the Oath or Affirmation of Office by each of the seven newly elected Councillors.

#### **DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS**

Objective 10: Lead and advocate for our community

10C Lead with integrity

10C1 Provide representative and accountable community governance

#### **REPORT**

In order to comply with the *Local Government Act 1993*, the General Manager must ensure that each councillor (including the Mayor) makes an oath or affirmation at or before the first meeting of the council following the local government election.

The taking of each oath or affirmation is to be recorded by way of a signed statement containing the oath or affirmation, or by recording the taking of the oath or affirmation by each councillor in the minutes of the council meeting. It is proposed that the record be kept by way of recording the taking of the oath or affirmation of each councillor in the minutes of this council meeting.

If for any circumstance a Councillor is unable to attend the first council meeting, he or she may take the oath or affirmation of office at another location in front of the General Manager, an Australian legal practitioner or a Justice of the Peace. The taking of the oath or affirmation outside a council meeting must be publicly recorded by the council. To meet this requirement a council staff member should also be present to ensure that an accurate record can be kept by the council.

For the purposes of each Councillor (including the Mayor) making an oath or affirmation as the first item of business for this meeting, the wording of the oath and affirmation are provided below:

**Oath**

I, Councillor (... please state full name ...), swear that I will undertake the duties of the office of councillor in the best interests of the people of the Richmond Valley community and Richmond Valley Council and that I will faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in me under the *Local Government Act 1993* or any other Act to the best of my ability and judgment.

**Affirmation**

I, Councillor (... please state full name ...), solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm that I will undertake the duties of the office of councillor in the best interests of the people of the Richmond Valley community and Richmond Valley Council and that I will faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in me under the *Local Government Act 1993* or any other Act to the best of my ability and judgment.

**CONCLUSION**

Richmond Valley Council's newly elected Mayor and Councillors will take the oath or affirmation at the commencement of the October 2024 Extraordinary Council meeting.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

Nil

## 5.2 ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR

**Author:** Vaughan Macdonald

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 231 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) provides that each new Council may elect a Deputy Mayor for the mayoral term or for a shorter term. The Deputy Mayor may exercise any function of the Mayor at the request of the Mayor, or if the Mayor is prevented by illness, absence or otherwise from exercising the function, or if there is a casual vacancy in the office of Mayor.

Schedule 7 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (the Regulation) outlines the method of conducting the election of Deputy Mayor. Under the Regulation, nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor are to be made in writing by two or more councillors (one of whom may be the nominee) and delivered to the Returning Officer.

If more than one candidate is nominated, the Regulation provides for the election to be conducted by either preferential ballot, ordinary ballot or open voting. Following public declaration of the election result, nomination forms and any ballot papers used in the election may be destroyed.

It is recommended that the method of conduct for the election of Deputy Mayor be by open voting.

### RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council elects a Deputy Mayor for a two-year period.
2. Nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor be submitted in accordance with the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021, Schedule 7.
3. The method of conduct for the election of Deputy Mayor be by open voting.
4. Following declaration of the election result, nomination forms be destroyed.

### DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 10: Lead and advocate for our community

10C Lead with integrity

10C1 Provide representative and accountable community governance

### BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

No fee is specifically payable to the Deputy Mayor. Should Council determine that a fee be payable, the Mayoral allowance would need to be reduced by the same amount.

### REPORT

Section 231 of the Act provides for the following in relation to the position of Deputy Mayor:

1. The councillors may elect a person from among their number to be the deputy mayor.
2. The person may be elected for the mayoral term or a shorter term.
3. The deputy mayor may exercise any function of the mayor at the request of the mayor or if the mayor is prevented by illness, absence or otherwise from exercising the function or if there is a casual vacancy in the office of mayor.



4. The councillors may elect a person from among their number to act as deputy mayor if the deputy mayor is prevented by illness, absence or otherwise from exercising a function under this section, or if no deputy mayor has been elected.

Schedule 7 of the Regulation outlines the requirements for conducting the election of Deputy Mayor. Under the Regulation, the General Manager, or a person appointed by the General Manager, acts as the Returning Officer for the election.

### **Term of office**

The Act provides for the Deputy Mayor to be elected for the mayoral term, or a shorter period. Richmond Valley Council has a popularly elected Mayor, with the term of office being four years. In Councils where the Mayor is elected by the Councillors, the minimum term of office under the Act is two years. Council may wish to reflect either of these timeframes in the term of office for the Deputy Mayor. As a minimum, the two-year term is recommended.

### **Nominating candidates**

The Regulation provides for a councillor to be nominated without notice for the role of Deputy Mayor. Nominations must be made in writing by two or more councillors (one of whom may be the nominee). The nomination is not valid unless the nominee consents to the nomination in writing. Nominations are then delivered to the Returning Officer and he or she announces the names of the nominees at the council meeting at which the election is to be held.

If only one councillor is nominated, he or she is elected. If more than one councillor is nominated, Council then determines by resolution whether it will use open voting, ordinary ballot or preferential ballot for the election. The election must be conducted at the same meeting.

### **Deciding by open voting**

Should Council decide to undertake the election via the open voting method, the preferred candidate is selected by show of hands.

If there are three or more candidates, the one with the lowest number of votes is excluded and the show of hands is taken repeatedly, using the same process, until there are only two candidates remaining. The person with the highest number of votes at the final poll is elected. If the final poll is a draw, the successful candidate is selected by lot.

### **Deciding by ordinary ballot**

Should Council decide to undertake the election via ordinary ballot, the Returning Officer decides the manner in which votes are to be marked on the ballot paper. He or she then determines if all the ballot papers received are formal votes (using the guidance in Clause 345 of the Regulation) and excludes any informal ballot papers. If there are only two candidates, the one with the highest number of votes is elected. If there are three or more candidates in the election, the one with the lowest number of votes is excluded after the first poll. The poll is then taken repeatedly, using the same process, until there are only two candidates remaining. The person with the highest number of votes at the final poll is elected. If the final poll is a draw, the successful candidate is selected by lot.

### **Deciding by preferential ballot**

Generally, the preferential ballot system is only applied in larger councils, when there are more than two candidates for the role. Should council decide to use this method councillors are asked to mark their votes by placing the numbers 1, 2, 3 and so on against the various names on the ballot paper to indicate their order of preference for all the candidates. If a candidate has an absolute majority (more than half the first preference votes), that candidate is elected. If not, the candidate with the least number of first preference votes is excluded and his or her votes are transferred to those marked as the second preference on the ballot paper/s. This process continues until one of the candidates has an absolute majority. If, at the final count, there are only two candidates left, each with the same number of votes, the successful candidate is selected by lot.

**Choosing by lot**

To choose a candidate by lot, the names of the candidates who have equal numbers of votes are written on similar slips of paper by the Returning Officer, the slips are folded by the Returning Officer so as to prevent the names being seen. The slips are then mixed, and one is drawn at random by the Returning Officer. The candidate whose name is on the drawn slip is chosen.

**Declaring the result**

The Regulation requires the Returning Officer to declare the results of the election, including the name of the successful candidate, at the council meeting where the election is held. The result must also be sent to the Office of Local Government and LGNSW.

**CONSULTATION**

Nomination forms have been provided to each councillor.

**CONCLUSION**

This report provides details of the process required for the election of Deputy Mayor. Nomination forms for the position of Deputy Mayor have been forwarded to each councillor.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

Nil

### 5.3 MAYORAL DELEGATION

Author: Vaughan Macdonald

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 226 of the *Local Government Act 1993* sets out the role of the Mayor. To support the role of the Mayor, Council has traditionally adopted a Mayoral delegation at the commencement of each new term of office. The 2024-2028 Council may wish to continue this practice.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Authorises the Mayor to exercise policy-making functions between meetings (in cases of emergency/necessity).
2. Delegates authority to the Mayor to approve leave of absences for the General Manager.

#### DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 10: Lead and advocate for our community

10C Lead with integrity

10C1 Provide representative and accountable community governance

#### BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Nil

#### REPORT

Section 226 of the *Local Government Act 1993* states:

*“The role of the mayor is as follows—*

- a. to be the leader of the council and a leader in the local community,*
- b. to advance community cohesion and promote civic awareness,*
- c. to be the principal member and spokesperson of the governing body, including representing the views of the council as to its local priorities,*
- d. to exercise, in cases of necessity, the policy-making functions of the governing body of the council between meetings of the council,*
- e. to preside at meetings of the council,*
- f. to ensure that meetings of the council are conducted efficiently, effectively and in accordance with this Act,*
- g. to ensure the timely development and adoption of the strategic plans, programs and policies of the council,*
- h. to promote the effective and consistent implementation of the strategic plans, programs and policies of the council,*
- i. to promote partnerships between the council and key stakeholders,*
- j. to advise, consult with and provide strategic direction to the general manager in relation to the implementation of the strategic plans and policies of the council,*

- k. in conjunction with the general manager, to ensure adequate opportunities and mechanisms for engagement between the council and the local community,*
- l. to carry out the civic and ceremonial functions of the mayoral office,*
- m. to represent the council on regional organisations and at inter-governmental forums at regional, State and Commonwealth level,*
- n. in consultation with the councillors, to lead performance appraisals of the general manager,*
- o. to exercise any other functions of the council that the council determines.”*

Each new Council can adopt a Mayoral delegation, under Section 377 of the Act, for the purpose of providing authority to the Mayor in respect of policy-making functions between Council meetings in the case of emergency/necessity. The proposed delegation also provides authority for the Mayor to approve a leave of absence for the General Manager.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Mayoral delegation is provided for consideration by Council.

### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

**Nil**

## 5.4 COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND DELEGATES

**Author:** Vaughan Macdonald

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Richmond Valley Council has a range of committees that contribute to its operations, activities and functions. Council also appoints delegates to external organisations.

Generally, appointments to essential committees and organisations are determined at the first meeting of the newly elected Council. This includes:

- Electing Council's two delegates to Rous County Council
- Selecting Council's representative on the Richmond Valley Council Local Traffic Committee

County council elections are conducted under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993* and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021, Schedule 9. Whereby, if the number of candidates nominated is not more than the number of vacancies to be filled, those candidates are to be declared elected. If there are more candidates nominated than the number to be elected, an election is to be determined by preferential ballot.

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1) Appoints Councillor representatives/delegates to the following committees or organisations:
  - Rous County Council – two Councillors,
  - Richmond Valley Council Local Traffic Committee – one Councillor.
- 2) The General Manager conducts the elections for the above positions in line with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993* and Local Government (General) Regulation 2021, as set out in this report;
- 3) Notes the appointment of the Mayor as Council's representative on the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Board for the 2024-2028 term, in accordance with Section 400T of the *Local Government Act 1993*; and
- 4) Notes that a review of other committee appointments, including Arts Northern Rivers, the Northern Regional Planning Panel and Council's Audit Risk and Improvement Committee, will be brought to a future meeting of Council.

### DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 10: Lead and advocate for our community

10C Lead with integrity

10C1 Provide representative and accountable community governance

### BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Nil

## REPORT

### Rous County Council

Under the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 and the Rous County Council Charter, Council must appoint two new delegates to the Rous County Council board following each local government election.

Schedule 9 of the Regulation outlines how the election should be conducted. The Rous County Council Charter requires each constituent council to choose two of its members to serve on the Board. Accordingly, the ballot is conducted under the Single Area Electorate provisions of Schedule 9, with the General Manager serving as Returning Officer.

Under Schedule 9 of the Regulation, if the number of candidates nominated is not more than the number of vacancies to be filled, those candidates are to be declared elected. If there are more candidates nominated than the number to be elected, an election is to be determined by preferential ballot.

### Nominating candidates

Nomination forms for Rous County Council delegates have been forwarded to each Councillor. Part 2 (5) of Schedule 9 outlines how nominations may be received.

The nomination:

- (a) may be made without notice by any councillor of the council, and
- (b) is to be in writing delivered or sent to the returning officer, and
- (c) is not valid unless the nominee has indicated consent to the nomination in writing.

The Returning Officer will announce the names of the nominees at the Council meeting. If more than two nominations are received, a ballot will be conducted to appoint each delegate. If only two nominations are received, both nominees will be declared elected.

### Conducting the ballot

If more than two nominations are received, the successful candidates will be selected via a preferential ballot for each delegate. Ballot papers will be distributed to Councillors, containing the names of all candidates, with each Councillor being required to mark their votes by placing the figures 1, 2 and so on against the various names to indicate the order of their preference. The votes will be counted in accordance with Schedule 9.

Results of the election will be announced at the Council meeting and forwarded to the General Manager of Rous County Council.

### Richmond Valley Council Local Traffic Committee

This committee is a statutory committee which advises Council on traffic related matters, referred to it by Council Officers and/or by Council resolution. The Committee is an advisory body only with recommendations reported to Council.

Membership consists of one Councillor, Director Projects & Business Development (or nominee), one representative each from the Police Traffic Branch and Transport for NSW and the Member for Clarence (or nominee).

With the commencement of the 2024-2028 Term, Council is required to appoint a new Councillor representative to the Committee.

### Northern Rivers Joint Organisation

Richmond Valley Council is a member of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) with the Mayor serving as Council's representative on the Board, in accordance with the requirements of

Section 400T of the *Local Government Act 1993*. The General Manager serves on the Advisory Committee. The JO elects a new Chair following each local government election. Election of the new Chair will take place at the first meeting of NRJO for the 2024-2028 Council term.

**CONSULTATION**

Nil

**CONCLUSION**

This report outlines the requirements for appointing Councillor representatives and delegates to various committees and organisations. Matters to be addressed at the Extraordinary meeting include appointment of delegates to Rous County Council and appointment of representatives to the Traffic Committee. Details of other committee appointments will be brought to a future Council meeting.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

Nil

## 5.5 COUNCIL MEETINGS - ORDINARY MEETING DAY AND TIME

**Author:** Vaughan Macdonald

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the *Local Government Act 1993*, a council is required to meet at least ten times each year, each time in a different month. Following a local government election, it has been Council's usual practice to review its meeting days and commencement times for its Ordinary Meetings.

Proposed meeting times and dates are recommended in this report.

### RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council holds its Ordinary Meetings on the third Tuesday of the month commencing at 6.00pm.
2. There will be no Ordinary Meeting held in January each year unless a resolution is passed to the contrary.
3. Council confirms that its Ordinary Meetings for the remainder of 2024 and 2025 will be held on the dates set out in this report.

### DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 10: Lead and advocate for our community

10C Lead with integrity

10C1 Provide representative and accountable community governance

### BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Nil

### REPORT

Section 365 of the *Local Government Act 1993* states that a council is required to meet at least ten times each year, each time in a different month. Following a local government election, it has been usual practice for Council to review its meeting days and commencement times.

At present, Council's Ordinary Meetings are held at 6.00pm on the third Tuesday of each month.

As per the Code of Meeting Practice, Council does not normally conduct an Ordinary Meeting in January, unless a resolution is passed to the contrary. It is proposed that this practice continues.

It is further proposed that Council meetings for the remainder of 2024 and 2025 continue to be held on the third Tuesday of the month commencing at 6.00pm. This is with the exception of the June Ordinary Meeting, which occurs on the fourth Tuesday of the month, due to the timing of budgetary requirements.

The following meeting dates and times are proposed:

#### 2024

- 22 October
- 19 November
- 17 December



**2025**

- 18 February
- 18 March
- 15 April
- 20 May
- 24 June (Budget meeting)
- 15 July
- 19 August
- 16 September
- 21 October
- 18 November
- 16 December

**CONSULTATION**

Under the Model Code of Meeting Practice for Local Councils in NSW, a council must give notice to the public of the time, date and place of each of its meetings (Clause 3.6).

**CONCLUSION**

Council has traditionally reviewed the day and time of its Ordinary Meetings following each local government election. This report proposes a meeting schedule for the remainder of 2024 and 2025.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

**Nil**

## 5.6 COUNTBACK PROCESS

**Author:** Vaughan Macdonald

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under Section 291A of the *Local Government Act 1993*, councils have the option of using a countback of votes cast at the last ordinary election to fill casual vacancies occurring on the Council in the first 18 months. This option aims to avoid the cost of holding a by-election.

Under the provisions, Richmond Valley Council could use the countback option if a vacancy occurred amongst the six Councillors, but not for a vacancy in the Mayoral office. In order to use the countback method, a resolution must be passed at the first meeting of the newly elected council.

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council considers the option of using the countback of votes cast at the 2024 ordinary election to fill casual vacancies occurring on the Council, in accordance with the provisions of Section 291A of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

### DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 10: Lead and advocate for our community

10C Lead with integrity

10C1 Provide representative and accountable community governance

### BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Use of the countback election process would incur administrative costs for Council however these are expected to be less than the cost of holding an attendance by-election.

### REPORT

The *Local Government Act 1993* was amended in 2016 to allow councils to use the countback method to fill casual vacancies on the elected council if they choose to do so. There are a number of conditions regarding this option:

- Councils must opt-in to the process by passing a resolution at their first council meeting;
- The vacancy must occur within 18 months of the election; and
- The method cannot be used to fill a vacancy for a popularly elected mayor.

If Council chose to opt-in to the countback process, the following scenarios would apply:

Councillor vacancies:

- Within the first 18 months of office, the vacancy could be filled by countback.
- Within the remaining term of office, Council could choose to hold a by-election, or apply to the Minister under s294 not to fill the vacancy, under certain circumstances.

Vacancy in the Mayoral office:

- Within the first 30 months of office, a by-election would need to be conducted.
- Within the final 18 months of office, the Governor would appoint a Councillor nominated by Council to fill the role, in accordance with s294.

**Countback methodology**

The countback election process is used to elect a councillor to fill a single vacancy, where the vacating councillor was elected under the proportional representation method (i.e. where two or more candidates were elected at a local government ordinary election). If there are multiple vacancies, a separate countback election is held for each vacancy. The process must be conducted by Council's election manager, the NSW Electoral Commission.

Once Council notifies the Electoral Commission of the vacancy, the Returning Officer contacts all unelected candidates from the local government ordinary election who may still qualify to be elected to the office of councillor. Where the candidate is interested, he or she must submit a formal application to the Returning Officer. All candidates who do not withdraw their application, become eligible candidates.

Applications for candidates to participate are open for 10 days; with the countback election required to be completed within 49 days.

If there are no eligible candidates, an attendance by-election must be held. If there is only one eligible candidate, that candidate is elected.

If there are multiple eligible candidates, a countback election is conducted. In a countback election, the Returning Officer:

- Uses preference data from ballot papers from the previous local government ordinary election;
- Uses the same proportional representation method used in the original election;
- Effectively re-runs the election making the vacating councillor ineligible and distributing each of their ballot papers to the next preference on the ballot paper;
- If a non-eligible candidate would be elected, the election is re-run with that candidate's ballot papers also distributed to their next preference on the ballot paper; and
- Re-runs the countback until an eligible candidate is elected.

**CONCLUSION**

Opting-in to the countback option under s291A of the Act may provide Council with a more cost-effective way of addressing casual vacancies in office. However, the provisions would not apply to the Office of Mayor in Richmond Valley Council's circumstances.

**ATTACHMENT(S)****1. Countback Election - Fact Sheet**



## Countback elections

### What is countback?

A quick, cost effective way to fill a casual vacancy.

Countback allows the council to fill a casual vacancy using a recount of the ballot papers from the last ordinary election instead of requiring an attendance by election.

Council must pass a resolution at its first meeting following the ordinary election to use countback to fill a casual vacancy.

### Model resolution

That Council, pursuant to section 291A(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1993*, declare that casual vacancies occurring in the office of a councillor within 18 months after the last ordinary election of councillors for the Council on 14 September 2024, are to be filled by a countback of votes cast at that election for the office in accordance with section 291A of the Act and directs the General Manager to notify the Electoral Commissioner for NSW of Council's decision within 7 days of this decision.

### Why would a Council choose to use countback?

#### Pros

- Time efficient:
  - Casual vacancy filled within 49 days or less, whereas a by-election can take up to 3 months
- Cost effective:
  - **Small by-election** >\$50,000
  - **Metro by-election** >\$500,000
  - **Countback election** \$6,000 - \$10,000
- Electorate not required to vote again
- No penalties for electors not voting
- No impact on sitting councillors
- Minimal effort from Council.

### Cons

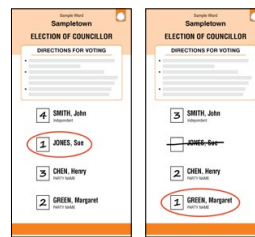
- No new candidates are able to be considered. Only unelected candidates from the previous ordinary election are able to apply
- Unelected candidates from the previous ordinary election cannot campaign to improve their vote.

### How does a countback election work?

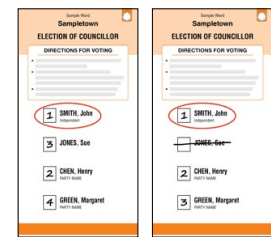
The count is conducted using the same ballot papers from the previous ordinary election which are stored as a data file in our computer count system.

Each ballot paper where the vacating councillor has a preference will be redistributed to the candidate with the next highest preference on that ballot paper by the count system. More examples, including ballot papers with groups, are available on our [website](#).

#### Example 1: Councillor Sue Jones resigns



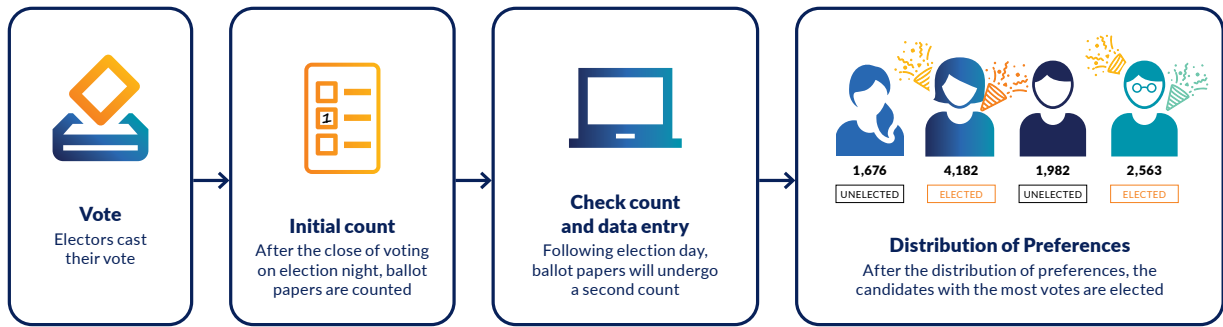
#### Example 2: Councillor Sue Jones resigns



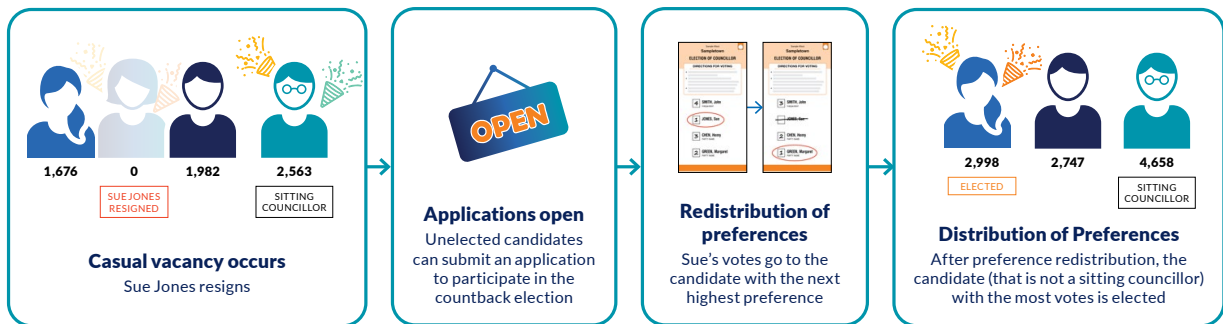
Left: Original ballot paper. Right: Countback preferences

How countback works in detail

Local Government election process



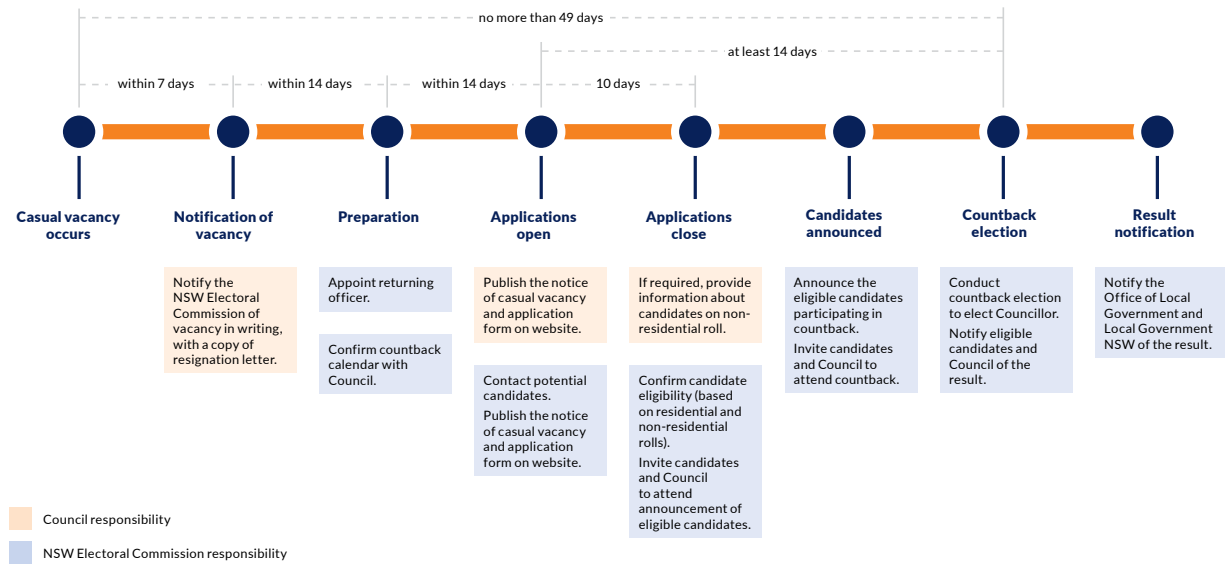
Countback election process



**What is the timeline for a countback election?**

Countback elections can only be used for 18 months after the Local Government ordinary elections. In the case of the 2024 local government elections, countback can only be used to fill casual vacancies until 14 March 2026.

The following summarises the steps involved in a countback election.



For more information about countback elections visit [elections.nsw.gov.au/elections/how-counting-works/countback-elections](https://elections.nsw.gov.au/elections/how-counting-works/countback-elections)