

Councillor Guidelines for State and Federal Elections

1. Purpose and application

- 1.1 The purpose of these guidelines is to outline Council's expectations of a Councillor who expresses an intention to run as a candidate, gains pre-selection, or otherwise nominates as a candidate for a seat in a State or Federal Election.
- 1.2 By complying with the guidelines, it is expected that Councillors will avoid the appearance that their position as a Councillor is being used as a platform for their campaign in a State or Federal Election.
- 1.3 These guidelines apply to all Councillors and operate in conjunction with Council's Councillor Code of Conduct.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 'Prospective Candidate' refers to a Councillor who nominates for pre-selection, becomes an endorsed candidate of a registered political party, or publicly expresses an intention to run as an independent candidate for a State or Federal Election.
- 2.2 'Nominated Candidate' refers to a Councillor who nominates as a candidate for a State or Federal Election through the relevant electoral commission.
- 2.3 A distinction is drawn between Prospective and Nominated Candidates as candidates for State and Federal Elections only become Nominated Candidates a few weeks prior to the relevant election date.

3. Notification of candidacy

- 3.1 Prospective Candidates will, as soon as practicable after nominating to run for pre-selection, becoming an endorsed candidate, or expressing their intention to run as a candidate, inform Council by delivering written notice to Council's Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- 3.2 The CEO, upon receipt of such written notice, will advise all Councillors.
- 3.3 Prospective Candidates will declare their intended candidacy at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council following their notification to the CEO.

4. Leave of absence

- 4.1 Nominated Candidates should apply for a leave of absence for a period that commences no later than the date of their nomination as a candidate with the relevant electoral commission and concludes no earlier than the close of voting for the election.
- 4.2 Applications for leave of absence will be sought in accordance with the processes ordinarily adopted by Council. Such applications will not be unreasonably refused.
- 4.3 During the approved period of leave, Nominated Councillors should not attend meetings of Council or Council committees, or otherwise act as a Councillor.
- 4.4 All Council equipment and materials must be returned to Council for the approved period of leave.

5. Conduct of Council business

5.1 When undertaking activities in their role as a Councillor, Councillors will take care to ensure that:

- items of business introduced onto the agenda of a Council or Council committee meeting
- notices of motion
- communications with people and organisations, both within and external to Council

relate to the objectives, role, functions and powers of Council and are not designed to further any Councillor's platform as a candidate in, or position with respect to, the relevant election.

5.2 Councillors should take particular care when:

- considering planning matters before Council in its role as a responsible authority under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- undertaking a consultation or advocacy role on behalf of members of the community, community groups or other interest groups
- attending Council events
- representing Council in communications with Federal or State Government entities.

5.3 At no point should Prospective or Nominated Candidates use, or appear to use, their position as a Councillor to further their platform as an election candidate.

6. Council resources

6.1 Councillors have access to a wide range of Council resources for use in their role as Councillors, including, but not limited to:

- offices and meeting rooms
- support staff
- hospitality services
- stationery
- equipment and facilities (such as mobile telephones, iPads and cab charge cards).

6.2 Councillors should ensure that Council resources are not used to further their platform as a candidate in, or in any manner connected with, the relevant election.

7. Council information and enquiries

7.1 Councillors have access to a wide range of information that is necessary for the purposes of fulfilling their role and functions as a Councillor.

7.2 Prospective and Nominated Candidates should ensure that information received from Council is used only for the purposes for which it is provided and is not used in a manner that furthers their platform as a candidate in, or in any manner connected with, the relevant election (except to the extent that such information is already in the public domain).

7.3 All enquiries or requests for information from Nominated Candidates should be directed through the CEO's Office.

8. Media engagement

- 8.1 Councillors may engage with the media in relation to Council business as a result of direct approaches, or through opportunities arranged by Council.
- 8.2 Prospective Candidates should ensure that any comment made to the media in their capacity as a Councillor is limited to matters concerning Council. When making public comments, they should take care to differentiate between their role as a candidate and their role as a Councillor.
- 8.3 Nominated Candidates who are on leave of absence should not make any public comment on Council business or any matters relating to their role as a Councillor.

9. Review

These guidelines will be reviewed in advance of a State or Federal Election, when there is a change in the Municipal Association of Victoria policy position on the candidature of Councillors in State or Federal Elections, or as otherwise required.