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Your Ref:

Contact: Bradley Cutts on 9725 0123

14 June 2022

Minister for Local Government  
The Hon Wendy Tuckerman MP  
GPO Box 5341  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Minister

## 2021 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

I am writing to advise that Fairfield City Council has completed its report on the conduct of the local government elections held in December 2021.

Section 393A(2) of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 requires that councils who had their elections administered by an electoral services provider, must submit a report to the Minister for Local Government within 6 months after the election has been declared.

Fairfield City Council was one of those councils and the attached report covers in detail, all the requirements prescribed under Section 393A(2) of the Regulation.

As a component of completing this report, Council has also published the election report on its website.

Should you require any further information, please contact me via email at [bcutts@fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bcutts@fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au) or telephone 9725 0123.

Yours sincerely



Bradley Cutts  
**ACTING CITY MANAGER**

Encl.

### 393A General manager to report on election

- (1) This section applies to an election administered by an electoral services provider.
- (2) After an election, the general manager must provide the Minister with a written report setting out details of the election, including (but not limited to) the following information—
  - (a) time spent on the election by the general manager as a proportion of the general manager's remuneration,

It is estimated that the City Manager spent about 1% of his time on the election which has been estimated to about \$5,115.00. Due to the change in legislation, the City Manager spent less time on the election as the role of Election Manager is administered by the Australian Election Company (electoral services provider).

- (b) time spent on the election by council staff as a proportion of council staff remuneration,

22019/2020 FY

Position	%	Cost	Cost Type
Procurement Co-ordinator	1	\$1,307.00	Direct
Manager Governance and Legal	1	\$1,753.00	Indirect

2020/2021 FY

Position	%	Cost	Cost Type
Director Corporate Governance	5	\$14,153.00	Direct
Director Community Outcomes	2	\$5,961.00	Indirect
Manager Governance and Legal	5	\$9,252.00	Indirect

2021/2022 FY

Position	%	Cost	Cost
Director Corporate Governance	10	\$29,196.00	Direct
Director Community Outcomes	5	\$15,856.00	Indirect
Manager Governance and Legal	10	\$18,363.00	Indirect
Manager Showground & Leisure Centres	0.33	\$705.00	Indirect

**Total \$96,546.00**

- (c) the remuneration of council staff employed specifically for the purpose of the election,

No Fairfield City Council staff were employed specifically for the elections however, a contractor was engaged, as per contract with the Australian Election Company.

(d) the remuneration, recruitment and training costs of election officials,

Remuneration, recruitment and training costs of election officials was included in the contract with Australian Election Company for the amount of \$565,225.58 excluding GST.

Returning Officer & Substitute Returning Officer	\$78,356.58
Polling Officials	\$486,869.00

The training costs are included in costs shown for Polling Officials. All election officials (including election office, pre poll and election day) were provided with documented procedure manuals appropriate to their employment category/role.

Additionally, all Pre Poll Office Managers and Polling Place Managers received a 3 hour "face to face" training session, delivered by the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer also offered and provided a supplementary 2 hour (non-compulsory) training session for "first time" Polling Place Managers. 14 Polling Place Managers attended the supplementary training session. The Australian Election Company also provided an instructional Powerpoint presentation for each individual ordinary Issuing Officer, employed at the 2021 elections.

Due to the COVID situation, additional costs were incurred for remuneration and recruitment costs of election officials as included in the contract with Australian Election Company for the amount of \$56,701.10 excluding GST.

Returning Officer & Substitute Returning Officer	\$14,241.58
Additional Travel Costs	\$14,392.00
Polling Officials for Pre-poll voting	\$12,514.56
Polling Officials for polling day	\$15,552.96

Other addition costs incurred due to the COVID situation included the accommodation, travel, storage, payroll tax for the Returning Officer & Substitute Returning Office.

The provision of training materials for election officials included the additional staff required due to the COVID situation.

(e) the cost of running any candidate information seminars,

Council arranged to hold 1 Candidate Information session for prospective candidates on Thursday 28 October 2021 which was to be conducted by the Director Corporate Governance. The session was an overview of what is expected of councillors, referencing resources available from the Office of Local Government. Council placed an advertisement on its website and local newspaper and requested that attendees register their interest due to the changing COVID situation. No attendees contacted Council therefore, no session was held in person. The presentation was published on Council's website.

A candidate information session was conducted by the Returning Officer on 4 November 2021. Council provided the venue (Waratah Room) at a cost of \$101.02. All handouts for this session were provided by the Australian Election Company and therefore included in the contract price.

- (f) the cost of hiring venues and equipment for the election, including council venues and equipment and any associated costs,

The cost to hire school and church halls was included in the contract with Australian Election Company for the amount of \$130,883.38 excluding GST.

Additional costs for Council provided venues for pre-polling and on Election Day include:

Address	2021 Dates	Hours Open to Vote
Cabravale Leisure Centre Programs Room 30 Broomfield Street Cabramatta	Monday 22 November – Friday 3 December Thursday 25 November Saturday 27 November Saturday 4 December	9.00am – 6.00pm 9.00am – 8.00pm 8.00am - 6.00pm 8.00am - 6.00pm
Fairfield Council Administration Centre Rooms 5 and 6 civic wing Avoca Road Wakeley	Monday 22 November – Friday 3 December Thursday 25 November Saturday 27 November Saturday 4 December	9.00am – 6.00pm 9.00am – 8.00pm 8.00am - 6.00pm 8.00am - 6.00pm
Fairfield Community Centre Hall 25 Barbara Street Fairfield	Monday 22 November – Friday 3 December Thursday 25 November Saturday 27 November Saturday 4 December	9.00am – 6.00pm 9.00am – 8.00pm 8.00am - 6.00pm 8.00am - 6.00pm
Fairfield Showground Waratah Room Smithfield Road Prairiewood	Monday 22 November – Friday 3 December Thursday 25 November Saturday 27 November Saturday 4 December	9.00am – 6.00pm 9.00am – 8.00pm 8.00am - 6.00pm 8.00am - 6.00pm

The cost to hire these Council facilities over 12 days are as follows:

Address	Cost including GST
Cabravale Leisure Centre Programs Room 30 Broomfield Street Cabramatta	\$17,453.80
Fairfield Council Administration Centre Rooms 5 and 6 civic wing Avoca Road Wakeley	\$3,466.80
Fairfield Community Centre Hall 25 Barbara Street Fairfield	\$11,520.00
Fairfield Showground Waratah Room Smithfield Road Prairiewood	\$9,696.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$42,136.60</b>

The cottage at the Fairfield Showground was used as the Election Office. The hire costs were based on:

12 to 30 July 2021 (3 weeks)	\$900.00
11 October to 21 December 2021 (12 weeks)	\$3600.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,500.00 including GST</b>

The provision of all election materials and equipment was included in the contract with the Australian Election Company.

Further costs incurred by Council were:

Item	Cost including GST
Electoral Commission NSW (ECNSW) – authorised rolls, enrolment envelopes, forms	\$39,723.75
Advertising – information session candidates, non-residential roll, postal voting, polling places	\$4,062.00
Advertising - City Life 68000 pamphlets winter & spring editions	\$8,031.00
Half length HB 80000 pencils single use	\$4,910.40
Mobile phone for Returning Officer	\$285.70
Election Office – clean	\$1243.64
Election Office - tea/coffee supplies	\$79.00
Election Office – equipment & repairs	\$2,502.52
Election Office - stationery supplies	\$2,190.00
Election Office – printing including QR Code posters, ward maps, street list	\$713.00
All venues set-up from October – furniture, staff, repairs, clean	\$3,815.39
Building Trades – logistics, delivery and pick-up of cardboard voting equipment from Polling Places	\$1,402.50
Building Trades – barricades setup before pre-poll to assist queueing separation, all sites	\$3,081.29
Rubber matting – Cabravale LC	\$3,632.20
Building Trades – temporary LED white lighting in Waratah Room	\$1,768.00
Building Trades – cleaning outside Polling Places	\$1,487.00
COVID cleans, masks, sanitiser	\$9,214.22
Locksmith – Waratah Room and cottage	\$2,324.80
Council website – staff maintaining information	\$1,800.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$92,266.21</b>

Therefore, the total cost of hiring venues and equipment for the election including council venues and equipment and any associated costs is:

Australian Election Company	\$130,883.38 excluding GST
Fairfield City Council	\$138,902.81 including GST
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$269,805.62</b>

- (g) the cost of any technological support, including the development of any counting software,

The cost of the vote counting software was included in the Australian Election Company contract.

- (h) the cost of preparing a written report under this section,

This report was prepared by the Manager Governance and Legal. It took one week to compile the numbers and write the report at a cost of \$4,500. This cost has not been included in the election costs provided in this report.

- (i) any electoral services provided to electors,

The electoral services provided to electors was included in the Australian Election Company contract.

- (j) any electoral services provided to candidates,

The electoral services provided to candidates was included in the Australian Election Company contract.

- (k) operational details of the election,

The operational details are included in the Australian Election Company contract.

- (l) an overall evaluation of the conduct of the election, including feedback from stakeholders,

Fairfield City Council, in partnership with the Australian Election Company considers that it conducted the Fairfield City Council elections accurately, equitably, professionally and in a COVID safe manner.

It is noted that there was a change of election date with the council elections postponed from 4 September 2021 to 4 December 2021. In addition, changes were made to the applicable legislation for conducting elections including the adjustment of timeframe for receipt of postal votes in response to changes to Australia Post delivery schedules and requirement for COVID Safety Plans.

Council's Director Corporate Governance participated in the COVID Safe Working Party meetings that were held in conjunction with the Office of Local Government and State Government agencies regarding election preparation.

In response to the COVID situation, there was an increase in number of polling places (pre poll and election day) due to safety and to provide an efficient service.

All feedback received by Fairfield City Council was forwarded to the Returning Officer or the Election Manager, Richard Kidd. This feedback consisted of:

- enquiries in response to the change from 3 to 2 wards
- delay of holding elections from September 2021 to December 2021
- technology assisted voting (iVote) not being available to the Fairfield LGA electors and only available to those council elections administered by the NSWEC (letter from Mayor to LG Minister)
- various concerns raised by the Election Manager with the Minister for Local Government, IPART and NSWEC regarding election costs, postponement and request for exclusive postal voting
- issuing of election material by party workers during the regulated period
- 100m rule issued to party workers
- recruitment of staff in line with changing Public Health Orders
- vaccinated and non-vaccinated electors attending polling places
- cleaning of venues in response to notification of positive COVID cases, in line with changing Public Health Orders

The evaluation of the conduct of the election is included in the report by the Australian Election Company.

- (m) the number of electors entitled to vote at the election and the number of electors who voted, specifying the number of electors who voted personally or by post,

Ward	Polling Day	Postal Votes	Pre-Poll	Total Votes	Total Voters enrolled as at 25/10/2021
Fairfield/Cabravale	23,805	1965	28,327	54,097	67,268
Parks	28,367	2076	20,793	51,236	61,423
Total	52,172	4041	49,120	105,333	128,691

Mayoral Election	Polling Day	Postal Votes	Pre-Poll	Total Votes	Total Voters enrolled as at 25/10/2021
Mayoral Election	52,376	4018	49,020	105,414	128,691

Due to the COVID situation and Public Health Orders, the Election Manager did not appoint any declared institutions at the 2021 elections. Postal Voting was offered to each declared institution.

- (n) the cost to the council of engaging the electoral services provider to administer the election.

The cost to engage the Australian Election Company as Council's electoral services provider was \$1,193,408.46 including GST.

- (3) The report must be provided to the Minister and displayed on the council's website within 6 months after the declaration of the election.

This election report has been published on Council's website.