

Item 7: Office of the General Manager

7.1 Council Meeting Schedule 2021/22

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR COMMUNITY
TO 04 AUGUST 2021 ORDINARY MEETING
GOV400088, GOV400088

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Director Community on the Council Meeting Schedule 2021/22; and**
2. **reschedule the dates for Council Meetings due to the postponement of the Local Government Elections until 4 December 2021; and**
3. **endorse the following dates for Council meetings:**
 - **15 September 2021**
 - **13 October 2021**
 - **3 November 2021**
 - **12 January 2022**
 - **2 February 2022**
 - **16 February 2022**
 - **16 March 2022**

Executive summary

The State Government has advised that the date of the Local Government elections has been postponed until 4 December 2021 due to concerns regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. This requires Council to reconsider its meeting dates to meet the requirements of the Code of Meeting Practice.

Disclosure of Interest

Nil

Detailed report

With the advice that has been received from the State Government regarding the postponement of the Council elections until 4 December 2021, changes are required to the Council meeting dates.

It is proposed to include a regular meeting in September as would normally occur, on the third Wednesday (being 15 September 2021). The October meeting date had already been brought forward to the 13 October for financial reporting reasons. The November meeting is now brought forward to 3 November 2021 to ensure that any major decisions are made prior to the caretaker period beginning on 6 November 2021.

Following the declaration of election results, it is a requirement that the mayoral election be held within three weeks. The declaration of results is scheduled to be finalised by 23 December 2021. Therefore the first meeting of the new Council will be held on Wednesday 12 January. At this meeting, Councillors will take the oath of office and elections will be held for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Any urgent matters will also be dealt with.

As no full meeting will have been held since 3 November 2021, it is proposed to hold an additional meeting in February to provide further information and training to new Councillors, as well as ensure that we can proceed through any backlog of reporting to Council. Council will then return to its regular schedule from the meeting on the third Wednesday in February.

It is noted that ultimately it is a decision of the new Council to determine the dates, days, times and frequency of Council meetings and this will be discussed with the new Council in January and February. The intent of this report is to provide some certainty to Councillors and candidates as to the schedule for the early weeks of the new term.

Community Plan implications

Theme	Good Governance
Goal	Strong civic leadership
Strategy	Provide accountable and transparent decision making for the community

Strategic implications

Council Strategies

Not applicable

Council Policies

Not applicable

Legislation

Local Government Act 1993

Financial implications

Not applicable

Associated Risks

It is important to be clear to the community when Council meetings will be held and also ensured that there is some guidance for the early meetings of the new Council to ensure continuity of governance.

SIMON JONES
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY

21 July 2021

Attachments: 1. Office of Local Government Circular to Councillors 21-20.

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM
GENERAL MANAGER

Circular Details	21-20/ 25 July 2021
Previous Circular	20-25 <i>The date of the next ordinary local government elections is 4 September 2021</i>
Who should read this	Councillors / General Managers / All council staff
Contact	Council Governance Team/ 02 4428 4100/ olg@olg.nsw.gov.au
Action required	Information

Postponement of the local government elections to 4 December 2021

What's new or changing

- The Minister for Local Government has published an order in the Gazette under section 318C of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) postponing all council elections to **4 December 2021**.
- The decision to postpone all council elections has been made in response to the escalating outbreak of the Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus in Greater Sydney and the potential for further outbreaks in regional areas.
- The decision has been made in consultation with and on the advice of the NSW Electoral Commissioner and NSW Health

What this will mean for your council

- Current councillors and popularly elected mayors will continue to hold their civic offices until council elections are held on 4 December 2021.
- The order made under section 318C continues the suspension of the requirement to hold by-elections to fill vacancies for the period specified in the order.
- Councils will not be required to hold by-elections to fill vacancies or to apply to the Minister to dispense with the requirement to hold a by-election before ordinary council elections are held on 4 December 2021.
- The making of the order will not affect the requirement to hold mayoral elections.
- Mayoral elections must be held for mayors elected in September 2019 when their two year-terms expire in September 2021.
- Mayors elected in September 2020 will continue to hold office until council elections are held on 4 December 2021.
- Chairpersons of county councils now hold office for two years.
- Chairpersons of county councils elected in September 2020 will continue to hold office until council elections are held on 4 December 2021.
- The composition of joint organisation boards may need to change in September 2021 if mayors of member councils elected by councillors are not re-elected.
- The postponement of the next ordinary local government elections will not affect the timing of future council elections, and the subsequent ordinary local government elections will still proceed in September 2024.

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Key points

- The local government elections were previously postponed to 4 September 2021 by orders made under section 318B of the Act.
- The order made under section 318C revokes the previous order and appoints 4 December 2021 as the day on which all council elections will be held.

Where to go for further information

- Further information is provided in the FAQ which is available on the Office of Local Government's website [here](#).
- For further information, please contact the Council Governance Team on 02 4428 4100 or by email at olg@olg.nsw.gov.au.

Kiersten Fishburn

Coordinator General, Planning Delivery and Local Government