

Women Leading Locally – It's Time

Information sessions for women
interested in nominating for 2022
Council Elections

Sessions by
ALGWA SA
by Women
for Women



Acknowledgment

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This publication follows in the footsteps of the Victorian Local Governance Association 2020 Campaign Toolkit. We thank them and their subsequent collaborators.

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The content for this document was created by Helen Hibeljic, Kristina Barnett and Julie Woodman in their roles as ALGWA SA Committee Members.

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ALGWA SA acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout South Australia and recognises the continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island cultures; and to Elders both past and present.

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Please enquire with the South Australian Electoral Commission (SAEC) or the South Australian Local Government Inspectorate (SALGI) for detailed information on regulations and legislative requirements.

Please direct enquiries to:

ALGWA SA Branch President: Cr Julie Woodman

Email: president@algwasa.org.au

M: 0431 188 788

ALGWA SA Secretary: Cr Kristina Barnett

Email: secretary@algwasa.org.au

M: 0408 822 923

Postal Address: PO Box 287 Prospect 5082

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Foreword

Women Leading Locally - It's Time - resource pack has been prepared by the Australian Local Government Women's Association South Australian Branch Inc. (ALGWA SA) for prospective women candidates wishing to stand for their local Council Election in South Australia.

Being a Councillor provides an exciting opportunity to make a difference in your local community by making vital decisions that make your area a better place to live.

This resource pack is part of ALGWA SA advocacy to improve under-representation of women in Councils.

We believe it is important that the composition of Councils reflects the diversity of the communities they serve as an essential part of a democratic, equitable and inclusive society.

ALGWA SA is a state member of the Australian Local Government Women's Association Inc. Its aim is to encourage and support women's involvement and participation in Local Government throughout Australia. ALGWA SA is non-party political and not for profit and encourages men and women to work towards its aims.





“It’s not women against men, it is women and men, and not that the world will be a better place if women run it, but that world will be a better place when women who bring their perspectives, share in running it.”

Dame Indira Patel OBE

National Council of Women Great Britain
Champion of International Women’s Rights (*Melbourne 2002*)

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About the ALGWA SA

ALGWA SA supports gender equity on Councils and seeks to assist in furthering women's participation, knowledge and understanding of the function of Local Government.



The Branch welcomes membership for both women and men who support ALGWA SA's aim.

Follow us on Facebook and jump onto our website for more information.

facebook.com/localgovernmentwomensa

www.algwasa.org.au

ALGWA SA

The South Australian Branch of ALGWA SA provides networking opportunities for those interested in encouraging women's participation in Local Government.

The South Australian Branch holds networking meetings, lunches, social functions, business meetings and provides a newsletter and mentoring.

Information on the branch and activities planned throughout South Australia can be obtained from State Secretary, Cr Kristina Barnett at algwa.sa@gmail.com.

We are a not-for-profit and non-political voluntary association.

We encourage and support women to become actively involved in the key decision-making processes of Local Government.

We support women candidates for Local Government elections

Membership is open to all people and organisations interested in supporting and encouraging women's participation in Local Government.

Please visit our website <https://www.algwasa.org.au> for more information.

Local Councils

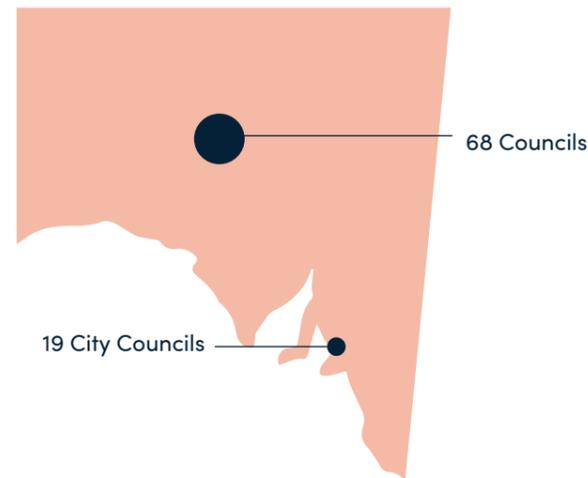
Your local Council facilitates essential community networks, provide services and acts as advocates for the diverse needs of communities through physical, social and economic planning.

There are 19 city Councils and 68 Councils in total across the State of South Australia.

Councillors represent either a ward (known as a ward councillor) or the council area as a whole (known as area councillor).

Elections are held for the positions of area councillor, mayor and ward councillors. Councils may have a combination of these positions.

Councillors are elected by the people who are eligible to vote and who live in the local area or who own property or business.



Councils develop and maintain community infrastructure such as roads, bridges, drains, halls, libraries, recreation facilities, parks and gardens.

Councils plan for future growth and development and provide a diverse range of property, economic, human, recreational and cultural services.

Councils enforce state and local laws relating to such matters as land use, environment protection, public health, traffic and parking and animal management.



Stand for what matters

2018 Council Election Results

Women are now represented within South Australian Councils at the highest level in history. As a result of the 2018 Council elections, 35% of Council members are now female, up from 29% in 2014 – that’s a significant increase in just one term of Council.

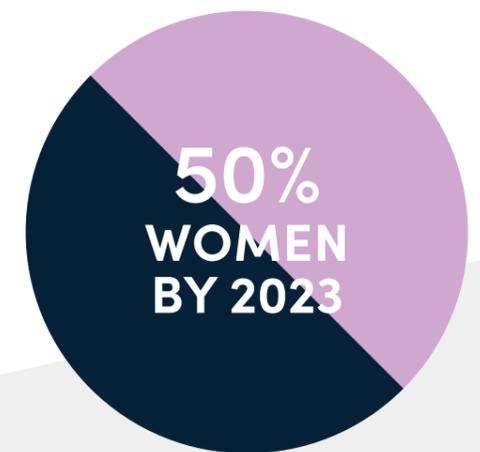
Standing up for what matters has never been more important, to our communities across the State. Of the 245 women elected to Council – 26 of those women have been appointed as Mayors. Again, a significant increase to the 9 female Mayors elected in 2014.

The record number of women in Local Government follows a record number of women nominating. During the 2018 Council Elections for the first time, 17 culturally diverse Council members were elected, this is a record number

There were approximately 395,000 South Australian who voted at the 2018 election, which was an increase of 38,000 in the 2014 Election.

A total of 1,374 nominations were received, this is 40 more than in 2014 and the highest number of nominations received since 1995, when SA had 115 Councils compared to 68 today.

There’s never been a more important time to stand for 2022 Council Elections than now, our aim is to carry this trend of change forward, encourage and support more women, and women of diverse backgrounds to stand for what matters to them and their communities most.



The obligations of a Councillor

A Councillor's desire to run as a candidate is commonly inspired by change – your efforts and contributions all depend on what you set out to do – and what you want to achieve.

Along with participating in Council and Committee meetings, Councillors perform a diverse range of tasks, which usually extends far beyond attending a weekly meeting or representing at a local community event.

There is a legislative requirement of the minimum number of Council meetings a Councillor must attend. Apart from this legislative requirement, it is up to the individual Councillor how much time they choose to spend on Council matters and within their communities.

It is said that the role of a Councillor is equivalent to that of a part time job. This of course depends on the amount of time and capacity you may have, most Councillors juggle a family, paid work, volunteering and community responsibilities.

Councillors do receive a taxable allowance, which is determined by the Council within parameters set by the State Government.



Am I eligible to stand?

Most people are eligible to vote in local council elections, and as such, also likely to be eligible to stand for a position on council.

You can nominate for a position on council regardless of qualifications, religion, race, gender, experience or profession. In fact, councils encourage nominations by people from diverse backgrounds to ensure that a wide range of views are being represented.

Anyone can stand for election as a council member (either mayor or councillor) if they are:

- an Australian citizen, and
- an elector for the area or the nominee of a body corporate or a group which has its name on the voters roll for the area. A nominee of a body corporate must be an officer of the body corporate and a nominee of a group must be a member of the group or an officer of a body corporate that is a member of the group.

You are not eligible if you:

- Are a State or Commonwealth parliamentarian.
- Are an undischarged bankrupt or receiving the benefit of a law for relief of insolvent debtors.
- Are disqualified from holding office by a court order.
- Are an employee of the council for which you are considering nominating.
- Are a candidate for election in another council area.
- Have been sentenced to imprisonment and are, or could become liable to serve the sentence or the remainder of the sentence.
- To be a Councillor in South Australia you must meet the above eligibility criteria, however there is no restriction on people with dual citizenship.

If you have any doubts as to whether you are eligible you should contact your council or the Electoral Commission of South Australia.

Who can vote?

Almost everyone over 18 years of age and living, owning or leasing property in a Council area can be eligible to vote. You must be enrolled on the Council voters roll to be able to vote.

How do I nominate as a candidate?

Complete the nomination kit available from your Council. The kit includes an application form, information booklets about the nomination process and the role and responsibilities of a Councillor.



What makes a good Councillor?

Councillors are elected by their communities to represent the views of their community on issues that matter to them most. Through this process Councillors serve by listening and being present to the needs of their residents and business owners.

When elected to Council you will be required to work with other Councillors perhaps in your own ward and the broader Council chamber with other Councillors representing their wards.

You, along with other Council members are required to participate in making policy decisions, establishing the rules, regulations and guidelines by which your community is governed, within the parameters of laws established by State Parliament.

Councillors do not get involved with the running of the Council, this is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer of that Council.

Generally your role as a Councillor will involve:

- ✔ Contributing to discussions and decision making at Council and committee meetings.
- ✔ Preparing and being across Council agendas, and other relevant documents in order to prepare for meetings.
- ✔ Reviewing strategic plans, policies and budget information.
- ✔ Representing Council at other meetings.
- ✔ Attending ceremonies, openings, awards and events.
- ✔ Staying abreast on major and minor Council projects.
- ✔ Providing leadership to your community.
- ✔ Making yourself available and approachable to discuss and provide advice on matters relevant to your local residents and/or business owners and further, relaying these matters through the correct channels at your Council.

Where to start?

Council

Learn about your local Council, and the services they offer. Visit their social media pages and take note of updates and stories they post. Spend time reading some of the commentary by the public, and you'll get a sense of what's important to them, their views and what's important to their community.

Familiarise yourself with your Council's initiatives and strategic plan. Learn about who your current Councillors are, and what they stand for. Get to know the local issues in your ward or area and form a perspective on what you could add to enrich your local community.

Attend Council meetings if you are able to, this will give you a good feel for the business that is dealt with in the Council meeting the dynamics within the meeting and how meetings are carried out. If you are unable to attend in person, in most cases you'll be able to stream the meeting online. You're also able to access the agenda and minutes online, to familiarise yourself with the issues that come up in your city.

Community Groups

Get to know the different community groups in your area. Find out what these community groups are aiming to achieve and how the Council can assist them in this process. These are important questions to explore because once you are out doorknocking and speaking to the leaders of community groups it is crucial to have these conversations.

Learn about the leaders in your community, whether they're assisting in running a community group, a cultural group, a religious organisation or a sport – just to mention a few. Write to the leaders. Introduce yourself. Ask them about what is important to their organisation and let them know that you are willing to help them to achieve their goals.

Ask to meet with them to further understand their ambitions and understand how you are able to help them get there.

Connect with your local community groups on social media and get involved in the discussions, share their posts and stories, and learn about them. Social media is a great tool as it gives you an idea of the community sentiment and their priorities.

Our communities need more women to stand and deliver – inspire and thrive

Your Ward or Council Area

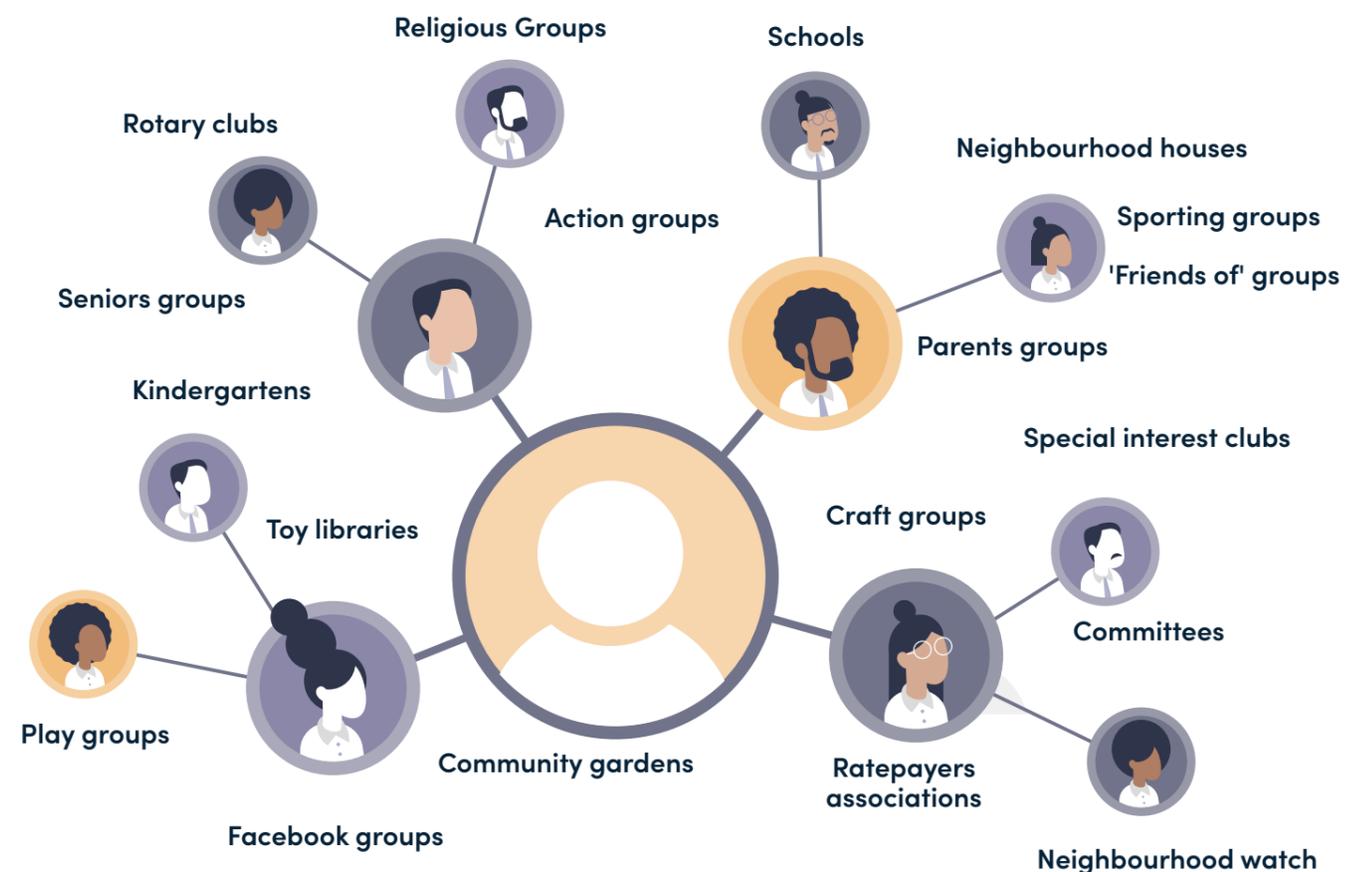
You can do this for any of the wards or council areas you're considering:

Make a list of the suburbs in your ward or council area. Your council staff can assist you to find the boundaries.

Make a list of key landmarks or community hubs in your Council ward or area – i.e. shopping centres, schools, kindergartens, sporting grounds/clubs – high traffic areas where the community comes together.

Don't worry too much about getting every single one – jot down the ones you're familiar with.

Can you think of at least three major issues facing the ward or area? If not, time to do some reconnaissance with friends and neighbours. They don't need to be time sensitive, pressing issues – they can be something that a lot of people care about, like access to library services, community health services or concerns over local traffic.



Any kind of group that comes together regularly! Connection is key.

Candidate statement

A candidate statement is a crucial component of your candidacy, preparing your candidate statement will help you to refine your key messaging.

Your statement should state why you're running and why people should vote for you, and include:

- ✓ A brief outline of your policies and proposals.
- ✓ Your reasons for standing for Council and what sets you apart.
- ✓ An overview of your goals if elected.
- ✓ Information about connection with your area: how long you've lived there, community or business involvement, this is the pitch that the majority of voters will see.

Ask for their vote. Present and arrange your statement to attract the attention of voters.

Use plain English and avoid using slang, lingo or colloquialisms.

Where possible, **mention specific problems** that you want to try and address in your area, but don't make promises you can't keep.

Try to persuade voters that your presence on Council will ensure their voice is heard.

Emphasise your accessibility and skills and your pride in making your area a great place to live and visit.

You will need to **include a high quality photo** that appears well in black and white (this is how it will be printed).

Smile and make sure voters can clearly see what you look like. Ensure your authentic voice comes through – balance a professional tone with your heartfelt sentiments.

Make sure the statement **does not contain spelling or formatting errors**. Ask a supporter to proofread it.

Double check and meet all the Electoral Commission of SA requirements about electoral material, including format and word limits.

Developing your platform

Once you have an understanding of the issues facing your community, the next step is to decide which of these issues you will focus on throughout the course of your campaign.

Although it is important to listen and absorb the issues that residents might raise with you, you are not expected to be an expert on every issue. More importantly, you are entitled to take a different position. Focus on the things you feel passionate about and follow these things through. Find out all you can about these issues – not just the concerns themselves, but their history of advocacy and action, who the key players are and what has and hasn't worked so far.

From there, you can develop your responses. Think of practical, achievable actions that you can implement, either over the course of your campaign, or in the event that you are elected. You may even choose to take the position that the concerns raised require further investigation and consultation. Listen to the issues and concerns raised by local residents and businesses while campaigning and raise them if you are elected.

As a candidate, your job is to listen to the community, advocate for the positions and views you believe in, and remain open, transparent and honest. Don't make promises you can't keep.

Once you're on Council, change will require the support of other Councilors, which will require working collaboratively and telling your story in order to bring people along, and convince them of the importance of your initiative.

If you're a member of a political party, please be mindful that local government is non-party political. If you are elected, you cannot vote on a policy solely based on the way your preferred political party has done so. Your job is to stay impartial to party politics, and to represent the views and advocate on behalf of your residents and community.

Campaign tips

Go online

Utilising an online platform is one of the most efficient and economically friendly ways of promoting yourself as a candidate and your platform.

- Establish a Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or any other social media forum to introduce yourself as a candidate and share your campaign trail online. Tell your community a story of what you stand for and what you're hopeful to deliver.
- Consider closing down any personal social media accounts you may have for the duration of your campaign.
- Share fun and catchy content of your campaign. Create interactive short videos, pictures, use gifs, social media live and generally post about what you're up to during your campaign.
- Encourage people to support your page and share your content.
- Schedule content so that information is regular.

Tell the story

Tell a story about you, the candidate. Make it fun, honest and genuine. People love to hear about who you are and why you're wanting to represent your community.

- Why are you standing for local government?
- What are you hoping to achieve?
- Why you think you're able to deliver to your community?
- Why people should vote for you?
- Include information on how people can vote, and the process of voting.

Write letters

Despite being in an era of technology, writing letters is still crucial, especially if you're able to personalise them with a hand signed or a personal note from you to your community.

- Write to everyone in your contact list, this includes residents, community organisations, sporting clubs, religious organisations,, to mention a few.
- Introduce yourself, who you are and what you stand for, ask them to reach out to you, and raise what's important to them and what changes they would like to see in their community.
- Write to organisations congratulating them on a recent achievement or reaching a milestone, use the opportunity to introduce yourself and talk about what you stand for and how you may be able to assist them.

Local catchups

- Pick a local café, reserve, hub, or a street corner that you can meet with your residents to discuss any issues relevant to them.
- Write letters or post to your community about hold a local catch up at a café and ask them to join you and other residents to discuss how you can improve your community.

Promote yourself

- Promote yourself, your message and your hard work through any means you may be able to, social media, writing letters, doorknocking or any other form that may be available to you.
- Ask your family and friends to talk to their contacts about your candidacy and your message and what you're aiming at achieving.
- Ask local businesses to promote your material, whether its your business card, a poster of your face or your content.
- Letterbox your message through a written letter or a DL flyer.

Be inclusive

- When addressing your community ensure that you have good knowledge of the demographics. RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH.
- Ensure that you're connecting with a wide range of your community, and that you are sensitive to cultural and diverse backgrounds.
- If you are able to, provide multilingual material and yourself and your message.

2022 Council Election Timetable

Event	Date & Time
Roll close	5pm, Friday 29 July 2022
Opening of nominations	Tuesday 23 August 2022
Nominations close	12 noon, Tuesday 6 September 2022
Dispatch of ballot material to electors	Between Friday 14 October and Thursday 20 October 2022
Close of voting (Polling Day)	5pm, Thursday 10 November 2022
Scrutiny and count	9am, Saturday 12 November 2022

Reference: <https://www.ecsa.sa.gov.au/elections/council-elections>

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