

Preamble

Section 2.11 of The *Local Government Act 1995* provides for two different methods by which Presidents or Mayors are elected to council, either:

- a. elected by electors of the district
- b. elected by the council from amongst the councillors

The Local Government Advisory Board has received a request from the Shire of Narrogin to change the method of election of the Shire of Narrogin President from by the electors to by the council.

Elector's poll question

Are you in favour of changing the method of election of the Shire of Narrogin President from being by the electors, to being by the elected council members?

In considering the question for the change of method of election of Shire President, the following summary of the case for each way of voting on the question has been prepared by the Local Government Advisory Board:

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT BY THE ELECTORS (current)

Those in favour may argue that:	Those against may argue that:
It enhances democracy as the electors have a direct say in the person who leads Council.	The electors may have less knowledge of a candidate's experience, capacity and capability than fellow councillors.
The President could be said to be more answerable to the community if popularly elected.	If the President does not have the support of the rest of council the result could be difficulty in council making decisions.
It provides continuity as councillors cannot remove a directly elected President for four (4) years.	Councillors may be best positioned to know when to withdraw support for a President.
The President may be more mindful of electors' views and feedback	The President may put individual councillor concerns ahead of the interest of the electors.
The term of Office of four (4) years gives continuity in the President overseeing council's objectives, goals and strategies.	A two (2) year election process could constitute a better process for a review of a President's performance.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT BY THE ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS (proposed)

Those in favour may argue that:	Those against may argue that:
A double selection process, with the person being elected to Council first before being eligible for election as President, gives more rigour to the selection process.	It removes the direct vote of the electors from the election and may support the development of factions on council.
Councillors may have better knowledge of a candidate's experience, capacity and capability.	The electors may wish to vote for a person who is considered independent and therefore not influenced by previous council experience.
An election by councillors can enhance the leadership of the President and the cohesiveness of the council.	The President could be said to be more answerable to the community if popularly elected.
If the President is elected on a two (2) year cycle it enables change at more frequent intervals if appropriate.	The more frequent change can potentially cause some disruption to council cohesiveness.
A two (2) year review of the President's performance is a better process and can only be achieved if the President is elected by council.	The term of Office of four (4) years gives continuity in the President overseeing the council's objectives, goals and strategies.