

09 August 2023

SUMMARY

- In a Special Council Meeting, Councillors majorly voted to publicly elect the Shire President in the upcoming Local Government Election in October 2023.
- Although the Shire of Exmouth is classified as a Band 3 Shire, it has decided to voluntarily follow these new requirements.

EXMOUTH COUNCIL MAKES BOLD MOVE TO PUBLICLY ELECT ITS SHIRE PRESIDENT

The Shire's commitment to good governance and effective leadership is evident in its goal to foster open, transparent, and accountable leadership. This commitment and the community's aspirations were emphasized during the consultation process for the Strategic Community Plan, which was adopted in December 2022. As part of its efforts to enhance governance and leadership, the Shire has introduced a significant change: In the upcoming Local Government Election on 21 October 2023, a publicly elected president will be added to the existing six elected members. This change aims to strengthen the Shire's democratic processes further and ensure that the voices of the community are well-represented.

The Council agreed in a majority vote to amend the process by allowing a vote of the electors of the Shire to determine the Shire President, aligning with the current State Government's review of the Local Government Act 1995. The reform, implemented by the State Government, aims to improve the services provided by local governments and ensure that they better serve residents and ratepayers. As part of this reform, it is now mandatory for local governments classified as a class 1 or 2 (band 1 or 2 under the current Salaries and Allowance Tribunal determination) to elect the Shire President through a vote by the electors.

During the Special Council Meeting, the Shire President Darlene Allston proposed this change with the intention of granting all electors the opportunity to directly vote for the President, empowering the ratepayers and giving them more say in choosing the leadership of their Council.

The publicly elected Shire President be in addition to the existing six elected members.

In addition to this new role being introduced, the postal election will revert back to the preferential voting system, with the aim to be more representative of the majority of voters with greater opportunities for a diversity of representation and views on the council.

Preferential voting is the same method used in state and federal elections; it allows voters to rank their preferred candidates in order of preference. Instead of simply marking an "X" next to their single favourite candidate, electors will have the option to rank all the candidates on the ballot paper on 21 October 2023. This ranking system ensures that even if an elector's first-choice candidate does not receive enough votes, their second or third choice may still be considered. By allowing voters to express multiple preferences, optional preferential voting ensures that the elected candidates truly represent the majority of voters.

Shire of Exmouth MEDIA RELEASE



The Shire of Exmouth will hold a Candidate Information Session and update its website www.exmouth.wa.gov.au and Social Media Accounts on LinkedIn and Facebook in the coming days to update its community members further.

COMMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO THE SHIRE – SHIRE PRESIDENT DARLENE ALLSTON

"The decision to include a publicly elected Shire President demonstrates the Shire's dedication to promoting a governance structure that is inclusive, participatory, and representative of the community's interests. It will bring more diversity to the Shire's leadership and enable a wider range of perspectives and experiences to be represented."

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