

LGE 028

Ms Lisa Clack  
Chief Executive Officer  
Shire of Merredin  
PO Box 42  
MERREDIN WA 6415

Dear Ms Clack

### **Local Government Ordinary Election: 2023**

The next local government ordinary elections are being held on 21 October 2023. While this is still some distance in the future, I have enclosed an estimate for your next ordinary election to assist in your 2023/2024 budget preparations.

The estimated cost for the 2023 election if conducted as a postal ballot is \$24,000 inc GST, which has been based on the following assumptions:

- 2,300 electors
- response rate of approximately 45%
- 4 vacancies
- count to be conducted at the offices of the Shire of Merredin
- appointment of a local Returning Officer
- regular Australia Post delivery service to apply for the lodgement of the election packages.

An additional amount of \$500 will be incurred if your Council decides to opt for the Australia Post Priority Service for the lodgement of election packages.

The Commission is required by the *Local Government Act* to conduct local government elections on a full cost recovery basis and you should note that this is an estimate only and may vary depending on a range of factors.

Costs not incorporated in this estimate include:

- any legal expenses other than those that are determined to be borne by the Western Australian Electoral Commission incurred as part of an invalidity complaint lodged with the Court of Disputed Returns
- the cost of any casual staff to assist the Returning Officer on election day or night
- any unanticipated costs arising from public health requirements for the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you are aware, the Government is currently considering reforms to the *Local Government Act 1995*, which include how elections are to be conducted. In order to assist with your local government's budget planning, we have included, to the best of our knowledge, costs that will arise from the changes proposed in legislation. For example, if under the amendments your local government will be required to conduct a mayoral/presidential election this has been included.

Some local governments may also note an increase in costs from their 2021 ordinary costs. These include increases arising from inflation in recent years affecting salaries for Returning Officers and other staff, printing and packaging costs as well as the increase in postage announced by Australia Post. Additional costs from the Commission have been included arising from improved processing procedures and additional resources to supplement the Commission's education, complaints management, investigation and legal efforts.

In order for the Commission to be responsible for the conduct of your election, the first step required by the *Local Government Act 1995* is my written agreement to undertake the election.

As such, you may take this letter as my agreement to be responsible for the conduct of the ordinary elections in 2023 for the Shire of Merredin in accordance with section 4.20(4) of the *Local Government Act 1995*, together with any other elections or polls that may also be required. My agreement is subject to the proviso that the Shire of Merredin also wishes to have the election undertaken by the Western Australian Electoral Commission as a postal election.

In order to achieve this, your council would need to pass the following two motions by absolute majority:

- Declare, in accordance with section 4.20(4) of the *Local Government Act 1995*, the Electoral Commissioner to be responsible for the conduct of the 2023 ordinary elections together with any other elections or polls which may be required
- Decide, in accordance with section 4.61(2) of the *Local Government Act 1995* that the method of conducting the election will be as a postal election.

It would be greatly appreciated if this item was considered at your March council meeting, to enable the Commission to have sufficient time to work with you to effectively conduct the election.

I look forward to conducting this election for the Shire of Merredin in anticipation of an affirmative vote by Council. If you have any further queries please contact Shani Wood Director, Election Operations on 9214 0400.

Yours sincerely



Robert Kennedy  
**ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER**

9 February 2023