

## Question on Notice

No. 904

Asked on 11 June 2019

**MS A LEAHY** ASKED THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (HON Y D'ATH) –

### QUESTION:

Will the Attorney-General advise of the costs of the Local Government elections reported separately for the 2016 Local Government election and the estimated costs provided to councils for the 2020 Local Government election (reported separately by council)?

### ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Warrego for her question.

I am advised that the total cost of the 2016 local government quadrennial elections was \$17.268 million, which was an average cost per elector of \$5.60.

I am advised that the total estimated cost to councils for the 2020 local government elections, as at January 2019, is \$27.435 million, which is an estimated average cost per elector of \$8.63. This is the same average cost per elector as the 2017 State general election.

The estimated cost per elector for conducting the 2020 Queensland local government elections compares favourably with elections in other jurisdictions, including the 2016 Federal election (\$18.28 per elector), the 2014 Victorian election (\$11.32 per elector) and the 2017 Western Australian election (\$11.61 per elector).

The cost differences between the 2016 and 2020 local government elections have been affected by a number of significant factors including:

- The 2016 elections were subsidised by the Queensland Government for the concurrent conduct of the referendum on fixed four-year terms. This subsidy reduced the costs required to be recovered from councils.
- The Electoral Commission of Queensland (ECQ) is currently implementing a broad range of electoral process improvements as recommended by the independent panel's *Review of the conduct of the 2016 local government elections, referendum and Toowoomba South by-election*, including a comprehensive workforce program for recruitment and training of temporary election staff.
- The ECQ has undertaken a comprehensive review of budgeting and accounting practices to provide a more accurate estimate of the actual costs of conducting local government elections.
- The numbers of electors in Queensland and the actual costs of base services required to deliver elections, such as labour, accommodation, postage and other operational costs are continuing to increase.

The ECQ has contacted each local government individually regarding arrangements for the conduct of the elections and will continue to work with councils to identify any cost saving initiatives that may reduce the costs to councils.

The overarching intention of the election planning process is to ensure that the 2020 local government elections are delivered to a high standard for all councils across Queensland and that voters are provided with fair and equitable opportunity to participate in the electoral process.