



The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP

Premier of NSW

Minister for Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

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ELECTIONS SET FOR WOLLONGONG AND SHELLHARBOUR CITY COUNCILS

The NSW Government will restore democracy to the Illawarra by holding local government elections for Shellharbour City Council and Wollongong City Council in September this year, NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell and Local Government Minister Don Page announced today.

Eligible local residents and ratepayers will go to the polls on 3 September, restoring local representation three years after the Councils were sacked by Labor.

"There is no more fundamental issue for local residents than the right to elect those who govern them," Mr O'Farrell said.

"Council decisions have a significant impact upon local communities and it's important that residents elect the people making those decisions.

"Labor has denied residents in Wollongong and Shellharbour locally-elected representatives since sacking the two Councils in 2008.

"The shameful recent history of Wollongong City Council lifted the lid on Labor Party politics in NSW, but it's no reason to deny democracy to the region and the opportunity to elect a new Council.

"This meets a commitment we gave to the people of the Illawarra before the March election and I am proud to deliver in the first week of Parliament."

The NSW Government will introduce legislation to Parliament today, scheduling elections for Shellharbour City Council and Wollongong City Council on 3 September 2011. A one-off, a five year term will be legislated for to avoid the costly exercise of another election in 2012.

Mr Page said the legislation would make a number of changes regarding wards and councillor numbers for the two Councils.

"The geographical size and population of the Shellharbour City Council area is more suited to having no wards, therefore the Government intends to abolish the existing ward structure and reduce the number of councillors from 13 to 7," Mr Page said.

“This means all eligible residents and ratepayers will vote on 3 September to elect a total of seven councillors, who will then elect the Mayor.

“The NSW Government proposes to reduce the number of wards in Wollongong City Council from the existing six to three.

“Residents and ratepayers will therefore be voting to elect four councillors in each ward, as well as their Mayor.

“This proposed change recognises the significance of the Wollongong City local government area for the entire region.

“The community will be able to have their say on the new ward boundaries when they are placed on public exhibition in the near future,” Mr Page said.

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