

Local Government Forum - 31st July 2025

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Summary

Supporting a candidate can bring many benefits to both parties. Candidates will also require the support of their FoGroups after being elected. Bushcare groups are ideal with a common cause of economic/environmental sustainability.

Becoming an Elected Member

- Build relationships with fellow Elected Members (EMs) and community.
- Stay true to your values,
- Listen to community,
- Attend community functions, planting days,
- Sign up for Bushcare volunteer events.
- Can elect to join committees such as policy writing. Eg local cat law, urban greening strategy. These will still need to be endorsed by Council.
- EMs to keep Bushcare groups informed of matters which may affect their groups, ie losing bushland to infrastructure, parking, sporting facilities, excessive impingement of playgrounds into bushland. (Should playgrounds even be in conservation areas?).
- Foreshore reserves are often Bush Forever. Remember, pruning/[burning](#) Bush Forever areas require a **clearing permit**



- Build a support team after you are elected.
- NOMINATE [here](#) before 4/9/25

Bushcare Groups to:

- Promote candidates and EMs who hold economic/ environmental and sustainability focus and **promote** those who are proposing to stand for re-election.
- Build relationships with both LG Officers and EMs. Do this with your LG Bushcare Officers. Get to know your local Bushcare staff (these people understand [you know more](#) about the area than they do. Bushcare Teams cover vast areas in their daily work).
- Use “drop in” sessions LG offer for public comment to meet Planning Officers. Offer to take them for a walk in local bushland.
- Environmental Officers may have little say when writing up documents for Council consideration, eg [public open space policy](#) DPLH want Public Open Space areas to be given different [shading](#) for conservation than for recreation. All [Bush Forever](#) need buffers and linkages. Health benefits of having nature nearby to every residential area. This may mean local wildlife trees surrounding sporting ovals.
- View the [canopy cover dashboard](#). Learn how it works and understand the amount of land in your locality with little or no vegetation - most likely these are hard surface areas.
- The **3-30-300** international rule is a guideline for urban planning that aims to improve human well-being by increasing access to nature. It suggests that everyone should have:
 - **3 trees:** Visibility of at least three trees from their home, workplace, or school.
 - **30% canopy cover:** At least 30% tree canopy cover in their neighbourhood.
 - **300 meters:** Proximity to a high-quality green space, such as a park, within 300 meters.
- Conservation areas can accommodate passive recreation that does not impact conservation values. [SPP 2.8 Bush Forever](#).



- **BUILD A COMMON VOICE** within your FoGroup via discussion and consensus. Don't leave major and minor decisions to just one person, they will become exhausted and frustrated. Always thank your Volunteers.
- Identify those in your group with good people and writing skills, ask them to speak with EM's.
- Find things in common other than the bad state of our bushland.
- Go to Ordinary Council Meetings (OCM) regularly to understand process.
- Learn to give deputations and ask questions at Council meetings.
- Contact other FoGroups who have had experience – try not to re-invent the wheel, other FoGroups will assist.
- Share within your FoGroup reviewing monthly Council Agendas. (Agendas can be large > 500 pages) which includes expenditure, planning, etc. (Split it up into smaller sections between members)

Policies are:

- **Not enforceable.** You can remind Councillors when decisions and/or new policies are proposed which are contrary to policies which they have previously endorsed, why deviate from good policy, eg Biodiversity Policy. Greening Strategy, 30% Tree Canopy Cover will not be achieved if more hard surfaces are built.
Best practice - needs to be shown.

Suggested Reading:

- **December 2022** The Kunming-Montreal [Global Biodiversity Framework](#) is a landmark international agreement, aiming to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. It includes 23 action-oriented targets to be achieved by 2030, with the overarching goal of creating a future where ecosystems are restored and biodiversity is thriving.
- **Protection of Biodiversity and Ecosystems – supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development goals and builds on the Convention's previous Strategic Plans**
- **January 2023** WA State Government Departments reviewed their policies and strategies, so they aligned to this International commitment.
- **July 2023** WA Parliament updated the local government act - [Local government act 3.1](#)
‘to provide for the good government of persons in its district’

General function of LG is to give due regard -

to promote the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the district

and

(ii) to plan for, and to plan for mitigating, risks associated with climate change; and

(iii) in making decisions, to consider potential long-term consequences and impacts on future generations;

(b) the need —

(i) to recognise the particular interests of Aboriginal people; and

(ii) to involve Aboriginal people in decision-making processes;

(c) the need to consider collaboration with other local governments.

These changes are not well known. Decisions made in Council can be challenged if they do or did not give **due regard to** this overarching function of a LG.

Campaigning and Marketing for candidates in Local Elections:

- Principles of good governance and spending rates wisely. This will appeal to those who have no environmental sustainability interest.
- Use your community group support base to door knock.
Know the local issues -
- Fb appeals to those most likely to vote (older generation)
- Young ones could be aligned with environmental/sustainability values but unlikely to vote.
 - Have a connection with community. Does your LGA have a youth advisory committee?
Find out what they do,
What they want to achieve?

Questions for your candidates!

They may be new candidates or councillors seeking re-election. Local Councillors serve four-year terms. However, elections for Local Councils are held every 2 years with half of the Council members elected at each election.

You can check records for former councillors via:

- Ordinary Council Meeting attendance;

- Passing motions;
- Altering Council Officers RECOMMENDATIONS with new motions.

Some Bushcare groups make a score card for community distribution. It is generally made up of questions that are based on their concerns and include loss of wildlife habitat and ecological connectivity, streetscapes, canopy cover. Not all candidates respond. Consider organising a community meeting with Candidates either through a Bushcare Group or Residents and Ratepayers group.

A few questions can be put to them such as:

1. Would they give away public realm for carparking or other hard surface infrastructure.
2. What does the 30% [canopy cover](#) target mean to them?
3. Why are they nominating?

Behaviour as an elected member

- Don't put yourself in a position of [breach](#) whilst canvassing or once elected. Breaches range from speaking of another candidate in bad terms, either verbally, Facebook or in public. You can be taken to Court by either the public or EM themselves. Breaches can be classified as either minor or serious breaches, depending on the nature and severity of the violation.
- Don't use adjectives or adverbs in your statements.

GOOD LUCK AND REMEMBER YOU CAN DO IT

