

2026 Local Government Election Update

Reconciliation Committee

Wednesday 6 May 2026

Charlotte Oldfield, Manager Council Governance

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Elections overview



- Local Government Elections in South Australia are conducted every four years in accordance with the legislative framework provided in the ***Local Government (Elections) Act 1999***.
- The City of Adelaide has unique requirements as the Capital City Council of South Australia. These requirements are included within the ***City of Adelaide Act 1998*** and its regulations.
- The two Acts and their associated regulations together provide the foundation for the management and conduct of the City of Adelaide Elections. The Acts provide details regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Council and the Electoral Commission of South Australia (ECSA) and qualifications regarding voting, voting entitlements, voting systems, candidates and caretaker provisions.
- An election timetable has been provided by ECSA with the **close of the voters roll at 5:00pm Friday 31 July 2026**.

Elections overview

In 2026, updated legislation was commenced, significantly impacting the way the City of Adelaide must run an Election.

Key changes include:

- **Expanded Statutory Accountability:** Amendments to the relevant legislation materially expand CEO obligations, including automatic enrolment requirements and State Elector cross-checking.
- **Cross-Agency Dependency:** The State Elector requirement introduces formal reliance on House of Assembly roll validation and coordination with ECSA.
- **Compressed Legislative Timelines:** Hard statutory deadlines, including elector engagement by 12 June 2026, significantly constrain systems updates and data stabilisation windows.
- **Entitlement Complexity:** More than ten enrolment scenarios and expanded definitions of nominee, default and officer.

The **Election 2026 Project Team** has been formulated to manage these changes.

Election Key Dates



EVENT	DATE
Roll close	Friday 31 July 2026, 5:00 pm
Nominations open	Tuesday 25 August 2026
Caretaker begins	Tuesday 8 September 2026 <i>* Unless otherwise resolved by Council</i>
Nominations close	Tuesday 8 September 2026, 12 noon
Mail out of voting material	Thursday 15 October – Wednesday 21 October 2026
Close of voting	Wednesday 11 November 2026, 5:00 pm
Scrutiny and count	Saturday 14 November 2026, 9:00 am

Election Facts – 2026 Updates

- **Voting is voluntary** in Council elections.
- **From 1 January 2026**, you must be a **State Elector** — and therefore an **Australian citizen** — to be on the Voter's Roll.
- You can **no longer enrol** on the Council Roll if you **live interstate or overseas**, even if you're an Australian citizen.
- The **Council Roll is property-based** (owners or occupiers), so voting rights are tied to the property, not the person.
- **Body Corporates and Group Owners** must nominate a **natural person** to vote for them.
- If no nomination is made, the **CEO will appoint** someone by default.

Voter Profiles



PRIYA

- 33 years old
- Permanent Resident
- Lives in Central Ward

Priya is a 33-year-old retailer who runs her food business in Central Ward at the Adelaide Central Market.

She came to Adelaide as a student 10 years ago where she met her (now) husband Marco. They've recently moved to the city to be closer to Marco's parents as they start thinking about building a family.

Priya loves the city's vibe and is emotionally invested on foot traffic and tourism and has voted previously.

As Priya is a permanent resident, rather than an Australian Citizen, she is not eligible to be on the House of Assembly roll and will not have a vote.



ROBERT

- 78, owns a commercial building in Central Ward,
- lives outside CoA
- State Elector

Robert owns a commercial building in Central Ward in his own name. The registered postal address is a GPO Box in Adelaide.

Robert also owns a second commercial property in Central Ward through the entity UMR P/L. Robert, his wife and 2 daughters are all Directors of UMR.

Robert is an Australian Citizen and is on the HoA in SA. However, as he will receive a vote for the first commercial property in his name, UMR will need to nominate another Public Officer for the second commercial property.



Becker Family Group

Becker Group has a property portfolio that spans the CBD and multiple suburbs in SA. All directors reside in SA and are Australian citizens.

The company values being a 'good corporate citizen' - and highly values their vote in the City of Adelaide elections.

Nonetheless, they must nominate a public officer for each property/entity.

The Group will need to work out who can be nominated as a "Public Officer" to ensure they maximise their voting entitlements.

How to help?

- **Let owners know to keep an eye** out for a City of Adelaide letter in late May/early June – it will ask you to **nominate a natural person to vote**.
- **Fill out the form** — online or on paper — it only takes a minute.
- If using hardcopy, **drop it straight into the Ballot Box** so it gets back quickly. Ballot Box Location is to be confirmed.
- **Got questions?** Call or email the Elections Team — we're ready to help. (Election2026@cityofadelaide.com.au, Phone to be advised)
- **Spread the word** to City Owners: everyone needs to complete their nomination.

Make it your business – enrol to vote



What Happens Next?

Once nominations close and the Voter's Roll is set, we head into the election period:

- Nominations open **Tuesday 25 August 2026**
- Nominations close **Tuesday 8 September 2026**, 12 noon and Council enters the **'Caretaker period'**, limiting the decisions that Council can make.

We'd love to see eligible community members:

- **Stand for Council**, and/or
- **Vote in the election**

**Make it your business –
enrol to vote**



Further Information



The Governance Team is available to answer questions.

Key Contacts

Associate Director, Governance and Strategy: Rebecca Hayes

Manager, Corporate Governance and Risk: Kathryn Goldy

Manager, Council Governance: Charlotte Oldfield

Links

ECSA: [Home - Electoral Commission SA](#)

CoA Website: [Elections | City of Adelaide](#)

SharePoint: [Council Elections – Home](#) & [Caretaker Overview](#)

Caretaker Policy: [Current Caretaker Policy](#) (*Updated version to be adopted by Council in May 2026*)