

**9.13.2 Report of the Returning Officer for the Ordinary Election held 19 October 2013**

<b>PROPONENT</b>	Returning Officer
<b>WARD:</b>	Central, Coastal, East, South & West Wards
<b>DIVISION:</b>	Corporate Services
<b>FILE REFERENCE:</b>	CNL 6/14
<b>LEGISLATION:</b>	Local Government Act 1995 and Local Government Elections Regulations 1997
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	Jeremy Hubble
<b>DATE OF REPORT:</b>	21 October 2013
<b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST:</b>	Nil
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**BACKGROUND:**

This report is to brief elected members on the conduct of the election held on 19 October 2013 and to provide an overview of statistics thereon.

At the Council meeting on 30 May 2013, Council resolved to hold an in-person election (rather than a postal election conducted by the WA Electoral Commission). The CEO was nominated as the Returning Officer.

The Shire of Manjimup district is divided into 6 Wards. Upon the close of the electoral roles, the total eligible voters for each ward were:

Ward	Residents Roll	Owners & Occupiers Roll	Consolidated Roll (total)
Central	3,166	30	3,196
Coastal	529	95	624
East	643	4	647
North	581	8	589
South	401	95	496
West	1,080	10	1,090
<b>Total 2013</b>	<b>6,400</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>6,642</b>
<b>Total 2011</b>	<b>6,431</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>6,684</b>
<b>Difference</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>(11)</b>	<b>(42)</b>

There has been a 0.6% (42) decline in electors since the last elections.

Vacant positions available for the 2013 elections were:

Ward	Vacancies	Nominations	Poll required
Central	3	5	Yes
Coastal	1	1	No
East	1	1	No
North	Nil	n/a	n/a
West	1	1	No
South	1	1	No

Given the resignation of Councillor Jones in late August 2013 (part way through his 4 year term), one of the three vacancies in the Central ward was for a 2 year term only.

Councillors were elected unopposed for the Coastal, East, West and South Wards. Polling was only required to be conducted for the Central Ward.

Early voting was available for 3 weeks preceding the election from the Shire Administration Office in Manjimup. In person polling was conducted at the Manjimup Town Hall on Saturday 19 October 2013.

A summary of the methods by which votes were issued follows:

Ward	Absentee votes	Postal votes	Early voting Manjimup Shire Admin office	Early voting other locations	In person on election day	Total votes issued	
Central	0	12	258	0	361	631	
						Less Postal ballots not returned	0
						Less Provisional ballots rejected	0
						Less informal ballots	4
						Total ballots accepted	<u>627</u>

#### **CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN:**

A public awareness campaign of the elections was undertaken by the Shire, WALGA and the West Australian Electoral Commission. In addition to normal collective promotion, in the weeks leading up to nominations, the Shire placed articles from continuing members promoting why they stood for Council and their experience since being elected.

All statutory requirements for public notice in respect of enrolment, nomination, absentee voting, postal voting, early voting, polling places and election outcomes were complied with.

#### **COMMENT (Includes Options):**

##### Owners and Occupiers

2009 advice was sent to all property owners not residing in the Shire of Manjimup advising them of their entitlement to apply to be registered on the owners and occupiers roll (cost of \$1,024).

2011 only statutory notice provided and roll reviewed as required by the Act.

2013 only statutory notice provided and roll reviewed as required by the Act.

##### Advertising

Advertising was undertaken for this election including:

- Participation in WALGA's group advertising for nominations for Council vacancies, advice on polling places and notification of election results;
- Councillor profiles in the MBT in the weeks prior to the election day;

- Notice of close of rolls, nominations, polling places and election results in the West Australian, Manjimup Bridgetown Times, Karri Pigeon, Pemberton Community News and the Walpole Weekly
- Shire Presidents' message encouraging women to consider nominating.
- Promotion in the Autumn and Spring editions of the Shire scene.

#### Choice of venues

The venue for polling day was selected on the basis of capacity, location and historical use for such purpose.

#### Informal votes

The use of first past the post method of voting resulted in a very low level of informal votes as illustrated:

Ward	No Informal Votes	% informal
Central	4	0.6%

#### Results and statistics

Ward	Candidate	Votes	Elected / term	Term expires
Coastal	Fahey		<b>Elected unopposed</b>	
Central	Omodei	489	<b>Elected 4 year term</b>	21 October 2017
	Taylor	276	Not elected	
	Jenkins	303	<b>Elected 2 year term</b>	17 October 2015
	Curo	232	Not elected	
	Logan	308	<b>Elected 4 year term</b>	21 October 2017
East	Winfield		<b>Elected unopposed</b>	
West	DeCampo		<b>Elected unopposed</b>	
South	Tapley		<b>Elected unopposed</b>	

In the contested Central Ward, electors were eligible to cast up to 3 votes each. 1,608 valid votes were cast out of a potential of 1,881 votes by the 627 electors. 33 (5%) of voting electors chose to cast only 1 vote each whereas 207 (33%) of voting electors chose to cast only 2 votes each. 387 (62%) of voting electors therefore chose to cast 3 votes each.

#### Voter participation

A summary of voter participation levels for Shire of Manjimup in person elections is:

Ward	Election	% voter participation
Central	2013 Ordinary	19.8%
	2011 Ordinary	No poll required
	2010 Extra Ordinary	9.3%
	2009 Ordinary	17.4%

	2007 Extra Ordinary	13.3%
	2005 Ordinary	16.3%
	2001 Ordinary	17.5%
Coastal	2013 Ordinary	No poll required
	2011 Ordinary	No vacancy
	2009 Ordinary	60.8%
	2007 Ordinary	52.2%
	2001 Ordinary	70.5%
West	2013 Ordinary	No poll required
	2011 Ordinary	24.1%
	2009 Ordinary	26.7%
	2007 Ordinary	25.4%
	2001 Ordinary	44.3%
North	2013 Ordinary	No vacancy
	2011 Ordinary	No poll required
	2007 Ordinary	No poll required
	2003 Ordinary	20.9%
East	2013 Ordinary	No poll required
	2011 Ordinary	No vacancies
	2009 Ordinary	No poll required
	2005 Ordinary	No poll required
	2001 Ordinary	22.9%
South	2013 Ordinary	No poll required
	2011 Ordinary	No vacancies
	2009 Ordinary	No poll required

#### Comparison of 2013 participation levels with postal voting

In 2013, the WA Electoral Commission conducted 76 postal voting and 2 in person polls for local governments in Western Australia.

2013 Shire of Manjimup In Person Voting Results	% voter participation
Central ward	19.8%
2013 WAEC Postal Voting Results (may be limited to wards where wards are used)	% voter participation
Average	Unavailable as the WAEC had not released its 2013 election report by the end of October
Highest (Shire of XX)	
Lowest (Shire of XX)	
Results for south west zone Council elections run by the WAEC in 2013 were:	
- Augusta Margaret River	40.5%
- Bridgetown Greenbushes	41.7%
- Busselton	29.8%
- Bunbury	35.9%
- Capel	Uncontested
- Collie	Uncontested
- Dardanup	28.0%
- Donnybrook Balingup	41.5%
- Harvey	Uncontested

#### **STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT:**

This election was conducted by the CEO as the Returning Officer in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1995 and Local Government Elections Regulations 1997.

**POLICY / STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:**

Strategic Community Plan (2012-2022):

Theme: Our Civic Leaders “Our Councillors and community leaders have a vision for the community, are accessible, operate with transparency and integrity, and act in good faith on behalf of their constituents”

Strategy 5.3: Engage in transparent decision-making processes and promote individual accountability.

Raising election profile appeared mildly effective with sufficient nominations for each ward and increased voter participation levels for the contested ward.

The election outcome improved gender balance with three women now representing 27.3% of the Council (up from 18.2%).

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The total cost of the 2013 Ordinary election involving one poll only was \$6,674 (ex gst) which included additional advertising costs due to late notice of resignation Cr Jones. By way of comparison, the cost of the 2011 election involving only one poll was \$6,338.

The report to Council in May 2013 estimated costs of an in-person election to be up to \$13,100 depending on the number of contested vacancies. By way of comparison, the quote for conducting a postal election (by the WA Electoral Commission and including other associated costs to be borne by the Shire of Manjimup), was \$27,055.

In person voting therefore saved in the order of \$20k over the alternative postal voting due predominately to only one poll being required however this saving is a little misleading as considerable Council officer time leading up to polling day was incurred but absorbed by normal salary budgets.

**SUSTAINABILITY:**

Environmental: Nil

Economic: Nil

Social: Nil

**VOTING REQUIREMENTS:**

**SIMPLE MAJORITY**

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Council receive the Returning Officers report for the election held on 19 October 2013.**

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil

## **APPENDICES**

Nil