

TOWN OF PORT HEDLAND — LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION

1110. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Local Government:

I ask this question on behalf of Hon Jacqui Boydell, who is away on urgent parliamentary business.

I refer to the recent ABC Pilbara Facebook post that states just 1 542 of the 8 428 ballots for the upcoming local government election in the Town of Port Hedland have been returned.

- (1) What engagement has the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries provided to the local community to ensure a strong local turnout to the election?
- (2) Was an audit conducted by the Western Australian Electoral Commission or DLGSC to determine the legitimacy of the 8 428 ballots sent?
- (3) Given the urgency to ensure a better turnout for the election, what is the department doing to encourage voter turnout?
- (4) What guidelines are in place to ensure the legitimacy of the newly elected council, given the concerns raised about previous local government results in Port Hedland?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries undertakes a broad, statewide promotional campaign preceding the normal biennial election cycle, rather than directly, for a specific local government extraordinary election. The department has engaged directly with the Town of Port Hedland's chief executive officer and the commissioner regarding the promotion of the upcoming election. This included the director general of the department meeting in Port Hedland with the CEO and commissioner in late August 2020 to develop a community awareness and participation strategy for the election. The town's commissioner and CEO have actively promoted the election and encouraged the community to be involved. At the opening of nominations, the Minister for Local Government's media statement, dated 3 September 2020, called for quality candidates, community participation in the election and quality ongoing representation.
- (2) The WA Electoral Commission is responsible for the conduct of the town's election.
- (3) The current level of returns for postal ballots is relatively normal for local government elections. Voting envelopes can be delivered in person until 6.00 pm on Saturday, 17 October 2020, so the final level of voter turnout cannot be determined until voting closes.
- (4) The WA Electoral Commission is responsible for the conduct of the town's election.