



Hon John Carey MLA
Minister for Housing; Lands; Homelessness; Local Government

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14 DEC 2022

Councillor Michelle Rich
President
Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale
6 Paterson Street
MUNDIJONG WA 6123

Dear Cr Rich

Michelle

Thank you for your letter dated 18 July 2022 regarding the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale (the Shire)'s interest in participating in electronic voting following the legislative reform program.

Western Australian electors rightly expect that local governments elections will be conducted in accordance with requirements and standards set out in relevant legislation, including the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act).

While I appreciate the Shire's interest in an electronic voting system, implementation of a suitable and effective system must meet legislative requirements and public expectations.

I understand that the use of electronic technology for local government elections in other Australian states has been generally limited.

Earlier this year, the New South Wales (NSW) Electoral Commission announced it was phasing out iVote, the electronic voting system used in NSW, due to reliability issues experienced by constituents accessing the system. As a result of issues with the iVote software, three 2021 local government elections were declared void by the NSW Supreme Court, with those elections needing to be rerun.

While there are no plans to immediately introduce an electronic voting system, I recognise that the Act should provide for online voting, should suitable technology be developed in the future.

As the Shire is aware, legislative amendments to allow for electronic voting in the future is one part of the McGowan Government's proposed local government reforms.

Further information on the reforms can be found on the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries website at:

<https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/local-government/strengthening-local-government/local-government-act-reform>

While I appreciate the Shire's interest in potentially utilising electronic methods of voting in future elections, significant further work is needed to ensure that any available systems or technologies are suited for proposed use in local government elections.

Yours sincerely



HON JOHN CAREY MLA
MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT