

CANDIDATE SELECTION POLICY

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The Nationals WA

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CANDIDATE SELECTION POLICY

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PURPOSE

To establish the rules and standards by which Candidates will be selected to run at future State and Federal Elections.

BACKGROUND

Part Six of the Constitution sets out a range of measures and requirements for the endorsement of candidates at state and federal elections. This document seeks to present the points most relevant while filling the gaps left by the founding document.

State Council is the governing body of the Party responsible for campaign and finance matters. State Councillors have the final endorsement power for candidate selections and will conduct preselection meetings on behalf of some Legislative Assembly areas and for the Legislative Council.

ELIGIBILITY

In order to be endorsed for candidacy, an applicant must:

- Meet relevant constitutional and legislated eligibility requirements to serve as a Member of Parliament, including bankruptcy, citizenship, and pecuniary interests.
- Be a current, financial member of The Nationals WA.
- Have been a member for at least one year.*
- Have completed the Application for Endorsement
- Have paid the relevant Candidate Application Fee and Candidate Co-contribution.
- Have been selected by the relevant Party Units.

*Prospective Candidates with less than one year's membership may apply to State Council to waive this requirement.

SELECTING CANDIDATES

Process

The process of selecting Candidates is broken into three stages:

1. Application
2. Due Diligence

3. Preselection

Application

Each prospective candidate (Applicant) will begin their application process by completing the prescribed *Application for Endorsement* form (details later in document).

Completed *Application for Endorsement* forms will be submitted by electronic means. Applicants can liaise with the State Director for any assistance in completing their application.

The State Director will prepare applications for the consideration of the Candidate Selection Committee (CSC).

Due Diligence

The CSC will meet to discuss applications received on a continual basis.

The CSC will conduct due diligence checks on each application to ensure the Candidate presents in honest form. This may include contacting referees, analysing social media presence, and contacting relevant Party members.

Once satisfied the *Application for Endorsement* is appropriately prepared, the CSC will invite the prospective Candidate to take part in their Candidate Interview.

The Candidate Interview is a strictly confidential meeting between the CSC and the prospective Candidate, which must be undertaken in-person.

Once the CSC has completed its processes, the CSC reports a recommendation to the relevant party unit on whether the Applicant proceed to Preselection. If the recommendation is for the application to proceed, findings will be shared with the relevant party unit.

Candidate Selection Committee

The Candidate Selection Committee (CSC) is a sub-committee of State Executive with the express responsibility of conducting due diligence checks on prospective Candidates. The CSC reports to State Executive on the soundness of an applicant's candidature, particularly focused on any risks that candidature may pose the Party. The deliberations of the CSC and the information provided to it is strictly confidential.

State Council empowers the CSC to reject or not proceed an applicant to preselection. An application must be rejected if the Applicant is deemed to pose a financial or reputational risk to the organisation.

The CSC is formed *ex-officio* from the following;

- State President
- A former State President

- Internal Policy Committee Chair
- State Director

Most, if not all, registered political parties have similar candidate vetting committees. The vetting of candidates' backgrounds has always been important. Today, the power of social media, for example, has only added to its importance. The emergence of information about a preselected candidate's background can derail a campaign.

The vetting program has another benefit. Material provided to the CSC may not even remotely threaten the prospective candidate's eligibility to be considered by delegates to a preselection meeting. It might be a minor offence or indiscretion. But knowledge of it gives the Party the opportunity to prepare for potential adverse media coverage if it emerges during a campaign or after a candidate is elected to public office.

Preselection

Once deemed fit by CSC to proceed to preselection, the Applicant progresses to preselection and will be provided a preselection package. The package will include:

- Candidate Handbook (includes Code of Conduct)
- A copy of the Constitution
- List of important Party Contacts
- Membership list for the electorate in which they have nominated (EC delegates will be marked with *). Those in non-preselecting electorates (inc. Legislative Council applicants) will also be provided a list of State Councillors.

The Applicant will be made aware in writing of the date preselection is to be undertaken and the body responsible (i.e., Electorate Council or State Council).

Once preselected, Candidates will be furnished with their Candidate Package, which includes:

- The Nationals WA Candidate Contract
- Candidate Name Tag
- Election Platform document

State Council has sole responsibility for the final endorsement of all Candidates.

RUNNING PRESELECTIONS

Legislative Assembly

The Constitution sets out a series of processes and powers for preselecting candidates in Legislative Assembly seats. The power to endorse lies solely with State Council, with a handful of Electorate Councils (ECs) empowered to conduct their own preselection process.

Those ECs formed under clause 50.2 of the Constitution are still entitled – and encouraged – to conduct Branch Nominee Presentation Meetings, whereby Branch members may resolve to recommend their preferred candidate to State Council. In these electorates – as well as those without either an Electorate Council or Branch, State Council will conduct Candidate Selection Meetings.

Sections 107, 108, 109, and 110 of the Constitution set out the parameters for conducting a preselection meeting for a Legislative Assembly seat. The principles set out in clause 107 of the Constitution will be applied to other preselections.

107. Legislative Assembly Selection Meeting

- 107.1 A Legislative Assembly Selection Meeting shall be held within each Legislative Assembly District by each Assembly Electorate Council formed under Clause 50.1 for the sole purpose of pre-selecting a candidate or candidates for a Legislative Assembly Electorate Election or to fill a Legislative Assembly candidate vacancy.
- 107.2 In circumstances where an Assembly Electorate Council has been formed under Clause 50.2, State Council shall be the party unit that conducts the Legislative Assembly Selection Meeting.
- 107.2.1 Under these circumstances constitutional Branches within these Assembly Districts shall be encouraged to hold a Branch Nominee Presentation Meeting. The branches may or may not recommend a preferred candidate, or candidates, to State Council for its consideration.
- 107.2.2 In the case that a branch considers and resolves a formal resolution regarding their preferred candidate or candidates, the secretary of the Branch shall immediately advise the State Director of the name(s) of the recommended applicants.
- 107.3 The Legislative Assembly Selection Meeting shall be held as required giving not less than thirty (30) days' notice of any proposed meeting.
- 107.4 In order to be eligible to vote at a Legislative Assembly Selection Meeting, a delegate must have been a Member of an associated Branch of that Assembly Electorate Council for not less than six (6) months before the Opening Date for nominations for that Legislative Assembly seat.
- 107.5 In order to be eligible to vote at a Branch Nominee Presentation Meeting, the branch member must have been a Member of the Branch for no less than six (6) months before the Opening Date for nominations for that Legislative Assembly seat.

108. Candidate Selection

- 108.1 At Selection Meetings, applicants for endorsement shall make their presentations in alphabetical order.
- 108.2 Selection shall be made by the exhaustive ballot system, if more than one applicant. The procedure for an exhaustive ballot is that each Branch Delegate writes the name of one applicant on the ballot paper and, if any applicant secures a majority of the votes, that applicant is chosen for endorsement by State Council. If no candidate has a majority, the applicant with the lowest number of votes is eliminated and another ballot taken. The procedure is repeated until one applicant secures a majority.
- 108.3 If a tied vote results at the conclusion of a Selection Meeting, delegates shall be asked to vote again. If a tied vote still results, all applicants' names involved in the tied vote shall be forwarded to State Council to determine the final endorsement.
- 108.4 The meeting may recommend to State Council that none of the applicants be endorsed.
- 108.5 Following a Legislative Assembly Selection Meeting, the Secretary of the relevant Assembly Electorate Council shall immediately advise the State Director of the name(s) of the recommended applicants.
- 108.6 Except with the special permission of State Council, no applicant shall be endorsed unless that applicant has been a member of the Party for a period of at least one year.
- 108.7 State Council shall consider the Legislative Assembly Selection Meeting recommendation from the relevant Assembly Electorate Councils.

109. Confidentiality of Candidate

- 109.1 Any candidate for endorsement may request that their application remain confidential, until the relevant selection committee meeting commences.

110. Cancellation of Endorsement

- 110.1 State Council may at any time cancel the endorsement of any candidate without necessarily giving any reason to the candidate and call for fresh nominations. If time does not permit the calling of fresh nominations, State Council may endorse, any other person, or persons, in lieu of the candidate whose endorsement has so been cancelled.

PROCESS

State Council may open applications in each electorate it desires applicants. State Council may choose to open applications in all, some, or no Legislative Assembly Electorates. State Council may choose to open applications in batches to help manage the administrative and logistical burden of candidate selection.

N.B. Once Electoral Boundaries are finalised by the Western Australian Electoral Commission (WAEC), State Council must meet to define the boundaries of Electorate Councils, ensuring

Branches are located within the appropriate geographical area. This re-alignment will also include a re-alignment of Electorate Council Delegates from the relevant Branches.

For those electorates where the Electorate Council is formed under Section 50.2 of the Constitution, State Council will be responsible for conducting Candidate Selection Meetings and endorsing Candidates. Local members will have the opportunity to engage with the preselection process through Branch Nomination Meetings (BNMs). State Council will consider the resolution of BNMs but has ultimate responsibility to select the candidate of its choosing.

It may come to pass that Applicants for endorsement come from electorates within which the Party's structure is in its infancy with no Branches yet established. For these electorates where no branch is formalised, State Council is responsible for Selection and Endorsement. To ensure local members are engaged in the process, the State Director will call a meeting for Party members registered within the electorate to discuss campaign priorities and indicate support (or otherwise) for a prospective Candidate. These informal meetings may assist State Councillors in their deliberations to select a Candidate.

Legislative Council

State Council is the preselecting body for the Legislative Council. It has the power to decide how many Candidates will be nominated and is responsible for running the Candidate Selection Meeting to fill those positions.

Unlike at previous elections, the 2025 Legislative Council election will be held as a single, whole-of-state region. State Council will conduct a single Candidate Selection Meeting to determine which Candidate fills each spot on the Legislative Council ballot.

Prospective Candidates and State Councillors will be given at least 30 days' notice of this Candidate Selection Meeting.

The Candidate Selection Meeting will allow all approved Candidates to present to State Council in alphabetical order.

Candidates will be selected by order of the ticket (i.e. elect first slot, then second, then third) using the exhaustive ballot process. Each candidate will have the right to appoint a Scrutineer to observe the ballot process.

State Council may choose to conduct Candidate selection and endorsement at the same meeting or at separate meetings.

FEDERAL ELECTIONS

House Of Representatives

State Council has the power to determine which House of Representatives (HoR) electorates the Nationals WA will contest and how these Candidates will be selected.

This Policy sets State Council as the preselecting body for House of Representatives Candidates.

On advice from the Campaign Committee, State Council will prescribe which Federal Divisions the Party will nominate Candidates for.

All approved Applicants will present to State Council in alphabetical order.

Candidates will be elected by exhaustive ballot. Each candidate will have the right to appoint a Scrutineer to observe the ballot process.

State Council may choose to conduct Candidate selection and endorsement at the same meeting or at separate meetings.

Senate

State Council is the preselecting body for the Senate. It has the power to decide how many candidates will be nominated and is responsible for running the Candidate Selection Meeting to fill those positions.

On advice from the Campaign Committee, State Council will prescribe how many positions the Party will nominate Candidates for.

All approved Applicants will present to State Council in alphabetical order.

Candidates will be elected by order of the ticket (i.e. elect first slot, then second, then third) by exhaustive ballot. Each candidate will have the right to appoint a Scrutineer to observe the ballot process.

State Council may choose to conduct Candidate selection and endorsement at the same meeting or at separate meetings.

PAPERWORK

Application for Endorsement form

There will be a requirement to complete an online Candidate vetting form that each prospective Candidate for election to a public office must complete prior to any preselection meeting and which is to be examined by the Candidate Selection Committee. The form includes the requirement for Applicants to submit:

- Current Curriculum vitae
- Credit Check
- Criminal Check.
- Certification of state of tax affairs
- The details of two nominating financial Members of The Nationals WA

The form requires prospective nominees to list the birthplace of all Grandparents and Citizenship status. This may require certification by foreign governments that the prospective candidate is not a dual citizen (especially for Federal applications).

The CSC reserves the right seek further information about the prospective Candidate's background.

Applications for Endorsement are completed online by visiting:

www.nationalswa.com/preselectionform

APPENDICES

The Different Stages of Candidacy

Throughout the process of Candidate selection, prospective Candidates go through several phases . These are:

TITLE	DESCRIPTION
Applicant	A party member who has begun or completed their <i>Application for Endorsement</i> .
Approved Applicant	A party member who has been approved by CSC to progress to preselection.
Preselected Candidate	A party member who has been preselected by the relevant party unit to contest the election for The Nationals WA
Endorsed Candidate	A party member who has had their candidature endorsed by State Council. Handed “Nationals Candidate for <Electorate>” moniker.
Nominated Candidate	An Endorsed Candidate becomes a Nominated Candidate when the Party submits its nomination of candidates to the relevant electoral commission.

SCHEDULE OF FEES & CHARGES

There is an expectation that Candidates will contribute to the resourcing of the Campaign.

State Council is empowered to decide the fees and charges applied and has sole discretion to allow a Candidate to proceed under payment plan provision or without payment.

State Council may choose not to endorse a Candidate without evidence that the Co-contribution and Bond have been - or will be - paid.

Name	Payable	Fee
Application Fee	Prior to <i>Application of Endorsement</i> being presented to GSC	\$2,750 (inc GST)
Candidate Co-contribution	Within 90 days of successful Preselection.	To be confirmed.

The Campaign Committee is tasked with objectively categorising seats and determining the Candidate Co-contribution for each category.

Indicative Timeline – State Election

DATE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
16 December 2023	Define Electorate Council Boundaries	State Council
	Open Applications for endorsement (nominations opened at this point)	State Council
	Delegate the Power to close and extend applications to State Executive	State Council
17 January 2024	Round 1 Applications closed	State Council/Executive
4-17 February 2024	Round 1 Selection Meetings held	Electorate Councils
18 February 2024	Round 2 Applications close	State Council/Executive
24 February 2024	Endorsement of Round 1 Preselected Candidates	State Council (virtual)
23 March 2024	Round 2 Selection Meeting held	State Council
27 April 2024	Legislative Council (LC) Applications close	State Council/Executive
	Round 3 Applications Close	
8 June 2024	LC Candidate Selection Meeting held	State Council
	Round 3 Candidate Selection Meeting held	
Mid-Late 2024	Any remaining Candidate Selections	State Council
8 March 2025	2025 WA State Election	

Candidate Selection Rounds

Legislative Assembly Electoral Districts by the Round in which they are planned to be preselected.

Round 1 Applications close 17/1/24	Round 2 Applications close 18/2/24	Round 3 Applications close 27/4/24
Central Wheatbelt	Warren-Blackwood	Legislative Council
Mid-West	Geraldton	All remaining Legislative Assembly seats
Roe	Other seats as determined by State Executive.	

Indicative Timeline – Federal

Guide only. To be clarified by State Executive at a later date.

DATE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY
April 2024	Decide which electorates to open nominations in and open nominations.	State Council
	Delegate the Power to close applications to State Executive	State Council
June 2024	Applications closed	State Council/Executive
July 2024	Due diligence undertaken	CSC
Jul/Aug 2024	Preselection Meetings held	Electorate Councils
August 2024	Candidates Endorsed	State Council
May/Jun 2025	Federal Election (<i>expected</i>)	