

ELECTION CARETAKER PERIOD

1. Purpose

This policy explains what Elected Members can and cannot do in the lead-up to a local government election, and until the new Council is in place. It is designed to make sure that:

- Council keeps providing normal services to the community.
- Major decisions are not made that could limit what the new Council can decide.
- Staff remain neutral and do not act in a political way.
- Council money, time and resources are used properly.

2. Scope

This policy applies to elected members and employees of Glenorchy City Council for the duration of the caretaker period of a local government general election.

This policy does not apply to local government by-elections.

3. Related Documents

- [Code of Conduct - Elected Member Dispute Resolution Policy](#)
- [Elected Member Expenses Policy](#)
- [Advertising Devices on Council Property Policy](#)
- [Tasmanian Planning Scheme - Glenorchy](#)
- [Good Governance Policy](#)

4. Statutory Requirements

Acts	Local Government Act 1993 Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993
Regulations	Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025
Australian/ International Standards	Not applicable

5. Definitions

Act means the [Local Government Act 1993](#).

By-election means an election to replace an Alderman after the Alderman's office becomes vacant.

Caretaker period means the period from the issue of a notice of election under section 269 of the Act to the issue of a certificate of election under section 304 of the Act.

Candidate means a person standing for election.

Elected Member is a collective term to describe Aldermen and Councillors as elected members of Glenorchy City Council.

Election Material means any advertisement, handbill, pamphlet, notice, flyer, letter or article that is intended to affect the result of an election.

Election Campaign means the activities of candidates to win voter support in the period preceding an election and includes activities such as door knocking, bulk emails, production of signs and flyers, telephone canvassing, social media campaigns, media commentary and advertising.

Emergency means a declared emergency, or a similar situation in which there is likely to be immediate threat to life or property.

Officer means a Council employee.

6. Policy Statement

Caretaker period notification

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will notify Elected Members and officers when a caretaker period begins and ends. The CEO will also provide this Policy to assist officers and Elected Members with compliance.

Continuation of services

During the caretaker period ordinary Council services continue and statutory responsibilities are not affected.

It is expected that respectful debate between Elected Members on matters of policy will continue during the caretaker period.

Individual Elected Members may still discuss future policy options as part of their election campaign.

Officers can still carry out activities, such as policy reviews, that are not likely to attract political controversy and are required regardless of the future election outcome.

While Council business continues, the caretaker conventions set out in this Policy do affect some types of Council activity.

Freedom of action for future Councils

Council is to avoid making major decisions during the caretaker period that are likely to commit an incoming Council in a way that might later limit its freedom to act.

What is a major decision?

A major decision:

- commits the use of significant resources
- approves capital works not previously approved as part of the annual budget process

- entrenches a policy, program or administrative structure that is politically contentious
- is likely to be a matter of controversy in an election campaign.

The following major decisions are to be avoided during a caretaker period:

- a major program or funding opportunity with another tier of government which commits Council resources over a number of years
- grants to community groups
- borrowing or remission of debts outside of existing policy guidelines
- changes to budgets or spending in a way that would restrict future policy options
- Chief Executive appointments or contract renewals for extended periods after the election (also see 'Emergency appointments' below)
- entry into major contracts, except for:
 - I. continuation of routinely provided services, independently entered into at arm's length from Elected Members, by officers exercising an existing delegation to approve that expenditure (usually an agreement under \$1 million in value)
 - II. approval of contracts that have used a prescribed public tender process where the preferred contractor has been independently assessed by Council officers
 - III. contracts required to respond to a declared emergency
 - IV. circumstances where failure to do so would breach a binding commitment made prior to the caretaker period exposing the Council to potential liability
 - V. capital works previously approved by Council as part of the annual budget process.

Meetings

During the caretaker period, Elected Members will not submit notices of motion to Council or Council Committees pursuant to regulation 19 of the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025* (LGMPR).

Elected Members will not ask questions without notice to Council or Council Committees pursuant to regulation 34 of the LGMPR. However, an Elected Member may, in accordance with regulation 35 of the LGMPR, give written notice to the CEO of a question on notice to be answered at a Council or Council Committee meeting.

Planning Instruments

Council will not make of its own motion, amend or repeal a local planning instrument under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*. For ease of interpretation, this includes a planning scheme, a temporary local planning instrument or a planning scheme policy but does not apply to applications made by third parties.

Announcements

If a decision was made before the caretaker period, then that decision may be announced during the caretaker period. Where possible, policy announcements should be made ahead of the caretaker period if their announcement is likely to cause controversy during the election campaign.

The Mayor will continue to act as the spokesperson of Council in fulfilment of their obligations under section 27(e) of the Act in relation to the ordinary business of the Council. The Mayor will also carry out the civic and ceremonial functions of the Mayoral Office during the caretaker period.

Tender process

Potential tenderers should be advised about the implications of the election and caretaker period, and the possibility that tender finalisation might be delayed.

Impartiality of Officers

Officers are to be impartial and apolitical, performing their public functions in an ethical and professional manner at all times.

Officers are to deal with all Elected Members equitably when performing the ordinary business of Council.

Officers are to act in a manner that avoids perceptions of partisanship in their dealings with Elected Members and the public.

Officers are to avoid comments that might be seen to be promoting the achievements of particular Elected Members.

While officers are entitled to their private political opinions away from a work setting, they are not to make public statements in person or online about their perceptions of candidates or give opinions on political matters where they might be perceived to be expressing the official view of Council, or of Council officers.

Officers must decline any request to be involved in an activity which appears to be linked to a campaign message or may be perceived as an endorsement.

Officers are to actively prevent Council resources from being used in a campaign, such as deleting links to candidates' pages or candidate election statements, from Council social media platforms.

Officers are not to be approached in relation to matters directly or indirectly involving an Elected Member's campaign.

Elected Member enquiries are to be managed through the Elected member interaction with council officer's directive. A copy of the directive will be provided to Elected members as part of the election information pack.

If an officer has any doubt about the appropriateness of an activity, they are to consult with their relevant manager.

If an Elected Member has any doubt as to the appropriateness of an activity, they are to consult the CEO.

Appropriate use of council resources

Distribution of election material

Elected Members are to comply with Council's ['Advertising Devices on Council Property \(May 2026\) policy'](#) and the [Tasmanian Planning Scheme – Glenorchy](#).

Use of Council equipment and stationery

Council supplied equipment and Council branded material is not to be used by Elected Members or officers in any manner that supports a candidate's election campaign.

Elected Members may continue to use Council equipment and branded material throughout the course of the caretaker period to carry out their regular functions as set out in section 28 of the Act.

Media

Elected Members are not to use their access to employees, events, or resources, to gain personal media attention in support of their, or any other candidate's, election campaign.

Elected Members are expected to engage in robust but still respectful debate, including on social media platforms.

Council committees and groups

An Elected Member is not to use their membership of a Council committee or reference group, or their appointment as a member of an external group on behalf of Council, to disseminate information or promote their, or any other candidate's, election campaign.

Allowances

Elected Members may continue to claim any allowances and expenses to which they are entitled under Council's [Elected Member Expenses \(May 2023\) Policy](#) that relate to the essential business of Council, and that do not relate to their electoral campaign activity.

7. Version Control

Version	V 2.0	Adopted	29 June 2026	Commencement date	30 June 2026
Minutes reference	Item 11.2			Review period	4 years from adoption
Previous versions	V 1.0 adopted 25 July 2022				
Responsible Directorate	Executive Office	Controller	Manager Stakeholder and Executive		
ECM Document no	Policies by Directorate				