



# MEDIA RELEASE

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**PAUL LYNCH MP**  
**MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT**  
**MINISTER FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**  
**MINISTER ASSISTING THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (MENTAL HEALTH)**

4 April 2008

## **Another chance for councils to save money**

New South Wales councils will be given an opportunity to reduce the number of councillors elected at this year's local government elections.

Under an amendment to the *Local Government Act 1993* introduced to State Parliament today, councils will have the opportunity to drop councillor numbers without having to resort to holding a constitutional referendum.

Minister for Local Government Paul Lynch said the proposed amendments would also confirm the optional preferential voting system where only one councillor is to be elected.

The amendments would also introduce proportional representation where two or more councillors are to be elected.

Mr Lynch said councils and ratepayers would benefit from a reduction in the number of elected representatives.

"Having a smaller number of councillors allows councils and ratepayers to save money on councillor fees and the cost administrative support," he said.

Mr Lynch said this opportunity to shed councillor numbers was particularly useful for councils with an even number of elected representatives.

"If councils decide on having 5, 7, 9 or 11 councillors, decisions are reached by majority vote without the need for the Mayor to use an additional casting vote," he said.

In 2005, the NSW Government gave councils a similar opportunity to reduce councillor numbers without the need to hold a constitutional referendum.

"As a result, 21 councils decided to reduce 46 councillor positions, saving ratepayers about \$540,000," Mr Lynch said. (a list of these councils follows this page)

The opportunity to reduce councillor numbers would be qualified by the following restrictions:

- councils undertake public consultation
- councils must not have less than 5 councillors

Councils have until 30 June 2008 to apply for a reduction in councillor numbers.

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***In 2005, 21 NSW councils elected to reduce the number of councillors to be elected at the 2008 local government elections***

- **Auburn** – 12 to 10 councillors – saving about **\$27,960 per annum**
- **Blayney** – 9 to 7 – saving **\$16,760**
- **Bourke** – 12 to 10 – saving **\$16,760**
- **Brewarrina** – 12 to 9 – saving **\$25,140**
- **Broken Hill** – 12 to 10 – saving **\$27,960**
- **Central Darling** – 12 to 9 – saving **\$25,140**
- **Coonamble** – 9 to 7 – saving **\$16,760**
- **Cootamundra** – 12 to 11 – saving **\$8380 \*\*\***
- **Cowra** – 11 to 9 – saving **\$16,760**
- **Dubbo** – 12 to 11 – saving **\$13,980**
- **Glen Innes Severn** – 9 to 7 – saving **\$16,760**
- **Great Lakes** – 12 to 9 – saving **\$41,940**
- **Greater Taree** – 12 to 9 – saving **\$41,940**
- **Jerilderie** – 9 to 7 – saving **\$16,760**
- **Mosman** – 12 to 9 – saving **\$41,940**
- **Murrumbidgee** – 8 to 6 – saving **\$16,760**
- **Orange** – 14 to 12 – saving **\$27,960**
- **Strathfield** – 9 to 7 – saving **\$27,960**
- **Tweed** – 11 to 7 – saving **\$55,920**
- **Wagga Wagga** – 15 to 14 – saving **\$13,980 \*\*\***
- **Wingecarribee** – 12 to 9 – saving **\$41,940**

*\*\*\* As a result of constitutional referenda, Cootamundra and Wagga Wagga will reduce councillor numbers further at the 2008 election, from 11 to 9 and 14 to 11 respectively*