

Council vote is big business

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IN JUST over two months ratepayers will vote to elect the new City of Greater Geelong council.

The results of the October 28 poll will be keenly anticipated, not just by the Geelong community, but also by the state government and state opposition, with many other regions across Australia sure to maintain a close eye on proceedings in Geelong.

Geelong has been without a council for the past 16 months with administrators Dr Kathy Alexander, Peter Dorling and Laurinda Gardner charged with making decisions for the city since April last year.

Since Local Government Minister Natalie Hutchins announced the election of our new council – 11 councillors will represent four wards – we've seen a number of people publicly indicate their intention to nominate.



There's still six weeks before nominations officially close, but so far more than a dozen candidates have put their hands up, through various forms of the media, and declared their intention to stand for council.

It's encouraging to see so much interest from community members wanting to make a difference to the future direction of the Geelong region.

The Geelong Chamber of Commerce, as the city's peak business group, has a strong interest in ensuring good and effective governance of the City from the new council.

The Chamber, as an apolitical organisation, does not "take sides" nor does it promote candidates or party politics of any persuasion. What we do seek though, is an environment of stability and certainty for the business sector.

According to the latest Business Trends Survey conducted by Deakin Business School and the Geelong Chamber, 25 per cent of respondents identified the greatest barrier to business growth as poor local government leadership, policy or support. This was overwhelmingly the number one barrier to business growth cited by respondents.

The City of Greater Geelong Council clearly has a direct impact on our cityregion's economic growth and prosperity.

While the chamber has previously stated a preference for the administrators to serve a four-year term to enable them sufficient time to implement the key recommendations of the Halliday Report, we nevertheless look forward to welcoming and supporting the



newly-elected council.

Like others who have written on this subject, the chamber welcomes fresh and innovative thinking and a commitment from all our newly-elected councillors to work collaboratively and constructively

for the benefit of the entire municipality.

Administrators have delivered on one of the key recommendations of the Halliday Report, a 30-year vision for the City of Greater Geelong.

More than 16,000 people from all sectors right across the community participated in developing a vision that will guide the future direction of the city for the next 30 years.

The Geelong Chamber of Commerce encourages all candidates in the upcoming council election to embrace the city's 30-year vision and ensure this important community-endorsed plan is actioned and serves to underpin the city's future strategic direction.

As our city rapidly progresses into a new economy driven by innovation, technology, professional services, entrepreneurialism and the visitor experience, the community of Geelong deserves nothing less than a council that reflects the values and aspirations of its citizens and businesses as we continue to build upon Geelong's important role as the capital of our region and a magnet for future population and jobs growth.

Kylie Warne is President of the Geelong Chamber of Commerce.

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